



# LDS RELATIONSHIPS NEWSLETTER

Boy Scouts of America

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## New Young Men General Presidency Called

A new Young Men General Presidency was sustained on Saturday April 4, 2009 in the afternoon session of the 179<sup>th</sup> Annual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### *David L. Beck- Young Men General President*



David L. Beck was serving as a ward mission leader when he was called as the new general president of the Church's Young Men organization. He served previously as a stake president, high councilor, and bishop and as president of the Brazil, Rio de Janeiro North Mission.



Brother Beck is an executive with a manufacturing and distribution company and serves on the board of a technology college. He received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a master's degree in engineering administration from the University of Utah. He and his wife Robyn are the parents of four children.

### *Larry M. Gibson- First Counselor, Young Men General Presidency*



Larry M. Gibson, named as first counselor in the Young Men general presidency, was serving as a stake president when he received his call. Prior church service includes serving in a stake presidency, on a high council, as a bishop, and as a ward and stake Young Men president.

Brother Gibson's professional career has been in the technology sector where he worked as vice president and chief information officer of a Fortune 500 company. He received a bachelor's degree and master's degree in computer science and information science from Brigham Young University. He and his wife Shirley have six children.

### *Adrian Ochoa- Second Counselor, Young Men General Presidency*



Adrian Ochoa was serving as his ward's high priests group leader when he was called as second counselor in the Young Men general presidency. He has also served as a stake president, area public affairs director, Area Seventy and mission president.

Brother Ochoa has worked in advertising and film production in the United States and Mexico. He received a bachelor's degree in communications from Universidad Regiomontana and master's degrees in business and marketing from Instituto Tecnológico de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey and Universidad Autonoma de Nuevo Leon respectively. He and his wife Nancy oversee humanitarian work in Latin America and are the parents of five children.

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## Message from the Primary General Presidency



### **Sister Margaret Lifferth, First Counselor Primary General Presidency**

President Monson has reminded youth leaders that “We are builders of boys and menders of men. In doing so, we remember that the greatest verb in the vocabulary is to love; the second is to help.”

I can think of no great ways to love and help our youth than to bring those who are less active back into full church activity and give them a vision of who they are and the blessings that are in store for them as they fulfill their priesthood duties.

At a recent Scout training, Scout leaders were invited to share experiences of bringing boys back into church activity through the Scouting program. Several leaders volunteered to share their experiences with the group. As I listened to these faithful leaders, common elements emerged from their stories.

First, each leader sought out the inactive boy and his family and made a personal invitation to the boy to join in the troop activities. Often, the parents were happy to encourage the boy’s participation whether they, as parents, were active in the church or not. Their encouragement resided in the trust they felt in the Scouting program.

Second, it was obvious that the leader grew to love the boy as the leader became invested in the boy’s progress and success in the Scouting program. Often this part of the story revealed a lot of effort on the part of the leader to keep the boy engaged and connected to the troop.

A third common element in these activation experiences was that, as the boy participated in Scouting, he also grew in faith, came back into Church activity, participated in his priesthood duties and became committed to missionary service. Often the activation of the boy strengthened the whole family and the parents returned to church activity as well.

Most of the Scout leaders who shared their stories of activation did so with great emotion. It was easy to feel the love they felt for each boy. It was remarkable to know that they knew that the greatest blessing of Scouting was that, through the activities and programs, they could help build faith in Jesus Christ. Each leader was grateful for the experience of touching a boy’s life with increased testimony. He knew that he had not only changed the life of that boy...and possibly his parents...but he had changed the lives of generations to come.

Scouting is one of the great activation tools for leaders of youth. It provides a setting for friendship, fun activities, leadership skills, character building, advancement, and interaction with leaders of faith. We hope that every leader will get to know all the boys on his roster and reach out to each one with the goal of building faith and testimony. He will be successful as he reaches out in love with the desire to help.

Thanks to each of you for your committed work in behalf of our boys.

## Scout Cited for Sniffing Out Trouble



About 5,000 Boy Scouts assembled in South Jordan [Utah] this weekend for their annual fall "Jamboral" campout, and Sean Scott fit in like a tinfoil dinner — just another kid wearing baggy pants with a cell phone in the pocket.

But he sure did stand out when the Scouts held their formal program Friday night and gave the 13-year-old from the Mount Olympus area this year's "Medal of Merit," an award that recognizes "outstanding service in implementing the ideals and values of Scouting."

