



LDS RELATIONSHIPS NEWSLETTER

Boy Scouts of America

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Message from the Young Men General Presidency

Involvement in the Boy Scouts has countless blessings to young men in and out of the Church. One of the duties of young men in the Aaronic Priesthood is to “Invite all to come unto Christ” D&C 20:59.

It may seem a bit difficult for a young deacon or teacher to testify of the gospel’s truthfulness to their friends. But there are other ways to make this priesthood invitation. Invite them to a Scout activity. This has to be the easiest invitation there is in considering the restored gospel. Scouting is fun, and its foundation is based on the core values recited often by Boy Scouts in the Scout Law and the Scout Oath. These values strengthen young men of all faiths and persuasions and we should always approach Scouting with a recruitment attitude.

A Boy Scout and his adult leaders have a responsibility to invite other boys to participate in the troop. Recruitment is an important part of Scout membership. And while the invitation to Christ is of utmost importance to those of us as Priesthood holders, the invitation to boys and young men to participate in Scouting and become exposed to the wonderful value system which Boy Scouts embraces is of great value to all as well.

Whether a young man joins the Church through his exposure through the Scouting experience or not, bringing in boys and young men to the experience of Scouting is a deeply important experience in light of the constant bombardment of deviant influences that these boys face daily.

Mason Shipley from Pocatello, Idaho shares his experience.

This is my story of how I joined the LDS Church. I joined Scouts when I was seven. I was not Mormon at



the time and my family was inactive in the Church. I dropped out of Scouts due to football getting in the way of my schedule. I later rejoined at the age of 10 in Webelos. One of the requirements to get my Arrow of Light was to go to church on Sundays. Later that day I asked my friend, Will Kress, if he would take me, and he said, “Yes.” After going to church twice and getting my Arrow of Light, Will asked me if I still wanted to go to church, and I said, “Yes.” I kept going to church and, when Will moved to Soda Springs, another friend named Rhett Fackerell said he would take me to church. I agreed. The missionaries started to come over to my house. Their names were Elder Hobbs and Elder Grunggier and I greeted them open heartedly. My parents let them teach me the ways of the gospel. In April the missionaries asked me my thoughts on baptism. I prayed about it and felt it was a good idea. On April 21, 2010, I was baptized by Elder Hobbs. A week later I was given the Holy Ghost by Elder Grunggier. On July 20, I turned 12 and was ready to be ordained to deacon and it was done by Bishop Fackerell. I have been feeling great in the Church. That is my story of how I joined the LDS Church.

Scouting can be an effective way to introduce young men to the Restored Gospel, but it is important to view Scouting as a way to help guide young men who may not choose to embrace our Gospel message, but who can still be fortified by the fun and wholesome experiences that Scouting provides. These values and experiences help shape strong citizens and successful adults and they shield boys from many of the destructive influences that surround them.

Submitted by Ron L. Andersen, Young Men General Board Member

The Priesthood Leadership Conference on Scouting at Philmont is All About Change



To be honest, the Priesthood Leadership Conference on Scouting at Philmont was not something I had ever really planned on doing. While I am embarrassed to admit it, an outdoor camping experience at my age scores modestly below a tooth extraction on the “enjoy-ability” index. In fact, during dinner the

first evening, there were a number of wide-eyed fellow participants who were speaking in reverent tones about fulfilling a life’s dream of finally arriving at the premiere BSA venue in America. Still not quite capturing the spirit of Philmont, I turned to my wife, Michele, and said, “They have the same excitement about Philmont as I did about walking down Magnolia Lane at the Augusta National Golf Club during The Master’s last year.” She smiled, but I knew she had serious doubts about whether or not I was fully committed to making this a positive leadership experience.

I am not entirely sure at what moment it happened, but it did happen. The spirit of Philmont became overwhelming and the experience of spending time, side by side, shoulder to shoulder, with wonderful men and women consecrated to helping bring young men to Christ was transforming. I felt the spirit during the morning flag ceremony while wearing the Scout uniform as feelings of gratitude washed over me for the privilege of living in this great country; I felt it during every training session listening to inspired leaders teach with great insight and clarity about how Scouting can assist parents and priesthood leaders help young men fulfill their Duty to God; I felt it during meals in quiet, intimate conversations with new friends; and I felt it kneeling in prayer on a wood floor, in a tent, while the wind whirled and screamed around our encampment. The training at Philmont has the power to change lives of leaders and young men in our stake. The spirit at Philmont changed me.

