

1st Bancroft Troop sets sights on trip to Essex International Jamboree

By Chris Drost

The 1st Bancroft Troop and its leaders have set an ambitious goal of raising approximately \$25,000 - \$35,000 towards the Troop attending the 2024 Essex International Jamboree in Boyton Cross, Chelmsford, just outside London, England. The group also has plans to attend Adventureland in Scotland the week prior to the Jamboree.

The Essex International Jamboree is a seven-day event that brings Scouts and Guides together from across the United Kingdom and around the world. At the last event, 10,000 participants, including 2,000 volunteers, came together to make international friendships and challenge themselves in over 100 activities.

Adventureland in Scotland will provide an opportunity for the Troop to participate in a variety of activities such as rope courses, while the older kids work on their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. The youth who are working on the Duke of Edinburgh Award will have an opportunity to learn valuable practical and social skills for career development, make a positive impact on the lives of others through community service and take up the challenge of an Adventurous Journey with a team of peers. "This is a very prestigious award," explains Loretta Kasperski, Troop leader.

The 1st Bancroft Troop currently has six of the older youth, ages 11 - 16, but four younger ones will be moving up from Scouts to Troop. It is anticipated that there will be 10 youth, plus leaders, going on the trip overseas. The funds being raised will go towards the expenses for the youth and their leaders.

"We have a whole year of fundraising activities planned," says Kasperski. To kick things off there will be a Fundrive on May 28 at the Bird's Creek Community Centre. The Troop is collecting household items, toys, books, clothing, kitchen appliances, e-waste, batteries and empties for the event. Anyone with items to donate ahead of time can contact Kasperski at 416-830-1844. Pick-up is also available.

On June 18 there will be a Father's Day barbecue and car wash, tentatively also held at the Bird's Creek Community Centre.

The group is planning to have a tent at the Canada Day festivities where families can enjoy such things as candy kabobs and a pie throwing contest.

The Troop will also be at the Airport Fly-in Breakfast in July with Krispy Kreme donuts for sale.

In August, plans are in the works for a Green Clean workshop. One of the leaders is a herbologist who will make cleaning products with people. Each person will leave with a whole system of cleaning products.

"We also hope to do a No Frills barbecue," says Kasperski.

The parents of the children will be holding a Nerf War fundraiser and in September, a spaghetti fundraising dinner is being planned.

The Troop will also be selling first aid kits and there will be another Fun Drive again in October. Plans are also being put together for a Halloween Haunted House event.

In November they will be selling Purdy's Chocolates and then take December to take a bit of a break and some family time.

"I have witnessed great growth in youth who are able to participate in these international events. The young person who was able to travel to Switzerland gained valuable leadership skills, and just blossomed. This is an opportunity for young people to gain independence, leadership experience and have a taste of adventure," explains Kasperski. She also believes it makes the kids more appreciative of the trip by working towards raising the funds to attend. "I see real growth. It is amazing," she says.

The Troop (ages 11-14) is still taking new members. Meetings are held on Wednesdays from 6:30 ? 8 p.m. at the Bird's Creek Community Centre. For the younger ages, Cubs, Beavers, and Scouts are also taking new members. They meet on Tuesdays from 6:30 ? 7:30 p.m. but there are plans to split the group in two in September as the number of participants has been growing.

?We only have six leaders for all of this, so we are very ambitious. We are looking for part-time leaders or volunteers. We are quite flexible if you can only help out a few times each year,? says Kasperski.

For further information there is a 1st Bancroft Beaver, Cubs and Scouts Facebook page.