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O.C. Eagle Scout collected 141 merit badges - all that you can possibly earn

Aug. 31, 2016 | Updated Sept. 3, 2016 10:05 p.m.



17-year-old Michael Traynham of Lake Forest has earned every possible merit badge as an Eagle Scout.

KYUSUNG GONG, STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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By NATHAN PERCY (/reporter-profile/nathan-2415-percy) / STAFF WRITER

Mission Viejo resident Michael Traynham can officially say he's done it all in the realm of Scouting.

The 17-year old was recently honored by his Lake Forest-based Eagle Scout troop, as well as Lake Forest Mayor Andrew Hamilton, for earning every merit badge available as an Eagle Scout.

Traynham, a Mission Viejo High senior, has a story for every one and along the way he learned the importance of having support and surrounding himself with those who aided him along his journey.

In five years, Traynham earned 141 merit badges, five of which are no longer available. He is the newest member of about 320 Eagle Scouts in the history of the organization to earn all possible merit badges.

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subject=OCREGISTER%20compare, earning the rank of Eagle Scout requires Scout members to

200.C.% earn 21 merit badges.
20Eagle%
20Scout% Earning those merit badges has taken Traynham and his family to different parts of the country, including North Carolina, Texas and New Mexico.
20collected%
20141% On Monday night, Traynham sat down with his troop leader, Dave Klein, at Saddleback Church to sign off on his final merit badge: backpacking.
20merit%
20badges%
20-%20all% Traynham completed the task in New Mexico, where he hiked 75 miles in 10 days and set up camp in between. After meeting with his troop on Monday, Traynham and his father, Mike, along with other members of his troop, were on their way to San Pedro to take a bus to San Diego and hop aboard a naval ship.

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Q. How did you get into Boy Scouts?

A. I was a Cub Scout for a few weeks and that path just started falling apart, so I did something called Indian Guides, which was like Scouts, until I was in middle school. And then when I got into the seventh grade, my dad talked to me about joining the Boy Scouts. I thought, Ok, that gives me something to do.

Q. Did you have an idea beforehand that you wanted to accomplish this feat or did it come about over time?

A. At first, I thought, I'm going to get the required amount of merit badges and be done, but after doing merit badges, I wanted to see what the others had in store, what different experiences were out there.

Q. What was the most challenging merit badge to earn and why? How did you overcome the challenge?

A. Probably backpacking, mostly because of the overnights and three-day hikes. I think the only way I could accomplish that and what helped me accomplish it was the encouragement of friends and family.

Q. Was there ever a point where you felt like giving up on earning a certain merit badge? How did you overcome that adversity?

A. Multiple times, I thought about giving up, but the support from my friends, my family especially my mom (Vickie), she's been the driving force, the encouragement the whole way through. So, I think without the encouragement of my mom, I wouldn't have been here doing this.

Q. What is the biggest takeaway from this journey of earning every merit badge?

A. Most of the whole thing is, even though you think it's not possible to finish, just take it slow, don't try to rush it. Take it step by step and just take as long as you need.

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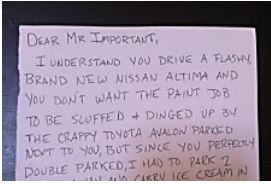
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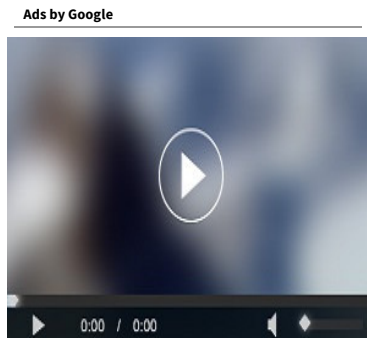
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