

MAKING FAMILY LIFE MORE FUN

Outdoor Activities Promote Health, Fitness, Family



Adventures in the great outdoors can be easy, inexpensive and accessed close to home.

(NAPSA)—A proven path to a healthier mind and body is getting outdoors often and mixing it up with friends and family.

That's the advice of 73-year-old Jim Whittaker, an active mountaineer, sailor, scuba diver and author who, nearly 40 years ago, became the first American to summit Mount Everest.

Whittaker says you don't have to be an extreme adventurer to enjoy the outdoors and nature. From children to grandparents, there's an outdoor activity for everyone, from low-impact to strenuous. "You don't have to scale Mt. Everest to enjoy the outdoors," suggests Whittaker, an advisor to outdoor interest site, *Altrec.com*. "Seek your own 'Everest' and take the time to enjoy the journey."

More than 60 million people apparently agree—that's the number of Americans who recently went tent and RV camping (*American Sports Data, Inc.*). According to the same study, another 40 million went for a hike.

Heading into the outdoors can also be easy, inexpensive and accessed close to home. Most recreational resources are near urban and suburban areas—many accessible to those with physical limitations. Taking a short hike just outside of town can even give you a sense of experiencing wilderness.

Tack on an overnight stay and

remind yourself there are actually stars above. Toss in the fixings for s'mores, add a harmonica for campfire songs and create family memories that last a lifetime. Natural settings are ideal for health and fitness, as well as for those long overdue, unhurried conversations with friends and family. If you're just getting started, remember: keep it easy, fun and close to home.

Getting Started

Ironically, investing time indoors can save you time, money and energy in planning outdoor adventures. Use the Web to visit sites with resources to meet your interest, skill and physical levels:

- www.altrec.com/features—for hundreds of articles and photo galleries on where and how to go, how to gear up, and how to access tips about outdoor skills and health and fitness.

- www.backpacker.com—for *Backpacker Magazine's* tips on technique, destinations and outfitting for hiking, backpacking and camping.

- www.ontheamericantrail.com—to explore some of the nation's 16 White House-dedicated Millennium Trails.

- www.reserveamerica.com—to access more than 140,000 U.S. campsites and make reservations.

- www.wildernet.com—to find more than 35,000 area and outdoor activity descriptions throughout the U.S.