



LDS RELATIONSHIPS NEWSLETTER

Boy Scouts of America

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President Thomas S. Monson shares counsel at historic Las Vegas event

Exerpts and photos from article "Scouting offers young men 'welcome rain'" by Jason Swensen from LDS Church News, week ending October 21, 2006

The greatest gift a man can give a boy is a willingness to share part of his life with him. Such is the spirit of Scouting. That was one of many rich messages President Thomas S. Monson, first counselor in the First Presidency, shared October 14, 2006 with more than 5,000 Las Vegas-area Scouts, friends and their leaders.

President Monson is at home in front of Boy Scouts. He is one of Scouting's most supportive and tenured friends. For almost four decades he has served on the organization's National Executive Board and is a recipient of the Silver Buffalo and the Bronze Wolf, Scouting's highest national and international award, respectively.

"How many boys have had their lives blessed - even saved - by Scouting?" President Monson asked. "It's impossible to guess just how many."

By enlisting the values taught by the Scout Oath and Law, Scouting has helped boys and men become "monuments to patience, to understanding, to effort, to kindness, to service, and to love," President Monson said.

The Church leader added that when those same values become a blueprint that overlays and undergirds the members of the American family, "hope will conquer despair, and faith will triumph over doubt. Such values, when learned and lived in our families, will be as welcome rain to a parched soil."

President Monson said boys of Scout age have seen greater strides into the mysteries of science than have others throughout all of history.

"This is not the age of small goals, mediocre accomplishment or shallow thought," he said. "We must think big. Don't restrict your thinking to today's problems. Plan for tomorrow's opportunities. Get clearly in mind your purpose in life. You are only limited by your thoughts and personal determination to convert these thoughts to realities.

"Scouting will help."

President Monson then spoke of several events that demonstrate the lifesaving lessons of Scouting.

"Is Scouting relevant?" President Monson asked. "Ask a mother, ask a father, ask a family who know a Scouting skill saved a son."

President Monson also spoke of the service opportunities Scouting provides young men and their leaders. Several years ago, he presented the Eagle Badge to a Scout named Samuel Barnes. Life has not been easy for Samuel. He has battled Crohn's Disease and spent much of his life in hospitals. "But that boy did not let that get him down."

Eager to serve others - particularly those who also suffered with illness - Samuel decided to build a train track and village for his doctor's office at Primary Children's Medical Center. The job would satisfy Samuel's required Eagle project and bring pleasure and diversion to the many sick children waiting in the office lobby to see their doctors. They could watch the merry train wind through the decorative village and forget, for a moment, about their troubles. The train village project became a community effort, and countless hours were spent fundraising and building the festive village and track.



Above: President Monson extends his hand to Las Vegas Area Council executive Phil Bevins, one of the Church leaders many friends in Scouting. Bottom of page: commemorative coin and patch from the Scout meeting.

President Monson spoke of others who had faced physical challenges, yet chose to move forward with a Scout-like spirit, blessing the lives of others.

"Don't let handicaps hold you back," he said. "Let them help you press forward."

President Monson has witnessed many ways lives have been blessed by boys and men who have been committed to Scouting and its virtues.

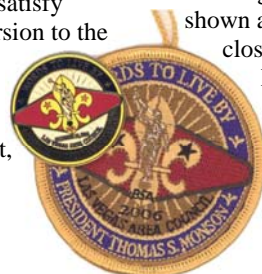
"As for me, I'm going to continue to build the lives of boys that they may become men of stature -- and that they too may walk the Scouting trail," he said. "It's a good trail. It's uphill, but you never can regret following the Scout Oath and the Scout Law."

Those who lead Scouts will have opportunities to change lives. "Take a boy by the hand and show him the way," President Monson counseled. "Keep him on that straight and narrow pathway. I testify to you that your reward will be eternal in nature, for there was one named Jesus who took men by the hand and showed them their opportunities so that they might become more like Him."

In closing, President Monson invoked an apostolic blessing upon his audience "that you may have joy in your lives. That you may have peace within your homes. That you may remember that great Scouter, for He, too, obeyed the Scout law, His Heavenly Father's law."

Las Vegas Nevada Highland Hills Stake President Todd Moody spoke of Scouting's rich Las Vegas history and the pivotal role wise Scouting and Aaronic priesthood leaders played in his own life. As a boy, President Moody faced many family challenges at home. Thanks to a few dedicated mentors, he was shown a better life path. There are young men "who need heroes close by today, much as I did then," he said.

Phil Bevins, a Scout executive for the Las Vegas Area Council, reminded those at the event that Scouting isn't defined by merit badges and building fires without matches. "What Scouting is about is preparing young people to have the confidence, to have the moral compass, to do what's right," Mr. Bevins said.



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The Importance of Wood Badge Training



Comments by
Charles W. Dahlquist, II
Young Men General
President

It is vital that we, as Priesthood and Aaronic Priesthood/Young Men leaders take training seriously. We are part of this great partnership with Boy Scouts of America for very specific reasons: If we fully

participate, our young men will be blessed and better prepared for missions and for the blessings of the temple. Part of the participation is training – especially Wood Badge training.

If we are really intent in touching the lives of our young men, in building, as Elder Ballard has challenged, “the greatest generation of missionaries this world has ever seen,” then we will do whatever is necessary to help us to accomplish that – including getting trained. For most of us, Wood Badge is life-changing because it has to do more with vision and understanding this great tool for strengthening young men of the Aaronic Priesthood than anything else.

