

one of us: Jakob Miller-Ulrich

# Eagle Scout candidate looks to sports medicine



Jakob Miller-Ulrich, who earned every badge but one in the Boy Scouts, has completed his Eagle Scout project, collecting items for the South Lake Animal League in Groveland. He collected 2,177 items. (Lori Carter/correspondent)

**By Lori Carter** Correspondent

CLERMONT — One goal is close to being checked off Jakob Miller-Ulrich's list: He's about to become an Eagle Scout through Boy Scout Troop 784.

Jakob, 17, completed his project, collecting items for the South Lake Animal League in Groveland. His goal was to reach 500 items. He collected 2,177 items, including dry food, wet food, sheets, blankets, bowls — “anything for the animals.” He said he wanted to provide basics so the League could focus on medical needs.

“I was actually very surprised with the amount of items I got,” he said. “The whole community exploded, kind of, and helped me out. I was surprised and completely shocked. It felt great.

“I have animals I take care of — we have cats and a dog, but we take care of the neighborhood cats, too, so I know what is needed.”

Jakob said he turns 18 in a couple weeks, which is the cutoff age to be in Boy Scouts. He said he will be completing his paperwork and going in front of a board soon to justify his Eagle application.

“It will be just unreal for me because of all the years of scouting I've done,” he said.

Jakob earned all but one of the group's 137 merit badges. He was unable to complete the scuba diving badge because of a medical condition. His favorite was the physical fitness merit badge, and he said he learned the most from the nuclear science merit badge.

“I took that before I really even learned anything about nuclear science, atoms or protons,” he said. “It was interesting and difficult at the time. It really helped me a lot in school.”

Jakob, a senior at East Ridge High School, said he's been in cross country and track and field for three years. He would have been in cross country for four years but was sidelined by a broken hip in his sophomore year.

"The pop that I heard as I was sprinting was my leg out of place," he said.

Going up and down stairs at school during the months of healing "was not fun," he said.

Born in Clearwater, Jakob came to Clermont with his parents when he was a few months old, and he joined the Scouts in first grade.

"I just wanted to try something new," he said of Scouts. "I could shoot bows and arrows and canoe — all this way cool stuff."

Jakob said he is thankful for all those who helped him accomplish his goals.

"I'm very grateful for my parents to help me with my goals of getting every single merit badge to my Eagle," he said. "I just appreciate everyone who has been there for me to help me grow up to the person I am now."

He is waiting to see whether he will earn a spot on a cross country team for a college. He said he's not the fastest on the high school team but is in the top five.

If no college will pick him up, Jakob said he plans to attend Lake-Sumter State College, then finish his degree at a state university. He said he plans to go into sports medicine.

"I've taken a few medicine classes, and ever since I was injured my sophomore year, I've just wanted to help other people because I've been there," he said. "I try to put others before myself."



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