

FEATURES

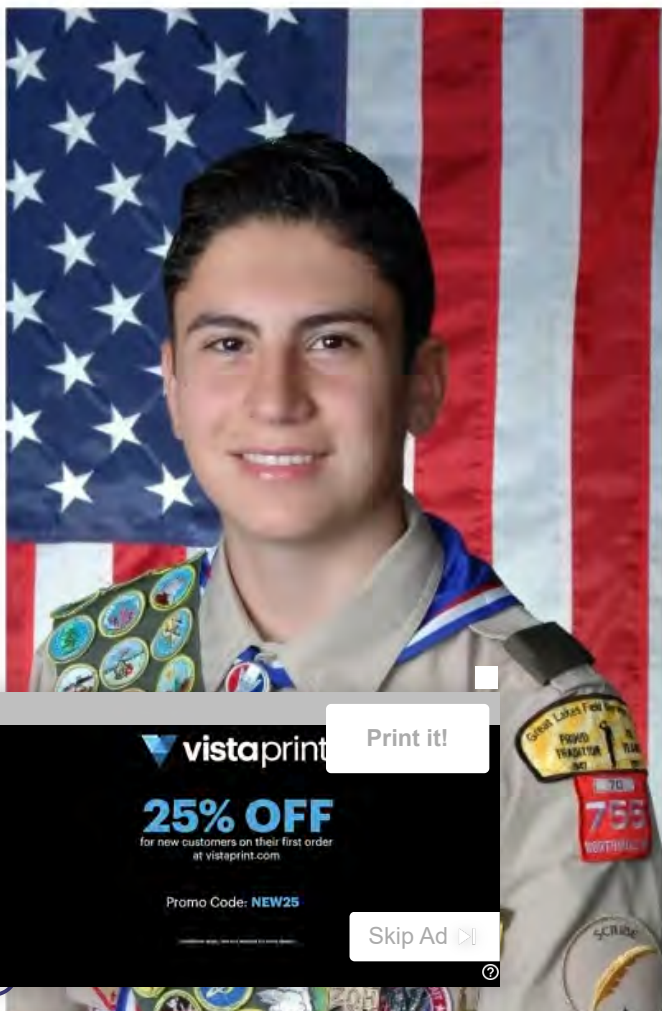
Badges? These brothers are earning ALL the stinking Boy Scout merit badges

George Atala has earned all 137 merit badges, while brother Andrew is on the verge

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Published: July 15, 2021 at 1:38 PM

Tags: **Something Good, Boy Scouts, Merit Badges, Community**



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Help



George Atala (left) earned all 137 merit badges offered by the Boy Scouts of America earlier this year, while Andrew (right) will soon. Contributed photo (Atala Family)

This story is a part of our "Something Good" series, which is designed to remind you of all the goodness in the world: the moments that can make you smile, feel warm inside and applaud humanity.



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At the moment, there might not be a busier seamstress than Yara Atala, and it's all thanks to her sons, George and Andrew.

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George, 16, and Andrew, 14, are Boy Scouts who have spent the last few years earning merit badges, which doesn't make them all that different from other Scouts.

But what does set them apart is the number of badges they've earned in a short time.

Earlier this year, George earned his 137th and final merit badge offered by the Boy Scouts of America.

By the end of this month, Andrew will join him and earn his final merit badge.

Since mom is the one who sews the badges on the sashes, that's been a lot of sewing for Mrs. Atala. There have been so many badges that each boy has needed two



"I did a couple, but I did a really bad job," Andrew said. "[My mom is] pretty good at it."

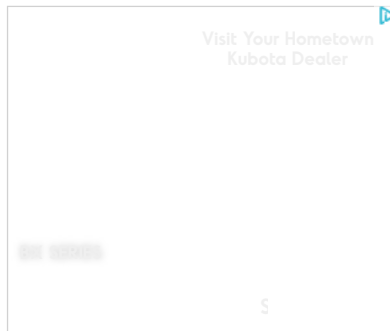
But Yara Atala has been happy to do the sewing, given how dedicated her sons have been to earning the badges since they started during their respective fifth-grade years.

George said his favorite one to earn was the engineering badge, while the hardest was life-saving.

For the life-saving badge, George said he went to a nearby pool, picked up a 20-pound dumbbell from the bottom of the 15-foot deep end, and swam up to the surface with it.

"I just want to inspire a lot of people," George said. "Scouting isn't as popular as it once was. Hopefully, I can inspire young people (to) reach their goals. Anything you set your mind to, you can accomplish."

Andrew said his favorite badge to earn was in scuba diving, while his least favorite is the final one he is about to complete: Bugling.



Even still, he's never played a brass instrument before, and yet, he's persevered, and is about to reach the finish line in terms of badges.

"For me, it wasn't really about how people see it as an achievement," Andrew said. "I was honestly just having fun. By the time I did all the ones I liked, I only had 20 more, so I decided I might as well just go for it."

Both teens have also earned their Eagle Scout designation, which required a service project.

George raised \$4,000 and bought duffel bags for foster kids in Detroit, filling the totes with supplies such as coloring books, toothbrushes and teddy bears.

Andrew and other Scouts raised \$6,000 **and put in a statue of Jesus at his church/middle school**, although it was a longer process than the boys realized, especially considering the pandemic.



in Italy, have it shipped overseas to Michigan, and then install it by digging a 3-foot hole and pouring in a