

Bancroft Scouts experience SCUBA diving



By Bill Kilpatrick

On May 12 members of the Bancroft scouting group got to experience what it's like to go SCUBA diving. The scouts traveled down to the RecPlex in Trenton to participate in the discover SCUBA program. Five scouts took part in the program which requires participants to be at least 10 years of age due to safety reasons. The Group Commissioner and Colony Scouter for the Bancroft Scouting Group Loretta Kasperski explained that the money raised from the groups recent tree planting fundraiser at Nellie Lunn Park was used to fund the excursion.

The youths learned basic safety skills such as underwater hand signals, how to use their regulators, where to find their pressure gage, and how to get water out of their masks while under water. Wren Alexander, the first brave scout to take the plunge, explained that they all had to put their gear on while in the water as it would have been too heavy for them if they put it on while on land. She explained that main rule of SCUBA diving: keep breathing. "You can't hold your breath," she explained. "It can hurt you."

The group got to swim around and practice some of the skills that they were taught. For another participant Parker Howran this resulted in a scary moment when he could not locate his regulator. "I was following the instructions to take the regulator out and throw it by your side [while swimming under water] then move your arm back and grab it and put it back in your mouth." He said, but he was unable to find the regulator. "I ran out of air and had to go to the surface," he said. "It was scary."

Parker's sister, Paige Howran, explained how the group did a "tea party" at the bottom of the pool where they practiced taking out their regulators, the instructors would pretend pour the tea into them, and then they would put them back in their mouths expelling any water left in the regulator by pressing a button. Paige said that her favorite part was learning the skills and swimming with her friends, while Wren's favorite part was breathing under water and pretending to be a mermaid. Parker said that despite some scary parts he would remember the fun experience of just learning to SCUBA dive.

Paige and Parker's mother Alesha also got to experience SCUBA diving with her kids and it's something that she "highly suggested" for other people who are physically capable of doing it. She explained how being part of the scouts has allowed her to "step outside of her own boundaries" along side her children and partake in activities that she might have otherwise avoided. This was a sentiment that was shared by Wren's mother Joanne as well who called the Bancroft Scouting program "fantastic." Wren said that she would definitely go SCUBA diving again and when she was asked what she would tell other people about her experience she replied, "They should try it."

For more information about the Bancroft Scouting group contact Loretta Kasperski at scouterloretta@gmail.com.