What I learned from this extraordinary Priesthood Leadership Conference is that



if you are willing to give your heart to the experience, even if it is reluctantly at first, there is something at Philmont that will change you. Part of it is in the sheer enormity of its 132,000 acres, part of it is in sharing the experience with your spouse, part of it is in the tears, part of it is

in the laughter, and part of it is recognizing that God’s hand is in this work and that, if we get out of the way, He will perform miracles in our lives – especially in a mountain setting where the splendor of His creations evidence His work in rich abundance. And, while I may always feel more comfortable at Augusta National than a walled tent on a desert plateau, I will never be the same. I will forever cherish this shared experience with remarkable people, wonderfully inspired leaders, gifted teachers and a humble tent that surprisingly started to feel like home.



Article submitted by M. Tim Welch, stake president, American Fork Utah Hillcrest Stake

Message from Primary General Presidency



When you combine priesthood, Primary, families, tents, flag ceremonies, mountain trek, the children’s parade, and the Spirit – what do you have? Philmont!

Once again this year Philmont was an unforgettable

experience. We gathered together to focus on our children and our youth – the Rising Generation. The principles of Scouting help prepare a boy for priesthood responsibilities. We thank priesthood leaders for their vision and desire to bless each individual boy on their path of priesthood duty. The influence of great leaders in a boy’s life cannot be underestimated. In your presence we were reminded of the power of priesthood leadership in shaping a boy’s life – future missionaries, husbands, and fathers.

We watched as cars arrived at Philmont with participants uncertain about what to expect. Those same cars left a week later to destinations all over the United States with hearts full of memories of the feelings of Philmont.

'Duty to God' Program Anchors Instruction at Philmont Conference

The annual LDS leadership conference at eastern New Mexico's Philmont Scout Ranch is, at once, an intensive training seminar and a spiritual gathering of like-minded youth leaders and their families.

Many come to the Scout training perhaps second-guessing their decision to burn a week of vacation time to sleep in tents and spend hours each day sitting in classroom instruction. Many more leave this storied ranch with spirits soaring after having known "a Zion's experience."

This year's Philmont LDS Conference "helped me see a vision of how Scouting and Duty To God should be able to function in Aaronic Priesthood Quorums. ... I am feeling specific revelation to implement. You've taught, I've learned and now I act and share," wrote Rob Finch, a stake Young Men president from Yakima, Washington.

Each year local priesthood leaders from across the country gather at Philmont conferences to be instructed on how to best implement Scouting in their respective wards and stakes even as they help young men become "priesthood men" and learn their duty to God. The conferences are presided over by Brother David L. Beck, Young Men general president, with the assistance of his counselors, Brother Larry M. Gibson and Brother Adrian Ochoa. The Primary general presidency, including Sister Rosemary M. Wixom and her second counselor, Sister Cheryl A. Esplin, also participated in this year's sessions, held June 25-July 1 and July 2-8.



While the leadership conferences provide essential Scouting training, the Philmont experience is also defined by families and new friends. While most of the participants had never met prior to arriving at the ranch, a sense of unity quickly developed. One evening Brother Gibson enjoyed a dish of ice cream with two couples, one from Texas and the other from Wyoming. The couples had just met, he said, but they conversed and laughed like old friends.

"At Philmont you make friends that you feel you have known forever," said Brother Ochoa.

Children's parades, a camp-wide family home evening, and even a viewing of the classic Scout flick "Follow Me Boys" ensured that families spent precious time with one another.

Sundays at Philmont were again sacred days for conference participants. The Sabbath is spent away from the classroom and recreational events as families come together for worship, quiet reflection, scripture study and gospel instruction. The encampment functions as a traditional ward, with participants fulfilling "callings" to teach Primary, priesthood quorum and Sunday School lessons. Others are enlisted to bless and pass the sacrament during sacrament meeting.

The best part of the Philmont "ward"? "We have 100 percent attendance at every meeting," said Brother Gibson, smiling.

