

## Green Bay Trail Day ‘a true collaboration’



*Visitors check out the butterfly hatchery on the trail.*

Alexa Burnell, Freelance Reporter  
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The Friends of the Green Bay Trail welcomed more than 400 visitors to Trail Day Saturday, Aug. 3, teaching guests how the picturesque path is a superhighway of information aimed at nurturing the earth along with the body, mind and soul.

Beginning at Scott Avenue and extending north to Shelton Park in Glencoe, Friends volunteers lined the path, giving all who stopped by a hands-on tutorial. New this year was the sponsorship and inclusion of 13 local businesses, who provided treats, prizes and more all in support of the 9.7 mile stretch of land through Glencoe, Winnetka, Highland Park, Kenilworth and Wilmette.

“While we’ve hosted the event before, this year, thanks to Friends volunteer, Eilsha Gray, we have a number of businesses out here today, showing everyone the multiple ways that the Green Bay Trail can be utilized,” said Betsy Leibson, the organization’s

founder. "Today is a true collaboration; guests will learn about important environmental issues, all the while, supporting local business owners, too."

As visitors stopped at various booths, they were reminded by shops like Phototronics that the trail provides the perfect setting for photography. Green Bay Cycle answered all biking related questions, and Illinois Bone and Joint gave helpful tips to runners about how to treat or prevent injuries.

Kevin Collins, of Wilmette's Chalet, was also present, showcasing the variety of native plants available at the store, while giving everyone a brief education on the benefits of going native.

"Native plants support a healthy environment for various insects and birds. They are the start of the food chain. They are beautiful and low-maintenance, providing a wealth of benefits," Collins said. "Native plants know how to grow in their own land, so they can survive on what the surrounding environment gives them. Their roots run deep, providing nourishment to the soil and balancing moisture."

"Native plants attract pollinators which directly impacts human food supply," Leibson added. "One in every three bites of food begins from the help of a pollinator."

Over at the hatchery stop, Sharon Zulkie expounded on the important lesson others were teaching about pollinators and native plants. She taught visitors about the various types of milkweed that support the Monarch butterfly. Echinacea, coneflowers and swamp milkweed, for example, all provide nutrients needed for butterfly survival. For those interested she suggested reading the book, "Butterflies through Binoculars" by Jefferey Glasberg.

Along with learning about how to help the environment, Liz Visteen, of the Glencoe Park District, setup shop at Shelton Park, showing folks how the trail can provide not only a cardio workout, but resistance training, too. Within the park is a fitness area, allowing folks to flex their muscles through pushups, abdominal exercises and more, all at their local park.

"It's always our goal to encourage people to get outdoors as much as possible and enjoy all of Glencoe's local parks," Visteen said. "The trail is a great way for residents to bike, walk, play and meet all their fitness needs in a natural setting."

Volunteer Craig Witty, a longtime resident of Winnetka, explained how nearly 30 years ago, the trail as once considered to become a parking lot for local businesses. But thanks to the dedication of many, the trail was transformed into an "environmental asset" for folks all over the North Shore to enjoy.

Similarly, Friends volunteer Cameron Avery echoed the sentiments of other Friend's members, adding that the trail provides just what is needed for over-stressed lives.

"Simply put," Avery said, "the Green Bay Trail feeds the soul."



The Friends are always looking for more volunteers to join and appreciate any and all financial donations to keep the trail the natural wonder it is known to be. For more info, visit [www.gbtrail.org](http://www.gbtrail.org).