This past January, in a story straight out of *Boy's Life*, Sean saved a widow's house, and possibly the widow's life, when he smelled a gas leak and quickly alerted the woman.

Sean was collecting fast offerings — donations for the poor — for his LDS ward on Sunday morning, January 6<sup>th</sup>, when he was leaving the home of 85-year-old Betty Gallacher. As he walked between the house and the garage, a strong gas odor invaded his nostrils, and if there's one thing a Boy Scout can do, it is smell ...

But let's let Sean tell what happened, in his own words:

"I was walking past her carport and I just smelled gas, you know, so I was wondering if I should go tell her, so first I asked my dad, who was waiting in the car. 'I thought I smelled gas,' I told him. 'Do you think I should go tell her?' He said he would, so I went back and told her and she asked me where I smelled it and I pointed to her gas meter. I don't know, it just felt like it was the right thing to do. It's what they tell you in Scouts: If something's wrong just to fix it and stuff."

"He kept saying, 'Mrs. Gallacher, you have a gas leak, you have a gas leak,'" Betty Gallacher remembers. "I couldn't smell it. I guess I've lost my sense of smell. But he could smell it."

She continued, "I immediately called the gas company and they immediately came up and fixed it, replaced the whole meter. What made it more amazing was that I was leaving town the next day. I was going to Mexico for two weeks. My bags were packed and were right by the door. One spark and my garage could have been gone and maybe my house too when I returned. I went to church that day, his parents were there and I said, 'My gosh, do you know what that boy did?' It was wonderful. I'm glad he's getting his award."

Sean didn't know about the Medal of Merit until this past Wednesday. His Scoutmaster, Steven Knudson, let him know during the weekly troop meeting when he assembled his Scouts and told them that one of them was going to receive a prestigious award for acting in an exemplary Scoutly manner when something didn't pass "the smell test."

Despite all the clues, the fact that Knudson was talking about him wasn't immediately apparent to Sean.

"Like all the other boys, he was like, who is it?" says Knudson. "Then it finally sunk in, hey, it's me!"

"Sean is as normal as normal comes in the package of a 13-year-old boy," says Knudson. "He is forgetful, scatterbrained and sometimes he sings to himself when someone is trying to give instructions. But every once in a while he really shows maturity and level-headedness."

And there's a house still standing below Mount Olympus because of it.

Article by Lee Benson, *Deseret News*, Sunday, September 14, 2008

# Missionary preparation: Aaronic Priesthood and Scouting

February is "Scout Month" — an opportune time for Aaronic Priesthood-age boys, their parents and their leaders to remember Scouting's essential role as a preparatory activity program for future missionaries.

Church leaders have long spoken of the relevance Scouting continues to play in the lives of young men in the Church. The principles embraced by the youngest Cub Scout to a Venturer finishing his final year of high school also double as life-building tools that can help prepare a young man for mission field success. In his April 1986 general conference address, President Ezra Taft Benson said a young man who earns his Eagle Scout — in conjunction with the Duty to God Award and a seminary graduation certificate — is "a young man who can perform miracles for the Lord in the mission field and throughout his life."

Scouting's role to better prepare young men for missions does not end with the Eagle Award. The Varsity Scouts and Venturing programs allow older Aaronic Priesthood holders to develop leadership skills that can serve them well in future missionary service.

By accepting the Scout Oath penned decades ago, a young man promises to "do my duty to God" and to "help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight."

Such a promise serves as an ideal recipe for successful missionary labor.

Before an audience of priesthood holders in October of 1993, President Thomas S. Monson declared his belief in the preparatory value of Scouting. "I am pleased to stand firm for an organization that teaches duty to God and country, that embraces the Scout Law. Yes, an organization whose motto is 'Be prepared' and whose slogan is 'Do a good turn daily.'

"The Aaronic Priesthood prepares boys for manhood and the weightier duties of the Melchizedek Priesthood. Scouting helps our boys to walk uprightly the priesthood path to exaltation."

