

Ditch 'surfing' - letting youngsters be wild at heart is the key to a happy - and healthy - childhood

WITH substantial evidence showing outdoor activities give youngsters great life skills, as well as keep them happy and healthy, daring kids throughout the area are being given the chance to take part in a really '*Wild*' adventure.

According to a survey by the British Heart Foundation, more than 55% of children aged 8-15 interviewed about how much exercise they took during the school summer holidays, said that they spent 60 minutes or more a day texting, talking on the phone or using instant messaging and internet sites.

'*Escape from Wildchild Wood*' is an outdoor day's adventure, which involves young people on a mission to find pieces of a missing code, by completing various team challenges, then escaping down a 70-metre zip-wire. Challenges along the way include abseiling down the 'tower of terror' and building a base camp in the woods to discuss strategies for the challenge with team members.

Organiser, Lynda Regan, said: "We know from research, that encouraging young people to take part in outdoor adventure activities gives them greater independence, confidence, self-esteem and better social and teamwork skills.

"As a result, we have set up this day-long outdoor adventure, which is not only great fun, but gives youngsters challenges such as solving secret codes and building base camps, as well as abseiling the '*tower of terror*' and travelling down a 70-metre zip wire."

She added: "When people my age were growing up, we loved to go out and find 'wild' places to play in and build dens. Given the chance, I would say any child would love nothing more than having a bit of freedom to go out and build a camp to play in. This is something different for the kids to try on top of the more common holiday activities."

'*Escape from Wildchild Wood*' is based at Phasel's Wood Scout camp near Hemel Hempstead.

To book, and for more information:

The adventure days are run and booked through Wildchild Activities, www.wildchildactivities.com 0845 371 7099

Location: Phasel's Wood Scout Camp, Nr Hemel Hempstead

Times: 10:30am – 3:15pm **Age:** 8-12 years

Instruction: Fully Qualified Instruction.

Safety: All safety equipment provided. Instructors are extremely experienced and do not allow anyone to attempt anything they feel is dangerous. For complete peace of mind Public Limited Liability Insurance is held and all instructors are CRB checked.

Clothing: Outdoor - dress according to weather. Appropriate sturdy footwear and loose clothing. **Refreshments:** Bring packed lunch and drinks

Cost: £35

But on the doorstep (tweak according to paper area) a wild wood is offering both kids and their families the chance to take part in the escape from 'Wildchild Wood'.

Child psychologist Richard Woolfson comments, 'Parents now realise that play is a serious business for children delivering physical as well as social and educational benefits. Outdoor play is as important now as it ever was, and children today can enjoy a great variety of outdoor toys, games and activities which are not only fun but also beneficial to health.'

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