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SHAKOPEE SCOUT EARNS ALL 137 MERIT BADGES

15-YEAR-OLD BRANDON NERI SUCCEEDS IN HIS CHALLENGE TO HIMSELF

At only 15 years old, Brandon Neri, an Eagle Scout from Troop 316 in Shakopee, MN, has earned all 137 merit badges.

Neri joined Scouts as a first grader, and swiftly moved up the ranks to his current rank as Eagle Scout by the age of 12. He has obtained many leadership roles along the way, including Patrol Leader and President of Crew 316. After he achieved the role of Eagle Scout, he became a mentor for his troop and began challenging himself to earning more merit badges.

Neri decided to start collecting badges as a "push" and "challenge" to himself. He believes that "setting your goals high" and "believing strongly in what you are doing" is the key to accomplishing such a task.

"In addition to learning a bunch of new skills, I have had some of the greatest experiences, such as whitewater kayaking, high ropes courses, and many other activities," Neri said. "I have also met some really good friends that I'll have for a lifetime."

HOW IT BEGAN

He began his challenge with the earning of his first merit badge, snow sports, and earned his last on June 25, 2017, with the earning of the Oceanography badge. He said his favorite badge to earn was the Kayaking badge because it made him learn a new skill that "helped [him] paddle [his] way through rapids" on the St. Louis River.

"By earning all of the Merit Badges, I have been exposed to a wide variety of topics that have helped me find hobbies and potential careers that I would have never know of without these badges," Neri said.

With every merit badge earned, Neri has learned new skills, and was able to find his passion for engineering and computer science. He plans to use the skills he has learned through Scouts in furthering his education and "making the world, and the lives of those on it, better."

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Neri plans to stay active in Scouts in the future as well. As well as mentoring younger scouts in his troop, he has spent the last two years serving as a staff member at Grey Wolf Youth Leadership Training. He recently has been spending his time in Scouts finishing earning all the merit badges, and earning other special awards such as the God & Life religious emblem and World Conservation Award.

"The Boy Scout program has taught me many great things and has given me a great deal of opportunities that I am very grateful and appreciative of," Neri said. "I would like to be able to do all I can to give back to the program and the others involved in it."



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