(Note: Following is the text of the graphic printed below)

## How does Scouting support the purposes of the Aaronic Priesthood and help young men become better missionaries?

- PRIMARY – CUB SCOUTS**  
*12 Core Values*
- 1. Citizenship:** Contributing service and showing responsibility to our communities.
  - 2. Compassion:** Being kind and considerate and showing concern for the well-being of others.
  - 3. Cooperation:** Being helpful and working together with others toward a common goal.
  - 4. Courage:** Being brave and doing what is right regardless of our fears or the consequences.
  - 5. Faith:** Having inner strength and confidence based on our trust in God.
  - 6. Health and Fitness:** Keeping our minds and bodies clean and fit.
  - 7. Honesty:** Telling the truth and being worthy of trust.
  - 8. Perseverance:** Sticking with something and not giving up, even if it is difficult.
  - 9. Positive Attitude:** Being cheerful and looking for and finding the best in all situations.
  - 10. Resourcefulness:** Using human and other resources to their fullest.
  - 11. Respect:** Showing regard for the worth of something or someone.
  - 12. Responsibility:** Fulfilling our duty to God, country, other people and ourselves.

*I promise to do my best to do my duty to God and my country, to help other people, and to obey the Law of the Pack.*

- DEACON – BOY SCOUTS**  
*Aims of Scouting*
- Character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness are the Aims of Scouting.
- Scouts who follow these Aims:
1. Develop self-reliance, as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage, and resourcefulness.
  2. Learn values based on religious concepts.
  3. Serve others and develop the desire and the skills to do so effectively.
  4. Learn citizenship by understanding the principles of the American social, economic, and governmental systems. They are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage and understand our nation's role in the world.
  5. Learn respect for others and for the basic rights of all people.
  6. Develop leadership skills and prepare to participate in and give leadership to American society.

*On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.*

- TEACHER – VARSITY SCOUTS**  
*Fields of Emphasis*
- 1. Personal Development**  
Promotes growth through spirituality, leadership abilities, citizenship, social and cultural attributes, and physical fitness.
  - 2. Service**  
Should become a constant ingredient in a Varsity Scout's daily experience. Projects are conceived, planned, and carried out by individual Varsity Scouts or the Varsity Scout team.
  - 3. Advancement**  
The same advancement program as Boy Scouts. Varsity Scouts can also receive the recognitions offered through such programs as the Varsity Letter and Denali Award.
  - 4. High Adventure and Sports**  
Supported by 27 program features.
  - 5. Special Programs and Events**  
On district, council, regional, and national levels.

*As a Varsity Scout, I will: Live by the Scout Oath (or Promise), Law, motto, and slogan; honor the dignity and worth of all persons; promote the cause of freedom; and do my best to be a good team member.*

- PRIEST – VENTURING-BSA**  
*Goals of Venturing*
- 1. Values**  
Young men will learn to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling the values in the Venturing Oath and Code.
  - 2. Group Activities**  
Young men will experience a program that is fun and full of challenge and adventure.
  - 3. Teaching Others**  
Young men will teach skills and values to others.
  - 4. Recognition and Advancement**  
Young men will acquire skills in the areas of high adventure, sports, arts and hobbies, and religious life. This includes the Trail to Eagle and Venturing Advancement.
  - 5. Leadership Experience**  
Young men will experience positive leadership from adult and youth leaders and be given opportunities to take on leadership roles.
  - 6. Adult Association**  
Young men will have a chance to learn and grow in a supportive, caring, and fun environment. While youth lead the crew, adults provide "shadow leadership" support.
- As a Venturer, I promise to do my duty to God and help strengthen America, to help others, and to seek truth, fairness, and adventure in our world.*

By Jason Swensen,  
Church News,  
week ending  
February 28, 2009



## Young Men Leaders Past and Present



*President Thomas S. Monson -- holding a decorative stick emblazoned with Scouting's merit badges -- stands with, from left, Elder Robert K. Dellenbach, Elder Robert L. Backman, Elder Jack H Goaslind Jr., Brother Dean R. Burgess, Elder Vaughn J Featherstone, Brother Charles W. Dahlquist II, Elder F. Melvin Hammond and Brother Michael A. Neider.*

The Young Men General Presidency gathered February 2<sup>nd</sup> with a group of venerable Church leaders who have, collectively, performed decades of service to bless and better the lives of the youth of the Church.

The historic luncheon included five emeritus General Authorities who have served as Young Men general presidents — Elder Robert L. Backman, Elder Vaughn J Featherstone, Elder Jack H Goaslind Jr., Elder Robert K. Dellenbach and Elder F. Melvin Hammond — along with a lifelong champion of Scouting and youth, President Thomas S. Monson.

Elder Ben B. Banks, an emeritus Seventy, also participated in the event that was hosted by Young Men General President Charles W. Dahlquist II and his two counselors, Dean R. Burgess and Michael A. Neider.

