

Amazing Race raises \$5,000 for trails

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MUSKOKA LAKES - It was another Amazing Race for the Muskoka Trails Council.

After bursting onto the summer scene last year with 49 teams, the race was held again this past Saturday.

This year, 17 teams of two ran or walked through a series of 37 activities across Baysville and Muskoka Lakes, said regional trails coordinator Sandra Beausoleil. A lower number of teams was expected this year due to the growing number of summer sporting events like triathlons and other races, said Beausoleil.

The Muskoka Amazing Race is patterned after the successful reality TV series. The day-long event requires teams of two to hunt down checkpoints through cryptic clues or by completing physical and mental challenges along the way.

Teams ran approximately eight to 12 kilometres in addition to participating in other physical challenges such as swimming or paddling.

Approximately \$40,000 was raised through fundraising pledges, sponsors, prizes and in-kind donations, said Beausoleil. After expenses, \$5,000 will go to the Muskoka Trails Council, she said.

There were more than 50 sponsors for the event.

The goal of the Amazing Race is to raise awareness about local trails and what the Muskoka Trails Council is about. Teams and volunteers also learned about the township's parks, beaches and businesses, said Beausoleil.

"It was a tourism boost for Baysville, for Port Carling, and Milford Bay," said Beausoleil.

The race got underway at 10 a.m. at The Landscapes resort in Baysville. The last team was at the finish line at Hanna Park in Port Carling at 6 p.m.

This year, teams could enter competitive or recreational categories. There were three extra checkpoints for the competitive category, making the teams run an extra four kilometres.

"They were hurting," said Beausoleil.

In Baysville there were various challenges, one featuring a local trail in Van Setters Park.

Teams also packed beer at the community's new brewery.

The second leg of the race was in Milford Bay, which was hosting its annual Fun Day at the same time. Amazing Race teams competed in similar children's games such as a three-legged races and egg races. The public and children enjoyed watching the teams compete, said Beausoleil.



Amazing Finish. Lindsay Stock and Chelsey Burford cross the finish line of the Amazing Race on Saturday in Port Carling. *Photo by Matt Driscoll*

"I think everybody had a good time...they (the kids) were probably wondering why they couldn't do the three legged race," she said.

Following that competition, there was paintball on the Huckleberry Rock Trail. Teams then proceeded to Port Carling where there were several more activities.

In the final activity, one team member swam from Archdekin Park to Hanna Park in Port Carling.

The Recycled Sisters team, made up of Heather Hussey and Kim Luxeon, were the top fundraising team with \$700 in pledges. They were given 15 minutes off their race time, but finished last.

"Unfortunately, it didn't do them much good...but the fact is they finished the race," said Beausoleil. All teams managed to finish the race in reasonably good health, she said.

All teams took home prizes, but the first place competitive team won two kayaks and a three night stay at The Landscapes. The first place recreational team won two kayaks and a one night stay at The Rosseau, A J.W. Marriott Resort and Spa at Red Leaves.

In the competitive category, first place went to the Beauty and the Beast team, Zach Lillie and Nick Cross; second place went to Team Superheroes in Training, Peter and Dion Yungblut; third place went to last year's winners, the Sophomore Jinx team of Kailey and Matt Richter.

In the recreational category, Touch of Grey with Jack Tyson and Paul Bak took first; The Honeymooners, Sandy Sellons and Rick Kupferschmidt were second; and third place went to The Gryphons, David Daleman and Candace Haywood.

Beausoleil hopes the event features a Georgian Bay component next year.

"We definitely want to have them as a focal point next year," she said.

Last year the race was held in Huntsville, Bracebridge and Gravenhurst.

For information about the Muskoka Trails Council and the Amazing Race, contact Sandra Beausoleil at info@muskokatrailscouncil.com or call 641-0562. Or visit the website at <http://www.muskokatrailscouncil.com/>