The Young Men and Primary general leaders also participated in outdoor sacrament meetings with older youth participants in the mountains high above the ranch. The youth were spending a week in the back country enjoying a mountain trek with Philmont staffers.

"The most important feedback we received was that people felt the Spirit," said Brother Beck.

*Photos by M. Winston Egan and Jason Swensen.
Article by Jason Swensen, Church News, week of July 16, 2011*



"Philmont was spectacular," reported Brother Beck. "It was so positive."

Classroom sessions offered counsel on how wards and stakes can best utilize Scouting to help young men fulfill their priesthood duties. Operating effective Varsity Scouts and Venturer programs was included in the

instruction, along with direction for local Cub Scout leaders. Much of this year's instruction was anchored to the revised Duty to God program.

"There was a great desire among the leaders to become more familiar with Duty to God," said Brother Beck. "The leaders were very appreciative of the instruction they received."

Participants in the 2011 Philmont LDS leadership conference take notes during instructional session. The training offers local priesthood leaders instruction on how to best utilize Scouting to help young men develop as priesthood holders.

The annual priesthood leadership session, held high in the mountains above the ranch, was again a conference highlight. Referencing Doctrine and Covenants Section 84, Brother Beck reminded the participants of the importance of Aaronic Priesthood leaders developing relationships of trust with the young men they serve.



A World of Scouting: Close to 40,000 Gather for Jamboree

Event in Sweden helps Scouts learn from other cultures



Growing up in Utah County, Griffin Bodine is accustomed to being surrounded on all sides by fellow members of the Church. So for this teacher from Lindon, Utah, participating in the World Scout Jamboree with youth from around the world was an eye-opening experience.

"This jamboree has given me an understanding of some of the world's people by meeting Scouts from other countries and learning about their lives," wrote Griffin in an email to the Church News.

Hundreds of LDS Scouts gathered with Scouts from around the world for the 22nd World Scout Jamboree July 27 through August 8 in Rinkaby, Sweden. Many participated in choir performances during musical activities at the event.

The event also afforded young members like Griffin an opportunity to share their testimonies and beliefs with others. "Several of us LDS Scouts took friends from Finland to the [devotional] where David L. Beck [Young Men general president] spoke, and they told us afterward of feeling a special spirit there.

"This jamboree experience is very useful in my preparation to be a missionary. It has helped a ton."

Almost 40,000 Scouts from all corners of the globe joined Griffin and hundreds of other LDS Scouts for the 22nd World Scout Jamboree in Rinkaby, Sweden. The event ended Aug. 8, but many LDS Scouters returned to their homes, wards and branches with lifelong memories and new friendships.

Thousands of Scouters also learned more about the Church and its beliefs at an LDS-sponsored tent located prominently in the jamboree's Faith and Beliefs Zone. The LDS tent offered visitors of all ages an opportunity to learn about their own family histories and functioned as a reminder of the Church's Christ-centered principles and doctrines. Brother Larry Gibson, first counselor in the Young Men general presidency, presided at the tent that was staffed by almost two dozen members.

Scouters and their leaders visit the LDS-sponsored tent located in the jamboree's Faith and Beliefs Zone. Visitors to the tent were able to learn more about the Church and their own family history.

The World Scout Jamboree "has been an outstanding event for the Church and the many youth in attendance," reported Brother Gibson from Sweden.

He added that the tent was a popular visitation spot for countless participants. "[The exhibit] is focused on three things: family heritage, the blessings of family today and preparation for our youth to have their own families in the future. There is great interest."

Brother Gibson said the Church's participation at the international gathering has allowed him and other members to enjoy the fellowship of folks from many different faiths working in the Faith and Beliefs Zone.

"It seemed so natural to meet together as representative heads of each of the faith groups and develop solutions for any problems, issues and needs for each day," he wrote. "We have become a very close group of eternal friends."

Brother Gibson also spoke of the dedication of the members who staffed the exhibit and the Aaronic Priesthood holders who helped enrich the World Scout Jamboree.

"They are very choice and constantly look for opportunities to serve and bless the lives of others. I have heard on numerous occasions that there is something different about 'those LDS boys!'"