Entitled the "Legacy of Leadership Luncheon," the gathering provided a unique forum to discuss the challenges facing young men throughout the Church. The event was informal and warm-hearted — a collection of like-minded friends.

Much of the discussion focused on the ongoing relevance of Scouting in the Church and the importance of shepherding each boy.

The longest-tenured member of Scouting's National Executive Board, President Monson said he first pulled on a Boy Scout uniform when he was 12 years old. "I've been a Scouter ever since."

The Church president spoke of his esteem for the Boy Scouts of America leadership. He emphasized the importance of caring bishops and leaders in the lives of young people.

While serving as a young bishop, he noticed that one of his priests, Richard Casto, was missing from a Sunday priest quorum meeting. Told that Richard was working at a local garage, Bishop Monson excused himself from the meeting

and drove to the garage. He found his missing charge working inside the garage's grease pit.

Bishop Monson heard Richard say from deep inside the pit, "You got me, bishop."

"I sure did," he answered. "Come out of that grease pit. I need to talk to you."

Bishop Monson then told Richard that he was needed in the quorum. That young man knew he was important to his Aaronic priesthood leader. Richard would go on to serve as a priesthood leader himself.

"Men who go after those who are in their charge will have success," said President Monson.

He shared simple counsel with his fellow youth leaders: "Don't give up."

Shepherding others, he added, blesses the lives of both the beneficiaries of service and their benefactors. The call to serve youth "is never over," said President Monson.

He closed his comments by enlisting the familiar wish of Tiny Tim from the Dickens novel *A Christmas Carol*: "May God bless us, everyone."

Brother Dahlquist paid tribute to each of his predecessors, saying that he and his counselors had inherited a strong foundation fortified by President Monson and the former Young Men general presidents. Each had acted as a life preserver to the youth during perilous times.

He also spoke of the dual role of Scouting and the Aaronic Priesthood's "Duty to God" program. "Where Scouting is strong, Duty to God is strong," he said.

Brother Dahlquist asked each of the former youth leaders gathered around the table to share his thoughts and counsel. Elder Hammond commented on the challenges that he had observed facing young people during his recent tenure as president of the Washington D.C. Temple.

"The young people of Scout age have a lot of choices to make," he noted.

Their ability to make wise decisions can be greatly influenced by those called to serve them. "It all depends on the leaders," said Elder Hammond.



*President Thomas S. Monson offers direction to longtime LDS general youth leaders gathered together. Seated at left is Elder Vaughn J Featherstone.*

Elder Dellenbach reminded the Young Men leaders of the key role parents must play in helping young people overcome the trials of the day.

## Young Men Leaders Past and Present continued

"Encourage the parents," he counseled. "They have a [vital] stewardship and responsibility."

Many of the challenges facing the young people remain the same, added Elder Backman. It's essential that wise youth leaders enlist the proven resources of the Church to help a rising generation.

"If we don't use the Scouting program to meet our priesthood aims, we are missing the boat," he said.

During his recent service as president of the Manti Utah Temple, Elder Goaslind had the opportunity to speak with young people as they gathered to serve in the temple. Many commented on the influential role a diligent bishop had played in their lives.

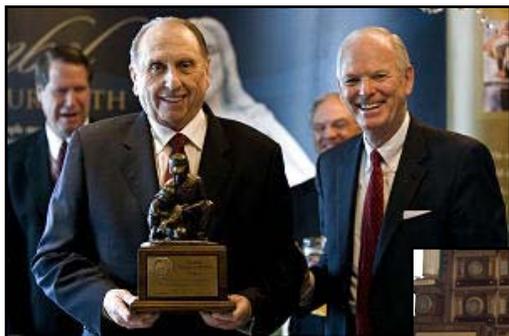
Bishops and counselors "can do almost as much for a young man as anyone I know," said Elder Goaslind.

Elder Banks expressed concern about the pervasiveness of pornography. It is a challenge facing young people throughout the Church. More awareness is needed, he said.

"Parents are not realizing [their children] are involved in pornography until they are in trouble," he said.

Scouting continues to prepare young men for missions, said

Elder Featherstone. The Scouting program, he said, "remains a major part of the Church."



*Brother Charles W. Dahlquist II presents President Thomas S. Monson with a youth-themed award during the Feb. 2 Legacy of Leadership Luncheon.*



The lessons of Scouting are still relevant to young men, he noted.

