

Joy Bible Camp launches Great Outdoors Program

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By Kristena Schutt-Moore

Joy Bible Camp's Great Outdoors Program is hitting the trail, on snowshoes. On Saturday, Feb. 27 families and youth were invited to learn about the skill and fun of snowshoeing with the camp's program director Jennifer Niewland. While it offers a way to get youth outdoors and active, snowshoeing also provides a way to enjoy time together while physically distanced along the camp's trail systems and obeying other COVID-19 guidelines.

The snowshoeing program is the first part of the Great Outdoors Program that Niewland is rolling out at the camp and will continue to be held at different times throughout the winter months. Different programs are to start under the Great Outdoors Program throughout the year depending on the seasons, weather and COVID-19.

In the snowshoeing program Niewland not only teaches participants how to snowshoe, but also about the history of the snowshoes and how they are made. The snowshoe programs are day-long events and are hosted on different days throughout the week to make it possible for those on different schedules to attend. Those interested in participating and having fun in the fresh snow that has been falling this past week can sign up through the Joy Bible Camp Facebook page, calling Niewland at 613-332-3696 extension 108, or emailing her at program@joycamp.ca.

"In this program [the Great Outdoors Program], it talks about history, so to appreciate the past, how it applies to our present day, appreciating the outdoors and nature, and getting outdoors and taking time away from TV. They say 15 minutes in nature is enough to help you destress a little bit, I kind of go by that motto as well," explained Neiwman when asked what inspired the Great Outdoors Program.

As the seasons change the Great Outdoors Program will start shifting gears. With the weather looking to start warming the program is looking to start its maple syrup program. In this program participants learn the proper way to tap trees, collect sap and boil syrup to ensure that the tree lives on and the syrup is safe to use.

The Great Outdoors Program contains many programs and events that can be held throughout the year. There is also the caring for trees program where students learn about sustainable forestry. This includes topics such as selective cutting, the harm of clear cutting, and how to obtain resources from the forest while still maintaining the habitat for the animals while ensuring that the resources are there for the next generations.

In the summer months there are plans to start a geocaching program. This program will teach both youth and families about how to use a GPS device and maps. These tools will then be used to find geocaches throughout the camp property.

Other programs will include a species at risk/biodiversity program, which will teach students about different habitat, the plants and animals that are endangered and why, and what can be done to help.

The wetland program is being planned to be held during the spring months. In this program families can learn about local wetlands and their importance. The camp will provide small nets and magnifying glasses to allow students to look at the small organisms that make the wetland a unique habitat.

The wilderness survival program will be one of the few programs available year-round. In it, families and youth will be able to learn how to ensure they can provide themselves with the necessities in the wild such as building a shelter and starting a fire. The youth will also have the chance to create their own para-cord bracelet which can be used in multiple ways.

All the programs are day-long events since with COVID-19 regulations, the camp cannot hold overnight events. However, they are allowed to host 50 people inside for any presentations needed during training and 100 people outside for hands-on activities, fun and learning. Each program will require unique equipment such as snowshoes and GPS devices which the camp will be providing. Hand sanitizer will also be available, but people are asked to bring their own masks and to dress appropriately for the weather. Those interested in the Great Outdoors Program are invited to contact Niewland at 613-332-3696 extension 108 or emailing her at program@joycamp.ca.