Brother Charles Dahlquist, a former Young Men general president who served as co-director of the Faith and Beliefs Zone, noted that the LDS Scouts' global experience at the World Jamboree will serve them well in future missionary service.

"Scouting helps today's youth to not only understand the importance of acquiring timeless values such as honesty, kindness, integrity, loyalty and service — it teaches them how to acquire those characteristics while they are having fun in serving others.

"This jamboree experience has given our young men of the Aaronic Priesthood the opportunity to understand common belief and values among peoples of the world which will be priceless in their preparation for full time missionary service."



Photos by Kelly Foss. Article by Jason Swensen, Church News, week of August 13, 2011

LDS Exhibit Shares Beliefs at 22nd World Scout Jamboree in Sweden



Ask any member of the LDS Exhibit staff, any of the contingent leaders or any of the youth who attended the 22nd World Scout Jamboree how their trip was, and no doubt you'll hear a resounding, "GREAT!" Over 40,000 Scouts and leaders from 143 countries came together in Rinkaby, Sweden, for "Simply Scouting" during a 2-week-long camping extravaganza from July 27 to August 8, 2011. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was well represented by the nearly 400 youth and adults who attended. A major exhibit also shared the beliefs and standards of the Church with thousands of visitors.

The LDS tent and exhibit attracted large crowds. Brother Larry M. Gibson, 1st Counselor in the Young Men General Presidency, presided over the exhibit. He and his wife, Shirley, were in attendance for the entire Jamboree. They, along with LDS/BSA Relationships Director David C. Pack and 24 other LDS Scout leaders staffed the area and helped the youth reflect on their Past, Present and Future families. Many staff members spoke different languages, which was an asset in communicating with youth from around the world.

Since the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has the world's largest collection of genealogical research, this was a natural lead-in to helping youth reflect on their past families. Twelve computers and having three professional genealogists on staff from FamilySearch allowed Scouts to prepare and print out a colorful copy of their own family pedigree. Webcams were set up so youth could prepare a "video postcard" and send greetings home to their families anywhere in the world. Scouts were also encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and values and what things they will want to teach their own children—the future families of the world. The family tree of Scouting's founder, Robert Baden-Powell, was displayed and was a popular spot for photos. Visitors were also invited to put a pin with their name on it on a giant world map in the tent entrance, an activity that proved enjoyable as well as educational in emphasizing the representation of youth from all parts of the globe.

Beautiful displays in the exhibit led to easy discussion with visitors about the beliefs and teachings of the Church. Central to the exhibit was the symbol of our faith, the Christus statue, to highlight our belief in Jesus Christ and that members are Christians. A display featuring values led to a discussion of the "For Strength of Youth" pamphlet, which was available in many different languages. Members and non-members alike took the opportunity to earn the unique George Albert Smith award, a colorful ceramic and metal dog tag. The award requirements included becoming familiar with some LDS beliefs and reading and discussing them with a staff member. Those working toward the award also learned the basics of family history research and completed some reading, including the Articles of Faith and a story about former Church President and great Scouter, George Albert Smith.

Each visitor to the LDS tent went away with a prized 2011 World Scout Jamboree patch featuring the name of the Church and an image of the Salt Lake

Temple. Before even entering the tent, they were attracted by the making of laser-engraved walking sticks by Gail Roper and the carving and painting of bolo ties by Gary and Laura Dollar. Some Scouts were fortunate enough to receive a bolo tie in return for commitments to future good works, living the Scout Oath and Law, and making personal goals.



Highlights for participants and staff were the special meetings attended by Europe Area President Erich W. Kopischke, Area Seventy R. Ingvar Olsson and Young Men General President David L.

Beck and their wives. Pouring rain did not dampen the spirits of the leaders nor the hundreds of youth and adults who gathered to hear the three brethren speak at a Fireside the evening of July 30 and preside and speak at Sacrament Meeting the next day. Both meetings featured music by a 160-voice Venturing Choir from the Ogden, Salt Lake and Orem areas who attended the Jamboree. The Choir also sang at the Jamboree Inter-faith Program which focused on learning about other religions.

