

## Growing in Community - Boy Scout Eagle Court of Honor

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**Coach Myrna--January 17, 2023**

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### *Growing in Community*

Last week, I had the privilege of attending an Eagle Court of Honor for six boys who had earned their rank of Eagle. This is the highest accomplishment in Boy Scouts that involves a substantial project that benefits an organization outside of Boy Scouts of America and it requires the boy to find support and financing for the project as well as lead others in completing the project. The six boys who were honored had the unique challenge of completing all of the requirements during Covid when their troop wasn't meeting regularly. At the court of honor, each boy spoke about the support they received from their leaders, parents and others in the greater community. The picture above shows the six boys and their leaders plus the mayor of San Leandro who attended the ceremony on his first day in office.

I would like to share an excerpt from my book "**7 Gifts to Give Your Child-- Parenting That Will Touch Their Future**" from the chapter on ***The Gift of Experiences***. My three sons had great experiences in Boy Scouts, and all achieved the rank of Eagle. However, there are many other opportunities for our children to grow in community and I share some such ideas below.

We need to help our child connect with experiences, activities, and organizations that support healthy challenges and collaboration—hiking clubs, sports, 4-H programs, choir, band, church youth groups, Big Brother-Big Sister programs, and more. For my boys, Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts provided amazing adventures that they could participate in together with their friends. They learned how to safely use a bow and arrow, as well as load and shoot a BB gun and shotgun.

There were built-in safety rules, merit badges to teach skills, and consequences when the rules weren't followed. I remember one of them coming home with a corner cut off his "Totin' Chip" card, which shows that they have demonstrated knowledge of and proper handling, care, and use of the pocketknife. The cut off corner is a warning that they weren't using the pocketknife safely. If all four corners are cut off, they lose the privilege of carrying a pocketknife and must earn that card again.

Each summer at scout camp, they learned to tie knots, climb a rock wall, operate a sailboat, cook over a gas stove, and make delicious desserts in a Dutch oven. As they got older, they participated in backpacking outings, white water rafting, and camping in the snow. Scouting gave them a safe environment to learn from failures, make affordable mistakes, experience teamwork, and gain many life skills. It was also an opportunity to interact with other adults besides their own parents, and gain confidence in asking for help or sharing ideas. In addition, it gave them a community within which to be challenged, supported, corrected, and guided.

There is a Papua New Guinea proverb that says, "Knowledge is only a rumor until it is in the muscle." In scouting, my sons helped to plan and execute the activities. Leadership was learned through teaching and mentoring others. When children can grow through experiences, the lessons learned become a part of them. The best leaders are hummingbird adults who only step in when they need to.

I helped to start a Venturing program as part of our church youth ministry. Venturing is part of Boy Scouts, but it is coed for high school and college age. It is designed to be youth-led, and my role was that of advisor. We had a planning meeting for our first big campout, and the youth had divided themselves into smaller cooking groups for the weekend.

They made up a menu and shopping list. I offered suggestions since this would be the first camping and outdoor cooking experience for some of our crew. However, I didn't override the first evening's meal of spaghetti and meatballs. As the cooking team was cleaning up after the meal, I heard them discussing the cons of washing up all the pots from preparing the noodles and tomato sauce in the outdoor setting, as well as the difficulty of heating water over the Coleman camp stove. Hopefully, their experience might help them make different menu choices on future campouts!

I encourage all parents to find groups and organizations that offer community experience and support while raising children. Check out what is available in your area. Look in local newspapers, library event boards, or county websites. Ask other parents for recommendations.

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