

MARYLAND Family

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Finally a chance to mush in Baltimore

11/30/07

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Even if there's no snow this winter, you can still take the kids dog sledding.

Dog sledding in Baltimore?

Believe it or not, now it's possible thanks to the newly formed Maryland Sled Dog Adventures, which offers a variety of programs for children and adults to experience "dryland" dog sledding where dogs run with wheeled carts called "rigs" or "gigs."

"I knew there was a need and an interest in dog sledding here," explained Catherine Benson, who started the business with her husband, Eric, and their four dogs (who all have a history in mushing). "I would get calls even before we formed the business or people would bump into me on the trail who didn't know you could do this here."

The company offers rides for birthday parties, patch programs for Scouts as well as group presentations for youth groups, home schoolers and 4-H Clubs. There are also classroom presentations and demonstrations at local area schools for classes studying the Iditarod or reading Jack London books.



Maryland Sled Dog Adventures offers children and adults the opportunity to experience 'dryland' dog sledding right here in Baltimore.



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The programs teach kids not only about dog sledding but also caring for the dogs, training and harnessing them. The kids also get the chance to drive a small one- or two-dog team or ride with an experienced adult.



There are specialized programs for Scouts, birthday parties and students.

Costs start at \$25 and go up to several hundred dollars for longer rides. Most of the programs are run on the North Central Rail Trail in northern Baltimore County from September to May, weather permitting.

If you are interested in watching a sled-dog race, The Fair Hill Dryland Challenge is scheduled for Dec. 8 and 9 in Fair Hill. The Bensons will be at the race giving rides and demonstrations, Catherine said. 443-562-5736 or www.marlanddogsledding.com

Adults can sign on for longer dog-sled tours or learn how to "canicross" (run with a harnessed dog pulling you) or "bikejor" (harness a team of dogs to your bike). They also have programs called "Run What You Brung" for people who want to train their dogs in sledding for exercise purposes.

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