"Keep doing it — the boys need it," he said. "They need all the tools in the toolbox."

At the conclusion of the leadership luncheon, the Young Men General Presidency presented each of the former Young Men presidents with an award honoring their service.

President Monson was presented a sculpture depicting a man fishing with a boy.

"Heavenly Father expects us to look after His children," he said after accepting the honor.

Article by Jason Swensen, *Church News*, week ending February 7, 2009 – Photos by August Miller, *Deseret News*

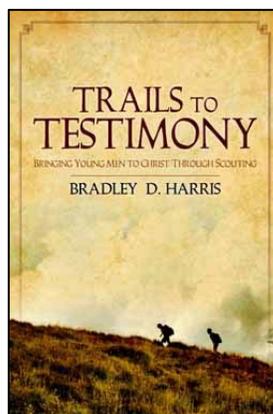
## LITERARY HIGHLIGHT:

### *Trails to Testimony: Bringing Young Men to Christ Through Scouting*

by Bradley D. Harris

Brother Harris draws upon his decades of experience working professionally and as a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America to focus parents and leaders of young men on the spiritual foundation of Scouting.

The author has collected dozens of stories and examples from all over the country to illustrate how Scouting, when properly applied, can help bring young men to Christ. He provides many practical examples to help parents and leaders understand the big picture of Scouting.



Brother Harris, while a member of the BSA National staff from 1998 – 2003, traveled to all fifty states. He served on the Young Men General Board from 2006 – 2009. His perspective on Scouting is refreshing and creative.

*Trails to Testimony* is a powerful guide for families and leaders entrusted with the sacred responsibility of teaching and guiding the young men of the Church.

This book is available on the LDS-BSA Relationships website [www.ldsbsa.org](http://www.ldsbsa.org)

## Philmont 2009 LDS Leadership Conference

We are excited to announce that the 2009 LDS Scouting Leadership Conference at Philmont is full again for another year. The attendance as of May 4, 2009 is as follows:

### Session 1 (June 27 – July 3): 568 Total

- 167 Conference Participants
- 486 Family members staying at the Training Center
- 82 Mountain Trek youth (ages 14 – 20)

### Session 2 (July 4 – 10): 636 Total

- 160 Conference Participants
- 523 Family members staying at the Training Center
- 113 Mountain Trek youth (ages 14 – 20)

The Philmont faculty is working hard to ensure that the LDS Scouting Leadership Conference is the highlight of the year for all of the participants. If you are interested in attending Philmont next year, go to [www.ldsbsa.org](http://www.ldsbsa.org) and download the 2010 Philmont application packet which will be posted in late fall. We hope to see you at Scouting's paradise!

## Eagle Projects Blessing Lives



Boy Scout Michael Brock, 14, is just a few merit badges and one daunting service project removed from the Eagle Award. A teacher from Henderson, Nevada, Michael and his parents and Scout leaders are brainstorming to identify an ideal Eagle project that will help him grow as a leader, do some good in his community and, yes, qualify him for the Eagle.

Indeed, developing, planning and executing a worthwhile Eagle Scout leadership service project is a task facing Michael and thousands of other LDS Scouts every year. It's often the final requirement that a young man completes before he can assume his place in the honored "Eagles Nest" reserved for those men and boys who earned Scouting's highest achievement award.

The projects can be as diverse as the Scouts themselves. Some Eagle candidates organize food or blood drives to benefit the sick or needy, while others craft historic markers to honor, say, the Mormon Battalion or a town's pioneer past. Often a project serves the Scout's own community, but other projects reach across oceans, such as a recent coat collection for war-weary children in Afghanistan.

If done right, Eagle projects do share a few common qualities: They are at once demanding and exhilarating, blessing the lives of both project organizers and project beneficiaries.

"Eagle projects are designed to test a boy's leadership skills and to have the largest possible impact in a community," said David Pack, director of the Boy Scouts of America/LDS Relationships office.

A lifelong Scouter, Brother Pack can't recall a time when Eagle candidates were not required to organize and execute a project defined by Scouting as "meaningful service not normally expected of a Scout as a part of his school, religion or community." In other words, Eagle projects are about stretching a young man beyond his routine in the classroom, the Scout troop or the priesthood quorum. The best projects can be, well, a bit uncomfortable for a 13- or 14-year-old boy.

