

FRIENDS OF IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, INC
and
IROQUOIS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE
TAKE A KID ALONG PROJECT (TAKA)

Take a hand, Open a mind, Touch a heart.

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The initial meeting will be held at the Refuge Headquarters on Thursday, May 13th at 10AM. Please attend or send in your application before this date as we are limited to four children. If more than four applications are received the lottery system will be used to select the participants.

For questions contact the Refuge at 585-948-5445 Ext. 200 or Carl Zenger, 716-434-7568, e-mail cpzenger@gmail.com

The child will receive the following:

- Children's Bluebird Activity Book
- Birds of New York Field Guide
- Spiral notebook to keep daily journal and trail notes
- Pen to record notes
- One strap back pack to carry trail supplies
- New York State Wildlife: An Introduction to Familiar Species
- Water bottle
- Small binoculars

The child will be able to keep these items after they have attended a minimum of five sessions with their leader.

The child will be requested to write a short journal each time they go out on the trail. At the end of the Bluebird season the child will be required to submit an account of their TAKA project activities. This could be in the form of a story (written by the child or with the parents help), photographs, or pictures the child has created. These items will be displayed at the Refuge and may be included in the Friends Newsletter the Overlook.

It is hoped that both the child and the leader will want to continue monitoring our trails together in future years. We will request that a registration form be filled out for each child each year that the child participates in the project. The registration forms are available from the Refuge Office.

Application for TAKA Project

Child's name _____ Age _____ (Must be 6 to 16 years old)
Parent or guardian _____
Address _____ City _____ Zip _____
Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

The child or the child's parent or guardian will need to fill out a volunteer form for the child and themselves if they plan to go with the child.

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It hasn't been long ago that the Eastern Bluebird population was in trouble. Because of the efforts of Refuge volunteers, The NYS Bluebird Society and others, bluebirds are once again thriving in Western New York. However, we need to remain vigilant for without continued help from people the Bluebird population may not survive.

As members of a conservation group (FINWR. Inc.), we need to pass on to the children in our lives and community a respect for nature. By participating in the TAKA project you will be passing on a legacy of love for Bluebirds and nature in general.

Leaders in the TAKA project must be members of the Friends of Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge, Inc. and are required to take the following pledge:

I pledge to take a child along with me to monitor our Bluebird trails as often as possible during the nesting season. I promise to explain to this child the importance and value of monitoring a Bluebird trail. I will plant a seed of love for Bluebirds and nature in this child's mind and nurture that seed in the hopes that this child will someday follow in my footsteps.

Approved leaders are Bob Schmidt and Carl Zenger

Suggestions for a fun and successful teaching opportunity:

As you are Taking A Kid Along tell them the story of bluebirds. Explain to your child how important humans are in the lives of bluebirds. Answer their questions but don't try to teach them everything about bluebirds in one outing. This is one reason it is a good idea to be able to go out with the child several times during the nesting season.

If your bluebird trail has many nesting boxes, consider taking your child on just part of your trail. If the child is very young, it might be a good idea to let the child take "ownership" of just a few boxes that have been successful for you in the past. They could keep records on just those boxes so that the whole process would not become overwhelming to them.

Take your child with you when you have plenty of time. Children can move at a slower pace than adults. They like to stop and look at every little thing they find. Encourage this natural wonder in your child by talking to them about the treasures they find.

When you take your child out, don't limit yourself to just bluebirds. Point out to the child different things in nature that are all around them. Most children love bugs, birds, frogs, fish, etc. They are curious about the buds, flowers, leaves, berries, and nuts that are on plants, trees, and shrubs. Take the opportunity to help them develop a love for all things in nature.

The most important thing is to have fun with your child. Having a good experience will encourage your child to want to go again. For the sake of our bluebirds and other wildlife we need our children to carry on for us when we are no longer able to do it.