

# THE NATURE CURE-ALL:

impact



## Get Outside on the Green Bay Trail

Being in nature is now shown to be so healing that some doctors are *prescribing* time in the great outdoors. Want to reduce your risk for asthma, diabetes, or heart disease? Get outside! Drink in fresh air and soak in sunshine. Swing your arms and pedal your legs, and shake off the cobwebs that grow during screen time. Being out in the natural world is so darn good for you.

One of the best places to be in nature locally is our own Green Bay Trail. That stretch of public land between South and Scott Avenues has been restored over the past decade by volunteers of the non-profit Friends of the Green Bay Trail (FGBT). They've cleared out the dark overgrown invasive buckthorn, and now native flowers, trees, and bushes are attracting monarchs, goldfinches, and native bees, along with other pollinators.

Betsy Leibson, founder of the FGBT, recently talked about how you can experience the healing magic of the trail. Several days a week, Leibson sees adults and kids out there on bikes, walking dogs, pushing baby strollers, running side-by-side, and flying by on scooters.

"The Green Bay Trail is literally right outside your back door, and it's free to everyone," Leibson says. "If you only have an hour between picking up one child and dropping off another, or you're between two appointments, you can escape there easily."

In addition to maintaining a beautiful natural space, FGBT brings nature programs to community locations such as Watts Ice Center, the Glencoe Library, or the Takiff Center.

"We've had programs with live owls and even a falcon," Leibson says. "Mark Spreyer came from the Stillman Nature Cen-

ter. He brought three different owls and paraded them around the room. Anyone could take pictures with the birds. When was the last time you did that?"

Local bird watching in Glencoe parks is another face-to-face opportunity with nature that FGBT is giving Glencoe residents.

"We hosted a bird-watching walk with Tim Joyce of Wild Birds Unlimited. The facts that he told us made everything come alive," Leibson says. "You can't help but be interested in all that Tim tells you about birds in our neighborhood because it's so fascinating."

Experiencing nature on the Green Bay Trail is open to anyone. "There are no skill requirements to visit the trail," Leibson says. "Everyone is equally invited 365 days a year."