

# Suburban Girl Takes on the Escarpment Forest

By Katelynn  
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**G**rowing up in the GTA I'd say I got an unconventional first full-time job last summer as an editorial assistant for this magazine which deals with the Niagara Escarpment. At first I was hoping to have a job at my local grocery store, close to home and an easy commute. When that fell through, little did I know that my next offer would be the exact opposite of what I saw myself doing. I did not grow up near a forest, but near townhomes, traffic and malls. Yet I was always up to go for a hike or rock climbing. I am not a conventional teen. I always had a heavy schedule as I was dedicated to being a national gymnast. At 11 years old I began training 24 hours a week and was soon competing internationally. Training and having a full-time job are similar in that both require dedication, self discipline and both would make me question why I was even there. I thought the magazine would make a nice fit for my interests and fill my time.

Working on a magazine, you'd think, "Okay, writing, pictures, smack it together and bam! Magazine." I had no idea what went on behind the scenes. My expectations going in were that I'd be doing some office work and light outdoor care of the property, but in fact it entailed much more. I ended up enjoying a lot of what I did, from updating the database of ads, composing articles, day trips to deliver magazines and meeting with the printer. However, the forestry work and battling mosquitoes were aspects I did not like so

much. I didn't know what lay ahead when I first started.

## Enjoyable Work

I came to enjoy different areas of the job and others that I didn't like so much. While I found that I hate sitting at a desk for eight hours a day, I loved seeing the real-life outcome of the desk work. I discovered interesting and unique retailers and others who were unique in unusual ways. One establishment serves toilet-themed desserts like "poopable tea" and "doo-doo waffles" while you eat sitting on a toilet! I could see the outcome of scouting and researching companies, to actually going to the storefront and handing them a magazine, explaining who we are and what we do. The conversations from passionate business owners, proud of the companies they've built, exchanging a word with us, opened my eyes to hidden gems in different cities along the Escarpment.

The fulfillment came from seeing the process from desk to storefront, delivering magazines to companies, to refining the final draft and last, meeting with the printer. It was worth seeing all the work that goes into only one issue, come full circle to a finished product. I can't imagine doing the same process four times a year every year.

Another aspect I revelled in was having free rein to write and proof two articles, one a column and one a full-length feature. Rather than write a meaningless high school essay, I got to gather my research first hand by hiking a section of the Bruce Trail, taking pictures and putting it all together. I'm looking



forward to seeing the final product in a future issue. The outcome is definitely more rewarding and more full scale. The difference to me is that at school I hand in my paper on a desk in a pile with countless others, compared to having a page of my very own published in a magazine. For people to read and hear what I have to say is way better than having my voice get lost in pages and pages of endless words on a desk somewhere where a teacher may or may not care to listen.

## Unpleasant Work

What I didn't enjoy was mostly the outdoor work especially when the weather was hot and buggy. Pulling pesky Buckthorn and maintaining the trails in the heat, with only mosquitoes to keep me company, was not my ideal work day. The

forestry work may come as a shock but is in tune with the whole theme of the magazine. As the property we work from is a part of the Escarpment area, it is our responsibility to care for and maintain it. And as a worker I shoulder some of the responsibility. The property acts as the thought before the magazine, the idea behind which this magazine was created. Both property and magazine go hand in hand, under the same umbrella to bring the Escarpment home to you as readers.

*Katelynn Baksa-Wiltshire is a first-year student at University of Ottawa who retired last year from an intense amateur career as an acrobatic gymnast, becoming a member of Team Canada for the 2019 Pan Am Championships in Mexico and winning a bronze medal.*