

# Adventures in education



**LIFE LESSONS** — Casey Ross, left, Amber Allicock-Hawtin, centre, and Adrienne Gore of YTV's *Road Scholars*. Education comes in many forms as these fellow trekkers can attest to while on the Chang Mai trail in Thailand, inset.

These are the kinds of high school field trips that usually only happen in daydreams or Disney movies.

But, for the eight kids lucky enough to be chosen for *Road Scholars* — beginning its second season tonight at 8 p.m. on YTV — school trips can involve surfing in Mexico or performing at the theatre in France.

"We branched the show out a little bit from the first season," executive producer Jane

Hawtin says. "In the first season, all the trips that the kids went on, they were intended to receive an academic credit."

This year, Hawtin says, the definition of education was broadened to include non-academic pursuits. For example, in the premiere episode, it's a snowboarding tour of the Alps.

"That trip was the least cultural of all the trips," Hawtin says. "For the other kids (in the tour group), it was about learning snowboarding and skiing. But Tyler, who we happened to send, happened to be our *It's Extreme Guy*, who was already an expert. The learning experience for him ended up being the videography."

Each of the eight episodes has a teenage host, including Hawtin's 19-year-old daughter, Amber, who is enrolled in some kind of a study program — often a very expensive program he or she would otherwise not be able to afford. Then they're given video cameras and turnbuckle to record their experiences.

Assignments range from a marine-biology course on Vancouver Island to studying world history in Spain. Amber's trip was to Thailand.

"There is still a learning component in every one of the trips, but not necessarily that they're getting a high school credit when they come back," Hawtin says. "That let us go a little younger, and it let us expand to different kinds of trips."

It also gave the producers leeway to pick the kids' experiences for their visual value.

Last year, Hawtin says, some of the classroom-oriented courses made for lively study but deadly television.