The LDS tent and exhibit was located near the center of the expansive Jamboree site in the large "Faith and Beliefs" Zone, home to tents and exhibits from eleven major world religions. In addition to the LDS faith, there were tents representing Baha'i, Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Orthodox, Protestant, Sikh and Won Buddhist religions. Co-directed by LDS Scouter (and former Young Men General President) Charles W. Dahlquist, a major goal of the Faith and Beliefs Zone was to increase understanding and build respect for those whose beliefs are different from our own. The overall theme of the Zone was "Reflections—Be a Lighthouse," with a goal of helping each Scout reflect on his personal ideology and letting personal example radiate goodness to others. Jamborees, both National and World, are an exceptional way to bring together Scouts from different backgrounds, cultures and beliefs and to foster brotherhood, cooperation and better understanding. Scouts attending this Jamboree in Sweden went back to their homes knowing that they are part of a worldwide association of Scouts, not just the small group from

their own locale. It is a knowledge they will treasure for a lifetime.

Article submitted by Wayne and Roma Bishop, members of the Jamboree International Service Team and chairmen of the LDS Faith and Beliefs Exhibit



Colossal Service Project Prepares Site for 2012 LDS Encampment

"Many hands make light work." If there was ever a motto for the Camp Sunrise cleanup, that would be it.

On Saturday, May 15, 2011 over 2,000 LDS Scouts, leaders, and family members traveled to Camp Sunrise, an undeveloped 66-acre site which is part of the Camp Cowles Scout Reservation



near Newport, Washington. The task at hand was simple, yet daunting - prepare the land for a massive LDS Encampment next year.

A total of 17 stakes were represented at the service project. Volunteers arrived from a wide range of locales, including Kalispel, Othello, Lewiston, Sandpoint and Spokane. Sections were roped off for each stake, and the workers dug in, cleaning the area where they will be camping next year. Small trees and bushes were pulled, sticks and brush were piled high, and rotting stumps were cut and ripped out.

Jim Fox, a member of the Spokane Valley Stake and general chairman of the 2012 LDS Encampment, said he was impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication shown by those who donated their Saturday to the cause.

"Everything is under the direction of the stake presidents and bishops, and the priesthood order is working," Fox said.

Lon Gibby, vice president of marketing for the Boy Scouts of America, Inland Northwest Council, said one of the challenges was keeping the army of volunteers occupied as they swiftly concluded each task.

"It's amazing how much work they accomplished in such a short amount of time," said Gibby.

Along with preparing their respective campsites, the scouts were able to clear the areas for flag ceremonies, general meetings and a merit badge midway.

Elder Brad K. Risenmay of the Area Seventy was present to witness this remarkable effort. He brought greetings from the Church general authorities, including President Thomas S. Monson.

"President Monson is not only a great Scouter, but he is a proponent of these large activities because of the wonderful effect that it has on the young men and the boys," Elder Risenmay said.

In 2012, from July 30 to Aug. 4, more than 4,000 LDS scouts will flock to Camp Sunrise for the "Catch the Vision" Aaronic Priesthood Encampment. It will offer a complete national jamboree list of activities

including obstacle courses, swimming, rappelling, a triathlon, entertainment, campwide firesides and more.

The last encampment of this scale was in 1984 at Farragut State Park near Coeur d'Alene. Elder

Risenmay, who was a bishop in Othello at the time, attended with his ward youth.

"It was such a marvelous event and one that was a blessing to our Aaronic Priesthood as well as to the leaders for many years to come," he said.

The service the boys put in at Camp Sunrise will be well-rewarded when they return next year for the encampment. Their tents and sleeping bags will be thankful for every rock they moved, and every stump they pulled from the campsite.

"These young men feel good about what they're doing," said Fox. "They can work and they can turn back and look and say, 'I've accomplished something!'"

Article by Corey Jenkins, Correspondent, Latter-day Sentinel

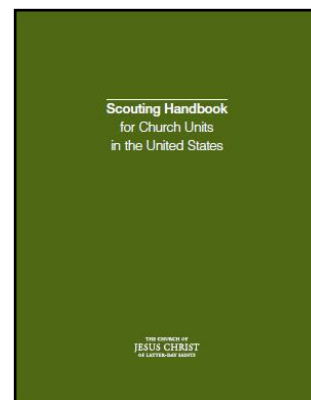
Website Gets a Facelift

If you have visited the LDS-BSA Relationships website recently you've likely noticed that it has received a brand new look!