Why do we think that we do not need to be trained in that program which the Church has espoused for nearly 100 years as the “activity arm of the Aaronic Priesthood?” The reason why Scouting training is vital is that, by and large, we do a very poor job in training the leaders we call to Aaronic Priesthood/Young Men callings – and yet expect them to work miracles in the lives of their young men. One of the great blessings of our partnership with Scouting is the marvelous training that is provided.

The call is for every leader, including stake presidency members working with youth, high councilors, stake Young Men presidents, Bishoprics, ward Young Men leaders and Scouting leaders, to be trained. By my count that is, at the least, 7-10 per ward and 50-75 per stake. I know companies that don’t even allow a new employee to step into the plant or office until he has received initial training. They do that because they know that, without training, most individuals will be ineffective in the job they were hired to do. And yet, we call leaders to strengthen, motivate and prepare young men for missionary service and life in general – without one iota of training.

In contrast to that, I know one bishop who has 17 Wood Badge trained leaders in his ward. Imagine the strength of their youth programs. I was in another ward the other day – a new ward with little Scout tradition. I was there because my grandson, now 11 years old, was getting his Second Class and First Class badges. As I spoke with a member of the bishopric after the Court of Honor, he

indicated that their entire Scouting team -- Bishopric, Young Men presidency and Scouting leaders -- were heading to Wood Badge within the year. I can only imagine what a great blessing that will be to the boys those leaders serve. INSTEAD OF WORRYING ABOUT ONE PERSON FROM A WARD AND TWO PERSONS FROM A STAKE ATTENDING WOOD BADGE -- WHY DON'T WE JUST COMMIT TO GET EVERY LEADER TRAINED, INCLUDING FAST START, YOUTH PROTECTION, BASIC TRAINING AND WOOD BADGE IMMEDIATELY AFTER THEY ARE CALLED. Once a priesthood leader makes that type of an investment in the training of a leader, he will be less likely to release him after 6 months of faithful service -- but will leave him in long enough to have a positive effect in the life of a boy.

One final thought. With some exceptions, generally the best Duty to God progress is made in those units that also have vibrant Scouting programs. The lessons we have learned for effective achievement programs in Scouting are the same that will make Duty to God effective. I seldom see a ward or stake that has a vibrant, exciting, building Duty to God program that does not also have a great Scouting program.

Not long ago, I spoke with a ward Young Men leader who was excited about the Duty to God program they had for their priests. “One week we have one mission president come and talk to the boys about this subject, and the next week, we have a returned missionary come and talk about that subject, . . . etc.” I asked, “Are they all lecture/discussions in the Church building?” “Yes,” was the answer. “And do they constitute your full activity program for priests, except for joint activities?” Again the answer was “Yes.” Then I asked, “And are your priests excited about what you are doing?” After some reflection, this Young Men president said, “You know, they really aren’t. We are having a very hard time getting them to attend.” Had this leader been to Wood Badge, he would have learned early that when you take the “fun” and youth involvement out of youth programs – most of the youth take themselves out as well.

Scouting teaches us how to build character and spiritual depth in our young men, and how to help them become involved in service and making a difference in the lives of others – while they are having fun.

I, personally, am grateful for the effect of my own personal attendance at Wood Badge at Camp Maple Dell nearly 25 years ago. I may not remember how to make a woggle, but I can still recall my feelings experienced during the training – it was life changing for me.

To learn more about Wood Badge training and how you can attend, contact your local Scout Office.





Primary General Presidency

Margaret S. Lifferth, First Counselor, Cheryl C. Lant, President and Vicki F. Matsumori, Second Counselor

Primary & Cub Scouting

Cub Scouting is the weekday activity for Primary boys ages 8-10. We are happy to be partnered with Cub Scouting as the boys develop character, learn leadership, grow physically, and give service. In the Church, boys also use the Cub Scouting program to develop testimony and prepare to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. This happens as they incorporate the Faith in God Program with the scouting activities. Earning the religious square knot patch also helps boys prepare to receive the Aaronic Priesthood. Look for the square knot icon by seven of the Faith in God activities. The religious square knot patch earned when they are Cub Scouts may be worn on their Boy Scout shirt.



Philmont

2007 LDS Leadership Conference



In early December a letter of invitation was sent from the First Presidency to all General Authorities, Area Seventies, Stake and District Presidents in the United States inviting them and select members of their Stakes to the Priesthood Leadership Conference on Scouting of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at Philmont Scout Ranch.

The Priesthood Leadership Conference convenes under the direction of the Young Men General Presidency and the General Scouting Committee of the Church. The faculty, selected from the Young Men General Board and Primary General Presidency and Board, provides training in the program and administration of Scouting as a supporting activity of the Aaronic Priesthood and Primary.



There are 2 sessions available: **June 30-July 6, 2007** and **July 7-13, 2007**. Anyone is welcome to register for one of these sessions at Philmont; however, it depends on the applicant's current Church leadership position whether he is accepted immediately or placed on a waiting list. Six positions are accepted immediately – the three members of the stake presidency, the Stake High Councilor over Young Men/Scouting and/or Primary, and the Stake Young Men President. Family members are welcome and encouraged to be a part of this experience with programming developed especially for them including tours, crafts, hikes, or just relaxing. Full-day activities with leaders are provided for each age-group.



These sessions are filling up quickly and are currently about 75% full, but room is still available. Applications and additional information can be found on our website: <http://www.ldsbsa.org> under the Philmont page. You may also contact the BSA-LDS Relations office at (801)530-0004.



