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Contact:

Amanda Nuzum

Chief Development Officer, Mid-Iowa Council, Boy Scouts of America

515-266-2135

Amanda.Nuzum@scouting.org

Mid-Iowa Council, BSA, celebrates Ankeny Scout's extraordinary accomplishment

Des Moines, IA (September 19, 2023) – An Ankeny Boy Scout has accomplished a rare feat that few have attained since the Boy Scouts of America began in 1910.

Charles Stevens, 17, earned every merit badge the National BSA program offers – not just the 21 needed to become an Eagle Scout, the rank that he hopes to achieve next month – but every one of the 138 merit badges possible.

Stevens is one of only five Scouts in Iowa known to have earned every merit badge, according to the Mid-Iowa Council, and is likely one of only several hundred in the country who have achieved the feat since the Scouting program was first established.

“Probably less than half of one percent of Scouts in the program earn all available merit badges, which tells you just how extraordinary of an accomplishment Charlie has completed,” Matt Hill, Mid-Iowa Council scout executive, said.

The BSA's merit badge program allows Scouts to explore subjects to determine if they would like to further pursue them as a career or vocation.

“Many great leaders and innovators in our country found their initial interest in their life's work through a merit badge,” Hill added. “Whether it be a citizenship in society, hiking or welding merit badge, our Scouts have the opportunity to explore a myriad of possible career interests and hobbies through the merit badge program.”

Stevens began Scouting as a Cub Scout in 2016. “It's a great way to learn new things, make friends, and have a positive input in the community,” he said.

His favorite part of Scouting was researching all the future careers that he learned about through merit badges. Earning every merit badge began as a fun goal and then grew into an attainable challenge. “Why not?” Stevens added. “When most opportunities are taken for granted, I much rather take time to appreciate most every opportunity.”

Stevens completed his Eagle project in March 2021, at the Agape Garden at Ankeny First United Methodist Church, which is an ecumenical faith garden that donates fresh produce to area food pantries. He hopes to complete his remaining Eagle rank requirements by the end of October.

About Scouts BSA

Scouts BSA provides exceptional programming to help boys and girls, ages 5-17, learn an appreciation of the outdoors, challenge themselves physically, develop/strengthen character, learn the value of serving others, participate in STEM learning, work in teams and achieve individual success. Its mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. This mission is the driving force behind all Scouting programs.

About Mid-Iowa Council, BSA

Serving 27 Iowa counties, Mid-Iowa Council, BSA is one of the state's foremost youth programs of character development and values-based leadership training. For more information about Mid-Iowa Council, BSA, programs, contact Amanda Nuzum at amanda.nuzum@scouting.org, 515-266-2135 or www.scoutingia.org

Photo caption: Pictured at the Mt. Norquay Via Ferrata ski resort in Alberta, Canada, Charlie continues to explore passions that began in Scouting.

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