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# Footnotes

Winter 2007-08

THE QUARTERLY OF THE TORONTO BRUCE TRAIL CLUB

Vol. XLIV No. 4

[www.torontobrucetrailclub.org](http://www.torontobrucetrailclub.org)

## Trails for Life: the Toronto Club gets kids to take a hike

By Mary McGee

In spring 2006, the Bruce Trail Association informed the Toronto Bruce Trail Club of an opportunity to apply for an Ontario Government grant on behalf of the Association. With financial assistance from the Ministry of Health Promotion "Trails for Life" program, and in partnership with Boys and Girls Clubs, TBTC offered four bus hikes in July and August of 2007. The goal of the project was to expose children and youth to active leisure opportunities provided by trails.

Boys and Girls Clubs are neighbourhood-based, so the bus pick-ups took place at or nearby the participating Clubs. The hike destinations were chosen to keep travel time to approximately one hour and the routes were planned to cover 6-7 km. The TBTC hike leaders provided instruction in trail safety and trail etiquette and pointed out interesting features encountered on the hike. Hikers were provided with water and a nutritious lunch. At the end of the hike they were asked to fill in a short questionnaire about their experience and given information packets on the Bruce Trail, the Waterfront Trail and City of



*The kids from St. Alban's Boys and Girls Club pose for a group photo on August 16th in Forks of the Credit. Ian Clunie and Ken Peters led the hike. Photo: Robert Burcher*

Toronto Discovery Walks.

In July, Walt Dunham led 37 hikers on a 6-km walk in Cold Creek Conservation Area. For this hike, the East Scarborough Boys and Girls Club Leader in Training program teamed up with a school-based summer program run by Por Amor. The younger children, who ranged in age from 8-12, delighted in seeing tadpoles and frogs in a large pond. For one Leader-in-Training, the highlight of the hike was that it provided quiet time for her to clear her head about things bothering her.

Three hikes took place the third week of August. Larry

Haigh and Ramesh Kamath led a group of 15 from the Jane and Finch Boys and Girls Club on a 7-km hike on the Oak Ridges Trail. For all but the male leader, this was their first hiking experience. Approximately 70 percent of the hikers reported that they enjoyed the day and would like to do more hiking. Barb Euler and Lucy Leung led 43 from the Toronto Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club, located near downtown Toronto, on hikes to Limehouse and Scotsdale Farm. While Hole-in-the-Wall was the highlight for many, for one 8-year-old girl it was an explanation by Barb. In her words: "My favourite part

of today's hike is when you told us the history of the limestone ruins."

The final hike was led by Ian Clunie and Ken Peters who took a group of 35 from the St Alban's Boys and Girls Club, located in mid-town Toronto, on a hike to Forks of the Credit. Of the four groups, this one had the most number of children who had hiked before and the highest percentage (90%) who enjoyed the day. For both first-timers and old hands, we hope that their trail experiences with TBTC this summer will encourage them to undertake many more hikes in the future.

**Read about a teen's first hike on the Trail, and how the Toronto Club is involved, on page 4.**