Along with this new look you'll find easier access to updated information, increased resources, and our online Scout shop. Visit www.ldsbsa.org and take a look for yourself!

New Scouting Handbook Available Online Only

The *Scouting Handbook for Church Units in the United States* is newly updated, replacing the 1997 *Scouting Handbook*, and available online only from the Church website. You can download a copy from www.ldsbsa.org under Resources.



Spokane Couple Honored for 100 Years of Scouting Service



Don and Pat Hunt were honored Saturday, August 6, 2011 for completing a combined total of 100 years of service to the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Jon Eastman, district director at Inland Northwest Council, Spokane, Washington, presented the Hunts with a certificate commemorating their service.

Eastman recognized the impact the Hunts have had on so many individuals. He compared the Hunt's service to throwing a pebble in a still pond and the ripples that occur from that event. "The boys they have served have been taught skills to be better leaders, husbands and to be productive in society with the skills they have learned for life, stated Eastman. "This is a huge accomplishment and impact in our society. I commend both of you for the service you have given to society, to those youth and to the Inland Northwest."

The Hunts received a Certificate of Appreciation for Continuing Outstanding Service to the Youth of our Nation from the Inland Northwest in the Thunderbird District.

Don and his wife, Pat, began serving as Boy Scout leaders in 1960, shortly after their wedding. Don and Pat helped form Cub Scout Pack 462 south of the Spokane Valley. They also trained Boy Scout leaders for the new troop. This endeavor required the Hunts to organize 17 active committee members. The Hunts are currently Webelos den leaders – a position they have held continuously since 2000.

"Over the years we've had so many neat kids", said Don. "Most of the boys were farm kids from the area. This was important because there wasn't a lot of activities for the boys to do back then."

The largest troop they ever had at one time was Troop 462, with 52 boys. "It was neat to have 52 boys," recalls Pat. "Back then the boys weren't separated by ages like it is now. All the ages were together. Don organized a senior patrol and had the older boys mentor and work with the younger boys. This was good leadership training."

Over the years, the Hunts have personally been Scout leaders to approximately 300 boys. "We have really enjoyed working directly with the boys at the troop and den level, said Don." They always tell their Scouts to call them when they earn their Eagle, the highest award earned in The Boy Scouts of America, because "we'll be there," said Pat. "We have been to hundreds of Eagle courts of honor. In fact we were at an Eagle ceremony during the eruption of Mount St. Helens."

In addition to their service as Scout leaders, Don Hunt and his boys are buglers. Don started bugling for their Scout camps. The Hunt's sons – Jim, John, and TJ – are buglers also. They earned the Bugling merit badge which required them to learn 21 songs.

"I got a 78 record from the Scout office," recalls Pat. "We slowed it down so the boys could practice."

"You have no idea how many lives you have impacted, said Jackie Andersen, a mother of three boys that were taught by the Hunts. "When I think back to Cub Scouts and my boys, I have fond memories of your influence and example to them."

In the past, Don Hunt has been a unit committee member for several packs and troops in the Valley District which became the Grizzly District (1960-1994) and in the Thunderbird District (1994-2011). Don has been a Cubmaster (Troop 462), assistant Scoutmaster (Troops 462, 419, 412), Scoutmaster (Troops 462, 419, 412), Explorer Advisor (Fire Service Post 488), and merit badge counselor for the Grizzly District (Citizenship in the Community, Safety, First Aid, Firemanship, Camping, and Cooking); Grizzly District unit commissioner, assistant district commissioner, commissioner, and activities chairman; Thunderbird District program and activities chairman, Pack 119 Webelos den leader, and Pack 99 Webelos den leader. Don is well known for developing the Inland Empire Council multi-media presentations for Sustaining Membership Enrollment, Order of the Arrow summer camp presentations, and council annual awards dinner opening ceremonies during the 1970's and 1980's. Some of these multimedia presentations have been used and reused all over the country.

In addition to years of volunteering in the BSA, Don has worked as a school bus driver, farmer, National Guardsman for 10 years, fire chief for Spokane County Fire District 8 for 22 years, training coordinator for Spokane County Fire District 4, instructor for Washington State Fire Service Training, chairman on committees for Washington State Fire Chiefs, and, most recently, to maintain computer systems for three area fire departments.

