



'Grateful Dads' take kids outdoors

Moms get morning off during monthly hikes for fathers

By Karen Holzmeister, STAFF WRITER

Article Last Updated: 01/04/2008 02:48:45 AM PST

CASTRO VALLEY — Cassidy and Evan Mueller hope Jan. 19 will be rain-free.

The sister and brother — 7 and 3, respectively — can't wait to go hiking that day with their dad, Allen, along with other fathers and their children.

Neither can Allen Mueller, who loves planning the outings.

Four years ago, Mueller, a Castro Valley resident, founded the East Bay chapter of Grateful Dads. Since 1998, members of the San Rafael-based group have blended family bonding with love of the outdoors and a desire to exercise.

"Evan was in a backpack until he was 1," Mueller recalled of his younger child. "For the last couple of years, he always has walked on hikes."

When Cassidy was 4 years old, she and her dad participated in several hikes with the original Marin County chapter founded by Jonathan Marks.

Mueller created the East Bay chapter so that he and other local fathers could enjoy the outdoors — and share experiences and information — without

traveling across the Bay.

The national organization now has 19 chapters in 15 states. The East Bay chapter, which covers Alameda and Contra Costa counties, has more than 100 members, Mueller said.

The East Bay chapter's first hike of 2008 is scheduled for Jan. 19 in Lafayette.

Each monthly excursion begins at

9 a.m., and moms get the morning off.

Monthly activities are scheduled — including a combined June 21-22 hike and camp-out for family and friends — at Lake Chabot in Castro Valley. The June hike will be the East Bay chapter's 50th since its founding.

"I think you actively need to schedule (time together) and make it a habit," Mueller explained. "I'm cognizant of the need to get away from sitting in front of the television."

Ten of 13 scheduled events this year are for dads and kids only.

Grateful Dads has no membership fees. Attendance at hiking and other events isn't mandatory. Each activity usually attracts 15 to 20 fathers with their children.

Advertisement

TARGET COUPON EXPIRES 3/8/08

FREE Twenty 4x6" basic prints

Offer available at Target One-hour Photo Labs. Go to Target.com/photo for the location nearest you. One-hour service limited to machine capacity. Limit one item or offer per coupon. Offer not available for prints made on the Kodak Picture Kiosk. Void if copied, transferred, purchased, sold or prohibited by law. No cash value. Maximum retail value \$4.40 for combined free offer.



9856-0113-2647-5849-0376-5806-89

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™