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Father and son stand out from the pack

Moe Acevedo honored by Boy Scouts, Frankie becomes Eagle Scout

By Claire K. Racine, Reporter

If a father and son could earn a merit badge for dedication to Boy Scouting, Moe and Frankie Acevedo would have earned it twice over.

Frankie, a junior at Port Chester High School, will soon be able to pin on his Eagle Scout medal for achieving the highest rank attainable in Boy Scouting and his father recently received recognition from the Boy Scouts of America Westchester-Putnam Council for helping to make a difference in the Latino community in Westchester County.

Soaring towards Eagle

When brainstorming ideas for his service project, the capstone of the Eagle Scout process, a scout leader suggested working on the flagpole at the Knights of Columbus. Frankie liked the idea but decided to make it his own.

"I thought maybe Carver because that's where we meet," he said.

Troop 400 is actually named in honor of the community center located at 400 Westchester Ave. that donates space for the Boy Scouts' meetings. Frankie liked the idea of a project that would benefit Carver Center. He pitched his plan to staff at Carver, who quickly saw the possibilities of an improved flagpole in front of the building.

"They said it was a perfect idea," Frankie said.

Initially the Port Chester High School student had planned to build a base around the flagpole. Once he started working on the site, he discovered it already had concrete poured there. Frankie had to tweak his plan to work around the poorly shaped concrete base to form a more aesthetically-pleasing one that could be easily utilized.

"The base was uneven," he explained. "I had to square it up with concrete."

After fixing the physical base of the pole, Frankie built a brick patio around it, which sounds easier than it was.

"Me and my father personally put around 50 hours into it," Frankie said. Furthermore, 21 of his fellow scouts also lent a hand. "They all put in about five hours each, I would say," he added.

To top off his project, Frankie tracked down a new flagpole topper, this one in the shape of an eagle.

"I wanted that because it's the Eagle Scout," he said. "The eagle on top-it makes sense and the way it looks, it looks nice instead of the old copper ball that was up there."



The Boy Scouts in Troop 400 crowd around the flagpole in front of Carver Center that Frankie Acevedo built for his Eagle Scout project.
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End in sight

After finishing up the physical work, there was still paperwork for Frankie to complete detailing all the time and effort he put into his project. Soon the whole lot will be sent off to the regional council, which gives it the go-ahead before shipping it to the Boy Scouts of America's national office in Texas for approval.

Many teenagers trying to become Eagle Scouts do not get to the approval stage until their senior year of high school. Frankie did not want to be in that situation.

"I wanted to get it done 'cause I've seen people rushing to do it and doing it last minute," he said.

By getting his project done in a timely manner rather than procrastinating, Frankie can be a good role model for the younger scouts. Not to mention it looks good on a college application, he added.

As for his father, Frankie's Eagle Scout achievement means more to Modesto "Moe" Acevedo than any personal recognition.

"How do I feel? It's a dream come true," Moe said. "It's every father or parent that gets involved with scouting-their dream is that their kid complete the program and get the Eagle Scout."

Besides his son, Moe is thrilled that in his troop there are five more teenagers working towards Eagle Scout.

Serving the community

Although Moe is ecstatic his son will soon have the prestigious recognition as an Eagle Scout, Moe himself was recently singled out. The Westchester-Putnam Council honored the Port Chester resident at its annual Latino Leaders breakfast on Oct. 9. The council also recognized Carver Center for its role in expanding Boy Scouting into the Latino community.

Given the large Hispanic population in the area, Moe made an effort from his first days as a scoutmaster to recruit in English and Spanish.

In Moe's opinion, scouting transcends language, and he has the experience to back it up. "When I came here to the United States, I didn't speak English and I was in Scouts," explained Moe, who left Puerto Rico when he was a boy. "Most of the guys I was with, they didn't speak Spanish."

Nowadays, Moe can easily converse in both English and Spanish, something that has been extremely helpful for him as a scoutmaster. Because of his experience reaching out to the Hispanic community, Moe was asked by the Westchester-Putnam Council to use his skills to help deliver their message to more than just Port Chester. He now serves on the council's membership subcommittee.

Moe's goal is to allow more boys to get involved in scouting and one day, hopefully, become Eagle Scouts just like his son Frankie.



Frankie Acevedo, a junior at Port Chester High School, raises the flag for the first time at the newly refurbished flagpole in front of Carver Center on Oct. 25. Acevedo constructed a patio around the pole for his Eagle Scout project.
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