

Youngsters reel in a taste of cottage living

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The pool at Scadding Court Community Centre is home to hundreds of special guests as the centre is currently running its Gone Fishin' program.

Gone Fishin' offers a brief taste of cottage living in the city with 1,500 rainbow trout, which youngsters and community residents are invited to come catch with a rod and reel.

Many local schools and organizations serving disabled children have already enjoyed the indoor fishing hole, reeling in fish, which they can either re-release into the pool or bring home to cook and eat.

"It's a one-of-a-kind program in the City of Toronto," said Scadding Court executive director Kevin Lee.

This marks the eighth year Scadding Court has hosted Gone Fishin', which teaches participants not only about fishing, but also about ecology and where their food comes from.

Lee said it made sense to hold the week-long event at Scadding because the pool would have been closed for maintenance anyway. He said he would like to see more events like this across the city.

"The city should consider using some of its outdoor pools in the spring and fall before they open so they can get better use out of their capital assets," he said. "Something like this could be done anywhere in the city, in any jurisdiction."

For many participants, Gone Fishin' provides a unique opportunity to try their hand at catching fish. Without the program, many would never have a chance to do so otherwise.

"It teaches them about food access, but it's also a recreational access program," Lee said. "For a lot of inner city kids and disabled young people, this is their one chance to fish."

Students from nearby Ryerson Community School were the first to try out the fish pond this year. The program provided them with a unique thrill in the middle of the city.

"I never tried it before, but it was fun," said Ryerson Community School Grade 5 student Jeffrey Lin after landing a rainbow trout. "The best part was getting a fish, but it was hard catching one."

Gone Fishin' will run through Saturday, June 19 at Scadding Court Community Centre, 707 Dundas St. W. The general public can drop by to fish from 3:30 to 7 p.m. on weeknights and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday.

Participants must pay \$3 for one fish and \$3.50 per additional fish, with fishing rods provided on-site.



Gone Fishin' Project. Emet Marrale, left, and Grace Chant watch as Walter Gomes guts a fish caught Monday in the Scadding Court Community Centre swimming pool. The pool was stocked with fish for the annual Gone Fishin' Project. (June 14, 2010) Photo/JOHN PACKMAN

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