



Walk Across Texas – Newsletter 3

The last week and part of this week we have had some really nice weather to walk. I love walking in weather where the sun shines and the evenings aren't too hot. I don't like walking when it is stormy. Thank goodness for other options for walking such as at the gym or even a grocery store. One walker suggested that when you go to a grocery store, that you walk several rounds around the grocery store, then shop at the end. I hope that you are having a good time participating in Walk Across Texas.

We have walked a total of 4,350.84 miles. We are really doing great. Our leading team of walkers this week is Goshen Creek Ghostbusters with 624.50 miles. There are several teams that aren't too far behind. Keep it up.

Next week come out for the group walks. The times have changed a little. We will meet Monday, May 2, 2016 at 5:00 p.m. at Springtown Park west entrance off the square. Tuesday, May 3, 2016 we will be at Love Street Park at 5:15 p.m. and Wednesday, May 4, 2016 at the Faith Presbyterian Church located at 301 Bailey Ranch Rd. in Aledo at 5:15 p.m.

Engaging Children in Walking and Hiking

A wonderful adventure for a child can begin with simply going on a walk or a hike. Children will not only have fun enjoying the outdoors but experience a wealth of exciting learning opportunities. Listed below are some great ideas that can be used alone or as a springboard to another idea that will engage children of all ages in walking or hiking.

1. **Go on a critter hunt:** When you are on a walk or hike, stop a few times to turn over logs, rocks or pieces of bark to see what's hiding underneath. You might discover beetles, spiders, worms and roly pollies. A magnifying glass is a great tool to bring along to get a closer look.
2. **Animal walks:** This is a fun game of taking turns to decide how to walk until reaching the next landmark (e.g. fence, tree, house). For example: walk like a duck by squatting legs and flapping arms or hop like a rabbit with arms tucked into chest and hopping forward. Sound effects can be added but be careful of other walkers and wildlife which may like a slightly more peaceful environment
3. **Can you find it?** A player chooses an object they see on the walk and says, "First one to find a ____". The player fills the blank with the object (e.g. green

leaf). Other players try to find the object first and the winner then chooses the next object to find.

4. **Follow me:** The goal of this game is to follow a partner as close as possible, without running into them, or anyone else. Take turns who gets to be the leader.
5. **Go on a scavenger hunt:** Before beginning a walk, brainstorm a list of objects you think you might find. For example: a feather, animal tracks, a flower, an acorn, a large rock, moss, a pine cone, etc. Add to the list during the walk.
6. **Once upon a time:** The aim of the game is to create a story. Everybody in turn makes up a sentence of the story from the surroundings. The funnier the story, the better.
7. **Poetry to go:** Take turns creating a poem-on-the-go. Start the children off with a simple line like "I really love to take a walk" and have them add their own rhymes in turn ("except when I forget my sock" ... "and then I step upon a rock" ... etc.).
8. **Play shadow tag:** Decide who will be "it". Shadow tag is similar to traditional tag but instead of tagging the person, step on their shadow. They become "it" and the game starts again. This game is most fun to play in the morning or evening when the shadows are longest.
9. **Make a grass whistle:** Select a nice long blade of green grass. Stretch it between the sides of both your thumbs so that it's pulled tight. Blow gently through the space left in the center, making a high-pitched whistle. Whistles can also be made from folding a big tree leaves (cottonwood leaves work best).
10. **String of words:** The first player names an item seen while walking or hiking, for example "Rabbit." The next player has to name another item which starts with the last letter of last item named, for example, "Tree". This activity works great to learn and name countries, states, cities, etc.

Here are some other websites to visit for other walking and hiking activities:

1. Go Outside and Get Growing! North Carolina Extension: <http://bit.ly/1c2H3X6>
2. Tag...Just Tag (You're It), James Madison University, Department of Kinesiology: <http://bit.ly/1Fm7oKo>
3. Games to Play While Walking, Walking Families UK: <http://bit.ly/1Hq0wwa>
4. 10 Games to Play on a Country Walk, Parent Dish: <http://aol.it/1c2H6SX>