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EAGLE SCOUT

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"They were with me all along."

When he became a Boy Scout at age 12, Ruebke thought it was a requirement to win every single merit badge. A couple of weeks later he learned he just needed 21 merit badges to become an Eagle Scout, but he decided to stick with his original goal.

His mother told him that was "absolutely okay. You made that decision. Go for it."

On average, Jonathan Ruebke worked on two merit badges a week. His mother used his badge requirements to build on to the homeschooling curriculum she designed for him. When her son was working toward his American Business badge, Michelle Ruebke incorporated math, social studies and history into his studies. The stamp collecting badge exposed him to other countries — and geography.

Jonathan Ruebke's favorite merit badges included archery, art, athletics, aviation, backpacking, climbing, crime prevention, graphic arts...He has a lot of interests.

"He's had in-depth exposure to 137 different careers," his mother said.

At 18, Ruebke has aged out of scouts, but he still volunteers and helps



younger scouts, such as his 9-year-old brother, Michael. He's now trying to figure out what he will do for college and a career. He got interested in law enforcement and becoming an Air Force pilot, while working on merit badges, but he has not yet narrowed down the path he will take.

"What am I going to do next?" he said, with a laugh.

For now Ruebke is working on graduating from high school. He has a job he likes at Ace Hardware,

the store from which he and fellow scouts have sold Christmas trees over the holidays to raise money for campouts and other scout trips.

Having reached the scouting pinnacle shortly before his 18th birthday, Ruebke appears confident. He plans to use the leadership and discipline skills he learned as a Boy Scout in his next adventure.

"I think this is my first step in trying to accomplish things and make the world better," he said.

EAGLE SCOUT

Newton youth reaches Boy Scout pinnacle

By Jeff Guy
Newton Kansan

Jonathan Ruebke was around 4-years-old when he saw a Norman Rockwell painting of a Boy Scout rescuing a girl

trapped in a flood. Somewhere around that time, he begged his mother to buy him an old Boy Scout handbook they came across at a garage sale.

"He would just sit there for hours running his finger down the pages," his mother, Michelle Ruebke said. "He couldn't even read."

The fascination with scouting worked out well for Jonathan Ruebke. At age 7, he joined Cub Scouts as a tiger cub, and in his 10 year association with the Boy Scouts of America, Ruebke not only

rose to the highest rank of Eagle Scout, he earned every merit badge BSA has to offer. All 137 of them.

"It's a crazy thought," Ruebke said, while sitting at the table in his family dining room, thinking about the numbers.

More than 83 million youth have belonged to BSA since it was started in 1911. Only a little more than two million of them

achieved the Eagle Scout rank. Ruebke is one of only around 200 boys in the organization's history to earn all the badges.

He credits his family, scout masters and all the adult volunteers in Troop 127 with helping him reach this milestone.

"I couldn't have done it without them," he said.

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