



← I rappelled off a 28-story building to raise money for underprivileged Scouts. (And I'm quite afraid of heights!)

FROM THE CORNEA TO THE CAMPSITE

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I am an Eagle Scout and grew up in the Scout program. As an adult, I've been a leader for the Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs of my two boys, now ages 8 and 14. I also serve as chairman of the board of directors for the Boy Scouts of America's Orange County Council, which serves 20,000 kids in Southern California with nationally recognized camps and programs. It's been a great way to be involved in my boys' lives and to help kids beyond my immediate community.

Adolescent boys and girls have incredible capacity to change their lives for the better. In Scouting, we give kids a set of rules to live by and an expectation that they'll treat each other with respect. Here's an example: A 12-year-old boy named David* joined our troop some years ago. David's dad left his mom before he was born, and his

mom has always struggled with drug addiction. He was taken care of by his mom's friend. David's mom had moved him from city to city each year of his young life, abruptly taking him out of school to move where she could more easily find drugs.

He has never been enrolled in the same school twice. He frequently would get into fights and got mostly Ds and Fs in school. Most of David's teachers predicted that he would end up in juvenile detention or as an adult in prison. In our troop, we gave extra adult supervision to make sure the other boys were safe, but David quickly took to learning knots and outdoor skills and enjoyed teaching other kids these skills. Because Scouting gave him an environment where he could have a reset, he took pride in leading others by example. He was elected patrol leader by his fellow Scouts, and, over

a matter of weeks, we witnessed a transformation of a boy from a trouble maker to a future leader—one who took pride in himself and his work. David's school performance dramatically improved, and, over the next couple of months, he spoke about one day joining the military. The story is not yet over for David. His mom decided to pull him out of school to move him again. But before he left our troop, we made contact with a local Scouting leader in the community he was moving to. Our hope is that his new troop will take David in as we did and give him at least a small part of his life where he will have structure and order. I have little doubt that, as long as Scouting is in his life, this young man will continue to make us proud. That's just one story of many, and this is what keeps me involved. ■

* (name changed for privacy)