Pat Hunt has been a den leader for Wolf, Bear, and Webelos Scouts. She has served in both church and community packs and troops and has served on every kind and level of committees you can imagine. For many years she planned the Grizzly merit badge clinics, which are now called merit badge colleges, and Cub Scout day camps at Camp Cowles and other locations. She has been a merit badge counselor for Citizenship in the Community, Nation, and World. Pat made, by hand, the first ever Grizzly District flag and all of the Scout and leader neckerchiefs for their community troop. In addition to her service in the BSA, Pat also volunteered for the Girl Scouts, and worked within the community for 30 years as a fire dispatcher for the West Plains and South Spokane Counties. Don and Pat have been married for 54 years and have four children, 12 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren.

Article by Alicia Mattoon, Multi-State Public Affairs Director of Media Relations, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Boy Scout Earns 132 Merit Badges Despite Disability

A Boy Scout from South Jordan, Utah has achieved a goal only a few can claim, and he didn't let his disability deter him.



Nate Christensen, 17, isn't your ordinary Boy Scout. That's evident when you look at his uniform. His sash is full of merit badges.

"This one is actually called the athletics badge," Nate said. "That took me a while to earn."

Nate also showed us his

cycling badge. He got it after learning how to ride a bike when he was 12. He has so many other badges that his mother had to extend his sash to fit them all. When asked to pick his favorite, Nate doesn't hesitate.



"I think the most epic badge I ever had was the grape soda cap from the Up House," Nate said, referring to the Disney movie, "Up."

The teen proudly wears his sash and for good reason.

"A long time ago, I just saw this article in the newspaper about a Scout that earned all the badges and I thought that would be a great goal for my life," he said.

And he achieved it. It's no small goal for any Boy Scout, especially one with autism.

"We're just so proud," said Nate's mother, Sandy Christensen. "He's worked so hard."

In the past six years, Nate has earned all 132 merit badges.

On Sunday, Nate's Scout leader presented him with his last two badges, for chess and inventing, during a special ceremony at his church in South Jordan. Just two months away from his 18th birthday, this is considered his final Court of Honor.

"I think it's changed his entire life. The things he's learned in Scouts will be the things he can take the rest of his life, for one thing, things like plumbing and home repair," Christensen said.

Nate, who has a mild or moderate diagnosis of autism, chose not to take any shortcuts getting these badges, even though he was allowed the option. He earned each one, just like any other Boy Scout would.

"It just makes me look so epic that I just want to show off all my merit badges to all my friends," Nate said.

Bragging rights are in order for Nate, who proved that anything is possible, if you set your mind to it.

Article by Sandra Yi, published on www.KSL.com, September 12, 2011

Philmont

2011 Stats

- Sessions Held: 2
- Total Faculty and Family Members: 73
- Priesthood Leaders: 314
- Family Members at Philmont: 653
- Mountain Trek Young Men & Women: 114
- Total Participants: 1,081
- Number of LDS Stakes Represented: 168
- Number of States Represented: 35
- Number of Councils Represented: 68

Philmont

2012 Priesthood Leadership Conference on Scouting

Session 1: June 30 - July 6, 2012
Session 2: July 7 - July 13, 2012

Invitations will be mailed from LDS Church headquarters to each stake president in the United States in October 2011.

NEW PHILMONT PARTICIPATION

POLICY: The LDS Scouting Leadership Conference at Philmont is for STAKE PRESIDENCY members and their families. Due to the high demand to attend the conference, only stake presidency members will be immediately registered. In addition, if members of the stake presidency register and would like a high councilor and/or stake Young Men president to attend with them, those applications will be immediately accepted as long as space is available. All other applications will be placed on a waiting list.

When openings occur, wait list applicants will be contacted by the LDS-BSA Relationships office. If you are a high councilor or stake Young Men president, encourage your stake presidency to submit their applications and you will all be accepted to the conference.

In addition, Philmont is a family experience as well as a marvelous training opportunity. Each priesthood leader is encouraged to bring his wife and family to Philmont.

Philmont information and updates are also available on our website: www.ldsbsa.org