

From boys to young men, Eagle Scouts offers challenges and experiences – even with nuclear medicine

It's healthy when such a group updates its programs to include the latest in life-saving technology.

Southeast Missourian
March 13, 2006

The Eagle Scouts' challenging community-service projects may change from year to year, but what remains constant is that through leadership and teamwork, these young men learn to overcome obstacles to successfully accomplish their goals.

Those boys who attain Scouting's highest rank have come through a program that builds character, citizenship and personal fitness. Only about 4 percent of all Boy Scouts reach the rank of Eagle Scout. Since 1911, more than 1 million Scouts have achieved Eagle Scout rank.

Troop 311 outdoor activities chairman Joe Garvey said that if it were easy, everyone would do it. "Keeping focused for four to five years takes self-discipline. Keeping a sense of humor through it all helps too." Self-discipline includes making plans to meet the requirements, supplying documentation, submitting it for approval and seeing those plans through.

Boy Scouts can start working on Eagle Scout requirements at age 11. As they succeed, tasks and requirements build to reinforce responsibility. According to the latest group of Troop 311 Eagle Scouts, the last three ranks, Star, Life and Eagle, are hard to get. Between each rank a six-month commitment in a position of responsibility within the troop is required.

Troop 311 Eagle Scouts

The Eagle Scout community-service project encourages team leadership and serves as a monument to the commitment and hard work of the Eagle Scout, his fellow Scouts, leaders and family members. The projects have included creating gathering spots at parochial schools and churches; installing benches and landscaping at parks, flag pole installation and painting maps on grade-school play areas.

Eagle Scout Andrew Hinkle landscaped three outdoor areas at the Jackson Middle School. It took more than 220 hours to complete. He widened a sidewalk, elevated the area, planted trees and added a retaining wall.

The road to achieving Eagle rank can be a hard one, but the journey brings its own rewards.

A trip to New Mexico to climb Mount Baldy tested the willpower of Scouts in Troop 311. Although visibility was limited on the climb up, when they reached the top they could see part of New Mexico, Utah and Colorado. Eagle Scout J.T. Dale had this to say: "It was hard, but completing it made me realize I could do almost anything."

The experience of snow skiing in Wisconsin, was new to Jake Sievers. "I wouldn't have done it except for Scouts," he said. Sievers plans to stay in Scouting to give back what he gained from it.

All part of the experience

Eagle Scouts and twin brothers Cody and Jake Mayfield remembered having to leave summer camp on account of chickenpox.

A breakdown on the way to a campout at Kentucky Lake held up the troop while they waited for a tire to be repaired.

Eagle Scout Andrew Graham broke his arm twice in a month when he was snowboarding and skating with Scouts. And most important, they all recalled wanting to give up the dream of becoming an Eagle Scout.

Dale said, "My mom said, 'no Eagle Scout, no license.'"

The Scouts who stuck it out are glad they did.

Some of the future plans of Troop 311's Eagles **include studying nuclear medicine**; becoming a computer system administrator, lawyer, mechanical engineer, meteorologist and podiatrist.

It's not surprising then that a former president, secretary of defense, CIA director, Olympian, astronaut, several former senators and the transplant surgeon of the first artificial heart are among some of the individuals who attained the Eagle Scout rank.