



# Nature School program launches in new Jungle Farm Forest Walk

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April 23, 2025: Katie Prokopchuk has the perfect academic and cultural background to prepare the curriculum for The Jungle Farm's newest summer youth educational program. She recently created an eight-week outdoor adventure pilot program called Nature School, that will be offered for youth ages 11-16 beginning on July 10.

"I was so excited when Leona called to see if I could work on the details of the program, because I've worked with her in the past and her enthusiasm is so rewarding to be around," said Katie, who is a member of Beaver First Nation in Treaty 8 territory. "I've always been drawn to spend time outdoors in nature, as I think lots of kids are, so the curriculum for this course came naturally. I really have a love of teaching children, and I think it's so important for kids to know the history of the land, what the land gives to us and how to be respectfully taking from the land."

"Lots of kids don't get that opportunity. Not every kid is a farm kid who gets to live this firsthand. But they can come to The Jungle Farm and have this rich and fun experience, which is awesome. I basically incorporated everything I want to teach to my daughter. I had to reign in some of my enthusiasm to make this fit into eight two-hour classes!"

Katie, who is of Cree, Dene and Métis heritage, worked as a summer student at The Jungle Farm for three years, beginning in 2016 while attending Olds College. She grew up on a grain farm that also had a massive garden and was exposed to different herbal remedies provided by the land. She took Olds College's four-year applied degree in Horticulture, and spent her practicum working in the college's renowned Botanic Gardens. Her interest in culinary and medicinal herbs led to the creation of a line of blended teas and cooking herbs, and an online shop Mountain View Herb Company. Her professional goals, however, took a backseat when her daughter was born three years ago! Katie, her husband and daughter, live on a farm near Camrose. She wants to continue growing her brand in the future, along with establishing plug production for healing herbs. For now, a small sampling of her products are available at Uptown Olds.

"The summers when I worked with Leona opened my eyes to the garden market side of things and I've loved it from the beginning. Leona supported me as I explored my interests, and both her and Blaine have been instrumental in all the things I've learned. They are supportive and knowledgeable, and I feel like they have so much enthusiasm it's as though they're just getting started on all they want to do! If I hadn't worked for them, I don't think I would have blossomed."

Katie created a program that covers everything from learning how animals and insects live to creating natural dye for colouring clothes. Participants will learn about wild foods and wild crafting, medicinal flowers, composting, importance of supporting insects and modern preservation methods. There will be plenty of time for topic-specific activities, such as making jam from Jungle Farm berries, as well as plenty of time for reflection.

"We want to include as much information as we can, but we also want to honour Indigenous culture and spend time experiencing how nature can quietly share many teachings, too," said Leona, who has worked to create an entire project around celebrating local and Indigenous heritage. Details on the Heritage Project, including the development of The Forest Walk, can be found [at this link](#).

"Having Katie involved in writing the Nature School curriculum has been perfect. Sharing these teachings with our older youth, who have grown beyond our ABC pre-school program and our 1,000 Outside program, was the next step in this important Heritage Project. Katie brought her strong background and her personal exuberance to every lesson! We are so excited to launch this new Nature School program."

Registration is open now for the first-ever Nature School program, which runs every Thursday at 10 – noon from July 10 – August 28. Click [here for information and registration](#).

**The Jungle Farm, 28120 Twp Rd 362, Red Deer County**  
[www.thejunglefarm.com](http://www.thejunglefarm.com)