

REALTOR® Hikes Strathcona Park with Air Cadets



Nanaimo, B.C. – Hiking 30km through British Columbia’s pristine wilderness, falling asleep to the sounds of the river and hooting owls, taking a dip in a glacier-fed lake, building new friendships, and learning valuable skills such as orienteering make memories that will last a lifetime. Twelve Nanaimo Air Cadets aged 13 to 16 traversed the challenging Elk River Trail with the help of a few experienced volunteers, including REALTOR® Ken Welte and his wife and business partner Laura.

“Part of the Air Cadets’ mission is to give youth the opportunity to explore the outdoors,” says Ken, who joined the Air Cadets as a teenager, then became a small craft pilot and began volunteering with the Nanaimo squadron when he was just 24-years-old. For the past 23 years, Ken has shared his passion for aviation by providing classroom instruction, taking kids flying—most recently as part of *COPA for Kids*—and volunteering on field trips.

“This trip was about self-empowerment. We showed the cadets that they could go further than they ever thought possible. This hike is rated ‘difficult’ by BC Parks, but using basic equipment, the cadets completed the hike without injury and were able to carry packs weighing approximately 20% of their body weight, or 20 to 30 pounds each.”



The trip may not have happened at all if not for Laura Welte. Three girls wanted to participate in the two-night hike, which required a female chaperone. Laura’s security screening arrived just in time, plus she powered through an earlier injury to her Achilles tendon. When the tendon began to pain her during this hike, Ken applied techniques he learned in his Occupational First Aid Level III training to minimize his wife’s discomfort.

They also tested out the new amateur radio (licenses) on the trail. “Although we were unsuccessful in connecting to the Woss repeater island trunk system to check in with our headquarters, we were successful at communicating between the two groups of cadets over a kilometer apart,” says Ken. “It is an added resource for safety overwatch.”

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