Brother Pack was just a deacon himself when he completed his Eagle project planning and organizing a community Pioneer Day celebration in his hometown in northern Utah. The 13-year-old coordinated events ranging from a chuck wagon breakfast to a town

carnival — and discovered hidden leadership skills he didn't know he possessed. As a former Scoutmaster, Brother Pack has witnessed such growth in countless other boys as they completed their own Eagle projects.

Scouting does not publish an Eagle project "suggestion list." They are individual matters, allowing young men to leave their own unique fingerprints of service. Michael Clara has worked as a Scoutmaster and priesthood leader in several Spanish-speaking branches in Salt Lake City. When he sits down with Scouts and talks Eagle projects, he asks the boys about their interests and how such interests might connect with elements of the Scout Law such as being courteous and kind. After some discussion, the Scout can usually develop some project ideas.



*Eagle Scout Junior Cruz stands with Tony and Amy Galvez on the Salt Lake City street that was renamed for the Galvezes' son, U.S. Marine Cpl. Adam Galvez. Photo by Ravell Call*

Brother Clara has witnessed some remarkable Eagle projects that have changed his community.

In 2007 one of his Scouts, Junior Cruz, organized an Eagle project to have a street named in honor of Adam Galvez, a U.S. Marine and Salt Lake City native who was killed fighting in Iraq.

Last year another of Brother Clara's Scouts, Eduardo Fuenzalida, organized a project to acquire and raise a flag pole outside the home meetinghouse of Elder William Tenney

Angilua Jr., a missionary who died in a bicycle crash in 2007 while serving in the Washington Seattle Mission. The young Scout coordinated the fund raising for the flag pole and worked with local businesses to secure contributions. As part of the project, an American flag was purchased and shipped to Washington where it was photographed with many of



*Scouts raise flag on a meetinghouse pole that was purchased as part of an Eagle project last year honoring the late Elder William Tenney Angilua Jr.*

Elder Angilua's fellow missionaries. The flag was then returned to Utah where it flew atop the new meetinghouse pole of the Pioneer Stake in Salt Lake City. The flag was later encased in glass and presented to Elder Angilua's family.

Taylor Lind, a priest in the Fairview Ward, York Pennsylvania Stake, was recently offered a glimpse of the day-to-day operations of a municipality rarely afforded a 17-year-old high school student. Taylor worked with elected leaders, engineers and civic planners during his Eagle project to color-code dozens of fire hydrants in Pennsylvania's Washington Township. He and his fellow Scouts from the ward painted the hydrant caps according to each fireplug's respective water pressure. Now responding firefighters know immediately the



*An Afghan soldier hands out coats to children in the Tag Ab Valley. The coats were collected as part of LDS Scout Braden Welburn's Eagle Project.*

## Eagle Projects Blessing Lives continued

flow available on any given hydrant — essential information when fighting fires.

Taylor's project has made the Washington Township a safer place. Meanwhile, the young man is armed with a new set of leadership skills that will serve him well as a missionary, a college student and a Melchizedek Priesthood holder.

"I've learned a lot about getting things going and taking up the initiative," said Taylor.

Brother Pack hopes Scouts will recognize that the true rewards of an effective Eagle project are found in the process. Perhaps a project can be organized, executed and finished in a few days, but at what cost? "The best projects always involve multiple people and multiple days," he said. "It's not so much what the project is, it's how that project is executed that makes a difference."

Tom Smith has learned to enjoy the process. A priest in the Woods Cross 6th Ward, Woods Cross Utah North



Stake, Tom has spent two years on his Eagle project, tenaciously raising thousands of dollars needed to commission a heroic-size bronze statue of a Boy Scout inspired by a sketch from Boy Scout founder

*Eagle candidate Tom Smith examines sculpture crafted by LDS artist Stan Watts. Tom's project involves raising money for the statue's completion. Photo by Ron Smith*

Robert Lord Baden Powell. In his efforts to raise attention and money for the project, Tom has spoken in front of the Woods Cross City Council, made presentations to business owners and scheduled home visits to potential contributors. Asking strangers for money has not come easy for Tom. But the fundraising continues even if the statue — which is being crafted by LDS sculptor Stan Watts — may not find a final home for a few years.

Still, the Scout has grown up thanks to his Eagle project, according to his father. "Tom has had to come out of his shell and done things that he'd probably rather not do," said Ron Smith.

Scouting remains the activity arm of the Aaronic Priesthood. Every day, young men — future missionaries, husbands and fathers — are realizing the blessings of service as they complete their Eagle projects.

