



Posted on Sun, May. 08, 2011

'It keeps me doing the right thing': Eagle Scout loves all things outdoors

BY TERI MADDOX
News-Democrat

Eighteen-year-old Weston Hock loves hiking, biking, camping, canoeing, rafting and meeting survivalist challenges in the woods.

His mother, Kathleen, 53, of Millstadt, has no idea why.

"We don't really do that as a family," she said. "We have a boat, and we go to Lake of the Ozarks almost every weekend. But when it comes to the end of the day, I like my own bed and a hot shower."

Weston's love of the outdoors helped keep him involved in Boy Scout Troop 24 at St. Augustine's Catholic Church in Belleville throughout junior high and high school.

This spring, he was named Eagle Scout of the Year by the Boy Scouts of America Lewis and Clark Council.

"(Weston is) a nice kid, but he also represents the principles of Scout law with his leadership and involvement in the community," said Phil Reis, 47, of O'Fallon, who served on the award committee.

Weston repaired and repainted walls of Millstadt Village Hall's council chambers and bathrooms for his Eagle Scout project last summer.

He also has done volunteer work through Althoff Catholic High School, St. Augustine's Youth Ministry and the Southern Illinois 32nd Degree Masonic Learning Center for Children in Belleville.

"(Volunteerism has) kept me out of trouble," he said. "It keeps me doing the right thing."

Weston is the son of Kathleen and Ed Hock Jr. He is graduating May 15 from Althoff, where he ran cross-country, bowled and played volleyball.

Weston plans to major in engineering at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

"We're very proud of him," said his mother, who has worked in the Stubblefield dental office for 30 years.

Weston was diagnosed with dyslexia in fifth grade. He became one of the first students at the 32nd Degree Learning Center.

Weston later gave speeches to support the organization and helped raise money through a walkathon.

"He's very compassionate," his mother said. "He cares a lot about other people, especially small children."

In January, Weston spent 11 days in Honduras as part of his Althoff senior service project. Students helped care for children at an orphanage in San Pedro Sula.

They also hauled rock and built a stove and bathroom in a remote mountain village.

"It was really an eye-opening experience," Weston said. "We're very fortunate to have what we have here. They have electricity, but it can go out at any time, and you never know when it's going to come back on."

One of Weston's favorite Scout experiences was traveling to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota two years ago.

Scouts had to survive in the wild with only the equipment and supplies they carried in canoes.

"I've had really good (Boy Scout) leaders," Weston said. "They're always planning activities and taking us places. They've been really good role models."
Contact reporter Teri Maddox at tmaddox@bnd.com or 239-2473.

© 2007 Belleville News-Democrat and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.belleville.com>

