

Features

Acton students test outdoors

"Totally roughing it" is fun but after spending a week in the wilds of the Terra Cotta Conservation Area the general consensus among several Grade 10 Acton High School students is that there is no place like home.

From Sept. 23 to 27 the Grade 10 students participated in a part of their curriculum termed outdoor education. The week long exercise taught the students outdoor survival techniques, camping skills, hands on education in biology, geography, art, history and communication, leadership skills, how to cooperate within a group, the importance of the environment and insights on how to choose a healthy lifestyle.

In talking with some of the students, however, they also learned how much they appreciate turning radio on, watching television and only having to take a few steps to get to the shower.

When asked what they disliked

about the week the students simultaneously said "there's no radio!" They went on to lament, "We've had to walk a mile to get to the shower."

Jenn Young seemed to represent the opinion of most of the students when she said the week was enjoyable but not enough that she would like to go to school outdoors all the time.

"I'd get sick of it," she said.

Another student, David Smiley, was one student that wouldn't mind getting his education outdoors. "It's more relaxed in nature, he said.

The students agreed the most beneficial aspect of the experience was the opportunity to get to know each other better. "It has brought us closer together as friends because we've been together night and day," said Sarah Fleet.

Activities the students participated in included learning how to use a compass, archery, canoe-

ing, camping skills, art, science and survival skills.

David Smiley enjoyed survival skills more than any of the activities saying, "it was a real challenge."

To learn wilderness survival skills the students pretended to be a carnivore meat eater or a herbivore - plant eater. In turn, they would have to find the appropriate food in the forest.

Jenn Young enjoyed orientation - compass reading - saying "it was easy and a lot of fun."

Sarah Fleet enjoyed learning how to canoe. "I never knew how to do it and it is something that I'll have to do later on," she said.

When asked if the students had become committed environmentalists given their new found awareness of nature, all said no. But they did say they will be more conscious about being more protective of it in the future.



Triangulation - the determination of distances using a transit - was only one of the many activities Grade 10 Acton High School students Jenn Young and her classmates learned during a school sponsored outdoor education week at the Terra Cotta Conservation Area Sept. 23 to 27. A transit is used to measure distances using angles and levels. Other activities the students participated in including canoeing, biology, orientation and camping exercises. But when all was said and done, the students seemed to agree, there's nothing like home. (Herald photo)

Child's Play caters to children

By LISA RUTLEDGE

The Herald

By five years of age, a child will have acquired half of his or her ultimate intelligence, said Marg Bennett, a representative of Child's Play International, a children's book publishing company.

"My son is four, so I'm working very hard," she added.

The publishing company, which offers a wide selection of quality books for infants, toddlers and preschoolers, requires more representatives in the Halton Hills area.

Child's Play books are not sold in stores but are available at fundraising events, preschools and home presentations given by company representatives. Mrs. Bennett, a company unit manager, has done several presentations in Georgetown, however, she requires more representatives in North Halton.

As a mother of two, Mrs. Bennett said Child's Play is more than a business opportunity. Immediately after seeing her son's fondness for the books, she fell in love with the company's mandate and decided to promote the value of reading to children.

As 1990 is the International Year of Literacy, it is important to reach as many people as possible and as young as possible, even the unborn, said Mrs. Bennett.

"No one is ever too young," Mrs. Bennett insisted. Children who were read to while still in their mother's womb are familiar with the rhythm of reading aloud, she

said.

"I feel that the foundation for reading has to be laid before the child goes to school," Mrs. Bennett said, adding that parents shouldn't wait for their children to go to school to learn to read. A teacher knows which children have been read to on a regular basis because the children tend to have a better attention span and a better vocabulary, Mrs. Bennett said. Studies have shown that children have a vocabulary range between 4,000 and 32,000 words. "The children on the upper end of the scale have parents who read to them daily," she said.

Mrs. Bennett said a good guideline for parents is to read at least five minutes each day to their children. It's sad when some parents say they don't have five minutes a day to read to their kids, she said.

It's essential to read to children because they learn by being read to just as they learn to speak by being spoken to, Mrs. Bennett explained.

Leave a book everywhere in the house, she suggested. String books to strollers, high chairs, in playpens or even in the bathtub, Mrs. Bennett added. Child's Play offers books covered with plastic so that they won't be ruined if water, juice or food is spilled on them, she said.

When parents choose a book for their youngster they should remember to look for bright colors, or black and white contrasts and lots of pictures with faces, added Mrs. Bennett.

Child's Play offers a selection of participatory books including books with beads children can manoeuvre and turning wheels. "They're books that let children use all of their senses," she said.

Rabbit's Golden Rule, which includes a rabbit with a squeaking nose, teaches children about strangers, explained Mrs. Bennett. Everytime a child hears the word, no, they are supposed to squeak the rabbit's nose. Memorizing and recognizing a word is the process of learning to read, she said.

Nancy Beckingham, a Georgetown mother of three hosted a Child's Play presentation at her home several months ago and is considering hosting another soon.

As a former day care worker, Mrs. Beckingham said children who have been read to regularly have a better vocabulary and listening skills. Parents have to realize their children need these skills to be able to express themselves, she insisted.

Child's Play offers a good selection of high quality books with interesting illustrations and themes, said Mrs. Beckingham.

There are books about human reproduction, emotions and there may soon even be a book about A.I.D.S., she said.

The price of Child's Play books is comparable to prices in any good book stores, Mrs. Bennett said.

Anyone interested in becoming a representative for Child's Play International can contact Marg Bennett at home, 877-6712.



Nancy Beckingham and her children (from left to right) Sean, Michael and Heather often enjoy a cuddling session over a Child's Play International book.

Here, Mrs. Beckingham is reading her children Quick as a Cricket, a book about children's emotions. (Herald photo)

Activities planned at libraries

Thanksgiving in Halton Hills can be celebrated Saturday (today) at both Georgetown and Acton public libraries.

Starting at 2 p.m. there is an hour of activity planned for youngsters ages seven years and over.

Youngsters can take home a special craft which will lend a festive air to the holiday table.

Registration for the activities can be done either in person or by phone.

For more information, contact either the Georgetown Library, 873-2681 or the Acton Library, 853-0301.



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