



**take a hike**  
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## **G2-1 KEY MESSAGES & NOTES FOR MEDIA**

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### **THE TAKE A HIKE PROGRAM**

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#### **What is Take a Hike?**

Take a Hike is a full-time alternative education program that engages at-risk youth through a unique combination of adventure-based learning, academics, therapy, and community involvement.

#### **Who created Take a Hike?**

The Take a Hike program was founded in 2000 by a teacher and a youth & family worker who understood the value of outdoor experiential learning for youth struggling in a traditional classroom setting. The Take a Hike Foundation was created shortly afterwards to fund the adventure-based learning and therapy components of the program.

#### **What is adventure-based learning?**

Take a Hike's adventure-based learning uses physical activities to help at-risk youth develop valuable life skills, such as goal setting, trust, communication, teamwork and problem solving. Take a Hike provides a safe and supportive environment for building self-esteem and self-motivation, instrumental to the successful turnaround of our students' lives.

#### **What adventure activities does Take a Hike offer its youth?**

Take a Hike's adventure-based learning program includes canoeing, kayaking, rock climbing, swimming, cross-country skiing, cycling, hiking, snow caving, snowshoeing and more. Students may also complete wilderness first aid, lifesaving, or courses in avalanche safety, and participate in multi-day expeditions, which focus on survival and other skills they've developed throughout the school year.

#### **What type of expeditions do the youth undertake?**

Take a Hike youth participate in multi-day expeditions throughout the year, in all seasons. These trips, anywhere from three to ten days may include a camping trip where they build their own shelters, a snowshoe trip where they build and sleep in snow-caves, and hiking, canoeing or kayaking excursions.

#### **What makes Take a Hike different from other adventure-based education programs?**

The Take a Hike program provides a unique combination of weekly adventure-based lessons, individual support for academics, one-on-one counselling from clinical therapists, and giving back to the community through volunteering.

#### **What does a typical week look like at Take a Hike?**

In a typical five-day school week, students spend three and a half days on academics in a self-paced learning environment. They spend one day on an outdoor activity, such as hiking, cycling,



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kayaking, canoeing or snowshoeing. They also spend half a day participating in a community-based volunteering activity.

## **THE TAKE A HIKE YOUTH AT RISK FOUNDATION AND FUNDRAISING**

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### **What is Take a Hike's vision?**

Take a Hike aims to be a North American leader in helping communities empower at-risk youth to achieve their full potential, realize their dreams and give back to their communities.

### **How does Take a Hike work with School Districts?**

Take a Hike's public-private partnership model allows the School District to deliver the program and the Foundation to raise the funds necessary for the elements that are over and above the District's budget for alternate education programming.

### **How is Take a Hike funded?**

The Take a Hike Youth at Risk Foundation is a not-for-profit organization, which receives contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. Take a Hike also holds annual fundraising events and is open to supporting others who want to fundraise for Take a Hike. Since 2000, the Foundation has raised over \$3 million in support of the program.

### **How are the funds used?**

Take a Hike funds all adventure-based learning activities, including weekly trips, multi-day expeditions and outdoor equipment. In the West Kootenays, funds are raised for the salaries of a full-time clinical therapist and a part-time adventure-based learning specialist. In Vancouver, donations fund the salaries of two full-time clinical therapists, a meal program, and scholarships for post-secondary education.

### **How can people donate to Take a Hike?**

Cheques made out to the Take a Hike Youth Foundation can be mailed to the Foundation office. Monthly or one-time donations can be made on our website at [www.takeahikefoundation.org/donate](http://www.takeahikefoundation.org/donate). Take a Hike also accepts funds designated through the United Way and as a gift of shares. Take a Hike is always open to discussing donor's specific wishes such as offering a new scholarship or supporting a specific component of the program.

## **TAKE A HIKE STUDENTS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

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### **What kinds of students are enrolled in Take a Hike?**

The Take a Hike youth program is offered to youth in grades 10-12 who have few remaining options. Every student has their own story, but in general, youth at Take a Hike have been unsuccessful in mainstream school due to personal issues such as drug and alcohol addiction, physical and mental abuse, low self-esteem, depression, unstable homes, poverty and/or trauma.



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### **How do students get into Take a Hike?**

Most students are referred to the Take a Hike program by school counsellors, principals, and social workers for an opportunity to make lasting change in their lives. Each program has a slightly different intake process.

### **How many youth participate in the program each year?**

Take a Hike currently operates two classrooms of 20-22 youth at John Oliver Secondary School in Vancouver: a Grade 10/11 class and a Grade 11/12 class. At Take a Hike West Kootenay, 15-20 students in Grades 10-12 participate in the program at the Kootenay Columbia Learning Centre (KCLC).

### **What happens to the youth when they leave Take a Hike?**

Take a Hike is a program for Grade 10-12 students. Some students spend one year with Take a Hike and transition back into the mainstream school system, while others continue with Take a Hike through to graduation. Take a Hike offers scholarships annually in the name of specific donors to Take a Hike graduates and alumni to support post-secondary education. A mentorship program was recently established to connect Grade 12 students with a role model to assist in the transition from high school.

### **What staff support Take a Hike?**

Take a Hike students are supported by an educated and experienced team of teachers, youth and family workers or child and youth care workers, clinical therapists and adventure-based learning specialists.

### **Is there an opportunity to volunteer for Take a Hike?**

All volunteer inquiries should be emailed to [volunteer@takeahikefoundation.org](mailto:volunteer@takeahikefoundation.org). There are opportunities for community members to volunteer in the Foundation office, on a committee, in the classrooms or the outdoors. All volunteer applicants can expect a thorough application process including the request for a criminal record check. Not all applicants will be selected for volunteer roles with Take a Hike.

## **TAKE A HIKE EXPANSION**

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### **When did the Take a Hike West Kootenay program start?**

Take a Hike West Kootenay started in September 2013. Additional information can be found at [www.takeahikefoundation.org/westkootenay](http://www.takeahikefoundation.org/westkootenay).

### **Will the Take a Hike program be offered in more communities in the future?**

Take a Hike is expanding their reach to support more at-risk youth in multiple communities throughout BC and eventually across Canada and the United States. Additional information can be found at [www.takeahikefoundation.org/expansion](http://www.takeahikefoundation.org/expansion).



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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### **Where can I find our more information about Take a Hike?**

You can find more information about Take a Hike at [www.takeahikefoundation.org](http://www.takeahikefoundation.org). You can also find Take a Hike on Twitter @TakeaHikeFdn, Facebook and YouTube.

### **Who can I contact to learn more about the Take a Hike Youth at Risk Foundation, Take a Hike Vancouver or Take a Hike West Kootenay?**

Matthew Coyne, CEO

Take a Hike Youth at Risk Foundation

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t: 604.630.5818 c: 604.809.6971

Matthew can answer your questions, provide program photos and connect you to specific members of the Foundation, Take a Hike Vancouver and Take a Hike West Kootenay.