"The priesthood is a service organization — it's designed to provide service to the Church and the community," said Brother Pack. "Scouting's Eagle projects help support the service mission of the Church."

Article by Jason Swensen, *Church News*, week ending January 17, 2009

## BSA's High Award for Saving Lives



Regan Hunt rescued four fellow freshmen from drowning in an irrigation canal near the Brigham Young University-Idaho campus on July 19, 2007. For his heroism, on Dec. 27, he received the Medal of Honor with Crossed Palms, the highest lifesaving honor bestowed by the Boy Scouts of America.

The ceremony took place in Austin, Texas, near Regan's home. About 250 people came to see Regan receive his medal, including Texas Gov. Rick Perry. Awarded for "unusual heroism and extraordinary skill or resourcefulness in saving or attempting to save life at extreme risk to self," the Medal of Honor with Crossed Palms is so rare that it was given to only 200 Boy Scouts between 1923 and 2007.

But behind the smiles and flash bulbs, grief tinged Regan's emotions while receiving the prestigious recognition. Despite the four lives he helped save on that muggy July evening, Regan could not save his good friend Parker Bradford, who never regained consciousness after falling into the canal and who died two days later.

"Getting the Medal of Honor was a very special occasion but, then again, it was also a memorial for Parker," Regan said. "You can't think of an incident without thinking of those involved in it. We got to take a moment of silence to honor Parker, in memory of him, and I think that was very special. I will remember that forever."

The chain of tragic events began when Parker and Logan Gerratt waded into the Cross Cut Canal at Monkey Rock on the outskirts of Rexburg, Idaho. Parker slipped and got sucked into a whirlpool. Logan dove in after Parker. Three other young men formed a human chain to try and extract Parker and Logan, but all three of the would-be rescuers succumbed to the undertow and fell into the whirlpool.

Enter Regan, who acted decisively and quickly by using a blanket to fish out three of the young men. But with Logan and Parker still in peril and unable to grasp onto the makeshift lifeline, Regan fastened one end of a ratchet strap tie-down to a guardrail, secured the other end to his wrist and lowered himself down from a bridge into the water to try to save his friends.

"It was obvious they were in very, very dangerous conditions," Regan said. "I figured I couldn't just jump in there because I'd get sucked away and stuck too. Even with the rope, I jumped in knowing there was a significant chance that could happen."

The whirlpool eventually ejected Logan and Parker, who both fell over a waterfall before washing ashore. Logan began vomiting water. Regan, who suffered a broken wrist from the tie-down he had fastened to himself, got out of the water and performed CPR on Parker until paramedics arrived — but Parker could not be revived.

"I'm thankful for what I was able to do for my other friends," Regan said. "I gave it all I could and tried really hard for Parker, but sometimes things just don't work out."

Regan's testimony and knowledge of the Plan of Salvation provided a measure of solace and comfort in the aftermath of Parker's untimely death.

"Parker was always so excited to be able to go on his mission — we were 18 (years old) and he had six months until he could leave," Regan recalls. "I view (his death) as a sad thing because his time on earth was cut short, but definitely not as a loss because Parker got to start his mission up in heaven six months early."

The four people Regan rescued nearly a year and a half ago likely won't be the last lives he saves. Now 19, Regan has interned with the Rexburg Fire Department and will soon become certified to be a firefighter, the job he wants to pursue.

Regan continues his studies at BYU-Idaho and plans to begin serving a full-time mission later this year.

Article by J.G. Askar, *Church News*, week ending January 4, 2009



## LDS Latinos Being Served by Scouting

When Noel Rios sat out on his front porch last summer to enjoy the evening cool, he'd witness a procession outside his home that left him troubled. Latino teenage boys — many of them immigrants to Brother Rios' Heber City, Utah community — would pass by each night, wandering up and down his street. The boys appeared to have no structure in their lives and little direction. They needed Scouting, decided Brother Rios.

At the time, Brother Rios was serving as the president of the Heber 13th (Spanish) Branch of the Heber City Utah Stake. The small branch was made up largely of immigrant

families from Mexico and Central and South America and had never sponsored a Scout troop. So Brother Rios filled out the necessary paperwork and, last August, formally organized Troop 1308 of Scouting's Utah National Parks Council. The branch's maiden troop consisted of a single Scout. Brother Rios was the Scoutmaster.

A few months later, Brother Rios was released as branch president — but he insisted on remaining the Scoutmaster. In seven months, the troop has grown from one Scout to about a dozen — including several who are not Church members. Despite limited resources, they have camped together, learned new skills and become friends.

