

Scout earns 122 badges despite life's obstacles

A Kenmore Eagle Scout has the rare distinction of having earned all of the 122 merit badges offered by the Boy Scouts, and was recently awarded a plaque honoring this achievement.

Soon after Jaime Grimes, son of James and Beverly Grimes, joined Boy Scout Troop 539 in the Kenmore Presbyterian Church, he told his mother he planned on earning all the badges despite a learning disability. Today, seven years later, his goals have been accomplished.

"This is an amazing task," his mother said, adding that he earned the badges gradually, at first.

"During summer camp, he would earn 10 badges, and then during the year he'd earn a couple more. When he was interested in the subject, it didn't seem like work to him," Mrs. Grimes said, adding Jaime's enthusiasm drew her husband into Boy Scouting, and two years ago he became his son's troop leader.

But the hardest badge to earn was the first one, due to the dyslexia, a reading disability, she said.

"At first we would read the merit badge book to him, and as time went on, he went on to conquer this himself," she said.

"It's a matter of Jaime's determination. Whatever Jaime sets his heart on - he accomplishes. It's made a mature person out of him."

The plaque awarded to Jaime for having earned all the merit badges available has only been given to 30 other boys nationwide.

"And, I believe, he's the first ever to receive it in this area," Ralph Monahan, committee chairman of Troop 539, said.

At age 13 Jaime earned his Eagle Scout Badge for leading 20 boys in building 100 wood duck houses in the Alabama Swamps, north of Batavia.

Before earning his Eagle Scout Badge, Jaime was admitted to the Order of the Arrow, the highest service order of scouting, and has embraced this membership with the same spit and vigor he has always given to scouting. He has held lodge, served as lodge chief, and as section chief, his mother said.

"He has just received the



SCOUTING DISPLAY: Jaime Grimes of Kenmore poses with the maximum number of Boy Scout badges attainable, which he earned.

Founder's Award, which you have to be nominated for," Mrs. Grimes said, adding the award is given to only one boy in the area.

In the order he has held vigil weekends, work weekends, and worked on food pantries, collected food and clothing, and even painted a bridge at Tiff Farms.

To have earned all the merit badges offered by the Boy Scouts indicates that Grimes is ambitious, said Vincent J. Harmon, a leader in Boy Scouting for more than 40 years and president of the Tonawanda Common Council.

"He's trying to search; he's trying to grow," Mr. Harmon said, adding there are merit badges in scholarship, citizenship, reading, personal finance, astronomy, computers, photography, journalism, engineering, as well as camping activities and environmental activities, and others.

"There are a whole host of exploratory programs, where they can explore various fields of endeavor. The point of Boy Scouting is to prepare them to be independent individuals and enable them to make decisions

about their future," Mr. Harmon said.

While in junior high school, Jaime's teachers wanted him to go to BOCES due to his dyslexia, but he refused because he wanted to attend college, and opted instead to attend a high school which would help prepare him for college.

"He knew he would need the full load of math and English for college," Mrs. Grimes said.

Thanks to his stubborn determination Jaime graduated from St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute this spring with a B-plus average and plans to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology on an engineering scholarship in the fall.

"He's approaching RIT the same way he approached Boy Scouting," his mother said.

"When he sets his mind on something, he works at it until he arrives at it."

Although his career goals are still formative, Jaime may "end up in environmental engineering," Mrs. Grimes predicted.

"And, I'm sure Boy Scouting has had an effect on that."

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