The Heber City boys represent a growing number of Latino immigrants across the United States who are finding a constructive, educational and, yes, fun experience through LDS-sponsored Scout troops.

Andres Ramos is a retired FBI agent and [served as a] member of the Church's Young Men General Board. He's also a decorated Scout leader who has been instrumental in organizing and training Scout troops and leaders in Spanish-language Church units in northern Utah. Like Brother Rios, Brother Ramos believes Scouting can help immigrant boys become a contributing element of their community. Scouting, he added, provides a healthy alternative for young men facing lives possibly burdened by poverty and gangs.

"Scouting can surround a young man within a system of success," said Brother Ramos.

As the activity arm of the Aaronic Priesthood, Scouting can be instrumental in

helping develop a deacon, teacher or priest as he prepares for a mission, family life, careers and lifelong Church service. Still, the program is not always an easy sell in the Latino immigrant community, according to Brother Ramos.

Most immigrant parents know little about Scouting. Some may think the program is exclusive to the Anglo communities — "an American thing." Additionally, few priesthood leaders serving in Spanish-language wards or branches come from Scouting backgrounds or have much Scout training.

Still, Church leaders from President Thomas S. Monson to Brother Ramos and Brother Rios agree Scouting is very helpful for all young men who have access to the program. For one, it provides wards and branches with a proven, organized activity program for LDS boys.

"We don't have to reinvent the wheel," said Brother Ramos. Scouting and its system of rank advancements, merit badges, service and leadership is designed to prepare a young man for success in his Church, family, community and profession.

When an immigrant boy puts on the Scout uniform, he becomes a part of something larger than himself. The American flag on the boy's right sleeve represents his place in his adopted country. "It means he's a part of the community — he's become a part of the Scout family," said Brother Ramos.

The awards and patches sewn on the front of the uniform herald achievement, personal growth and development.

Last summer, Brother Ramos watched as some 50 Latino Scouts from eight Spanish-language branches from the Ogden area marched in the city's Pioneer Day parade. Such activities allow parents of the immigrant Scouts to feel they, too, have a home and voice in their new communities.

Michael Clara has served as a Scoutmaster in a Spanish-language branch in Salt Lake City's Rose Park community. Scouting has provided his charges with leadership opportunities that have put them in contact with a variety of folks from their community. They have met with business, government and military leaders. While earning merit badges, they have developed job interests that will help them make career choices. When a Scout from Brother Clara's

troop earns his Eagle Award, he typically finds himself empowered with Scout-taught skills and savvy that will serve him well in any arena.

Scouting is not a panacea for the many problems facing LDS Hispanic young men or any other boy. Brother Ramos has witnessed young men from his Scout troops fall into gangs and make bad choices. Brother Rios, meanwhile, is saddened that not all his Scouts are participating fully in the program. Still, they remain believers in the potential of a Boy Scout.

Brother Ramos points to one LDS young man who came to the United State from Peru. When he arrived, the boy did not speak much English. His family did not have much money. Because of such challenges, the boy was vulnerable to the enticements of gangs and other trouble. Fortunately, the boy's immigrant branch had a functioning Scouting program. He pulled on the khaki uniform, began earning merit badges and accepted leadership duties in his troop and quorum. Now that young man is a full-time missionary, said Brother Ramos. He will return to his home prepared in Scout fashion to serve his Church and community.

"Scouting helped that young man recognize leadership potential in himself," Brother Ramos said.

The keys to Scouting success in immigrant units, he added, are no different than in traditional wards and branches: Parents and leaders must accept and support the program. Language need not be a barrier. Scouting provides many materials in Spanish, and leadership training is available for Scouting newcomers and veterans alike.

Brother Ramos has represented the Young Men General Board in recent travels to areas of the United States with large Latino immigrant communities such as Texas and New York. The local leaders shared with him concerns that some young men from their units are falling prey to poor choices that jeopardize their future. He offers them the same direction President Monson and other Church leaders have provided repeatedly: Organize and utilize Scouting.

Article by Jason Swensen, *Church News*, week ending February 28, 2009

Photos courtesy of Andres Ramos



*Scouts and other members from Ogden's Buenaventura (Spanish) Branch install a wheelchair ramp outside a member's home during a Scout-organized service project.*



*Scouting provides many immigrant members their first taste of camping and outdoor fun.*