



2023 NATIONAL JAMBOREE

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Media Contact:

PR@Scouting.org

<https://jamboree.scouting.org/media>

Boy Scouts of America to Unveil Bronze Statue at Summit Bechtel Reserve To Honor and Inspire Girls and Women in Scouting

“Ascending Eagle” Dedication Ceremony is Part of Scouting’s Women of Character Program Running Concurrent with 2023 National Jamboree

MOUNT HOPE, West Virginia (July 20, 2023) — The Boy Scouts of America announced today that, as part of Scouting’s 3- day “Women of Character” Program, it will unveil and dedicate an original bronze statue to honor and inspire past, current and future generations of girls and women involved in Scouting. Envisioned and created by West Virginia artist Jamie Lester, the 8-foot high, nearly 1,000 pound “Ascending Eagle” statue will be unveiled at a dedication ceremony scheduled for Saturday, July 22nd from 9:30 – 10:15 a.m. at the Scott Visitor Center, located at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia, where the 2023 National Jamboree will run from July 19th – July 28th.

The original concept for creation of a statue to honor women in Scouting was the brainchild of Dave Alexander of Phoenix, Arizona, a Distinguished Eagle Scout, Silver Buffalo Award recipient, National Executive Board member, and a major, lifelong supporter of the organization. In collaboration with Scouting, and working directly with Jamie Lester, Mr. Alexander sought to establish a monument that “captured the spirit and confidence” of the thousands of girls and women who’ve been involved in Scouting since 1912, and that served to inspire future generations of female Scouts and Scouters. Mr. Alexander said, “Whether male or female, all Scouts will benefit from the symbolism displayed in this statue. It serves as a constant reminder to strive toward their goals. If they can dream it, they can do it.”

First commissioned by Mr. Alexander in 2021, the project was initially delayed by COVID, but the design work continued and with approval of the initial sketch, the project proceeded quickly. According to Mr. Lester, “The wings that extend from the statue’s backpack are symbolic of the Valkyrie, from ancient Norse mythology, and are representative of female power and prestige in the Nordic culture. She is holding a torch and climbing upward, to depict the energy, wisdom, accomplishments, and leadership women bring to Scouting. The “On My

Honor” inscription – the first three words of the Scout Oath – suggest that men and women in Scouting share the same ideals.”

Artist Jamie Lester confesses to be a “proud West Virginian” who began creating art at the age of three; influenced by his mother, a watercolor painter, and his father, a coal miner who introduced him to whittling. After graduating from West Virginia University in 1997, Lester founded Vandalia Bronze in Morgantown, WV. In 2021, Lester co-founded the Love Hope Center for the Arts, a non-profit educational space in Fayetteville, WV.

In addition to several statues he previously created for the Boy Scouts of America, Lester has produced a long list of commissioned works, including statues of notable individuals including actor Don Knotts, basketball legend Jerry West, and former New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner. He’s sculpted life-sized portraits of more than 60 members of the World Golf Hall of Fame, and continues to sculpt all new inductees. He created the “Wall of Remembrance” in Brooklyn, New York, commemorating 105 firefighters from that borough who lost their lives in the World Trade Center attack. He also designed the observe side of the West Virginia state quarter as part of the U.S. Mint’s 50 State quarter program.

Women of Character Program Seeks to Expand Opportunities for Girls and Young Women

Scouting’s “Women of Character” event is designed to foster thought leadership, generate support for female-centric Scouting units across the United States, and ensure that young women have the opportunity to participate in the life-changing experiences that Scouting provides. The event will be attended by philanthropists and thought leaders who understand how young women can benefit from the leadership training, character development, and practical life skills that Scouting provides. In addition to the unveiling of the “Ascending Eagle,” highlights of the event will include:

- Testimonials from members of the inaugural class of female Eagle Scouts, and breakout sessions for all guests to share challenges, successes, and keys to overcoming obstacles;
- Scouter-led tours of many of the action-packed activities taking place at the National Jamboree, including the “Women in Scouting” community space; and
- A keynote address by American political analyst Dana Perino, founder of Minute Mentoring®, and former White House Press Secretary, serving under President George W. Bush.

Girls have been part of the Boy Scouts of America Venturing and Exploring programs as early as 1969. Cub Scouting welcomed girls in 2018 and in 2019 girls began registering for Scouts BSA (formerly known as “Boy Scouts”), making it possible for them to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. Participation and advancement requirements for all Scouting ranks are identical for boys and girls.

Since the BSA welcomed young girls into the Cub Scout program in 2018, and young women into Scouts BSA in 2019, more than 361,000 female participants have joined the program, currently representing nearly 16% of total membership. Women and girl BSA Scouts and Scouters will also represent more than 20% of the participants at the 2023 National Scouting Jamboree.

As of June 1, 2023, more than 5,000 girls have earned the rank of Eagle Scout. Based on recent research of female Eagle Scout, 75% of those surveyed reported that Scouting has had a great deal of influence on their ability to set and achieve goals. More than 70% said Scouting has enabled them to be a good team player, to take better care of the environment, and to treat others with respect.



About the 2023 National Jamboree

Media can find more information about the National Jamboree, as well as register for media credentials at <https://jamboree.scouting.org/media> or contact PR@Scouting.org



National Jamboree B-Roll & Video

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/boyscoutsofamerica/albums/72177720305973950>

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2023 National Jamboree Logo

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About the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America provides the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training, which helps young people to be "Prepared. For Life.®" The Scouting organization is composed of more than 1 million youth members between the ages of 7 and 21 and approximately 960,000 volunteers in local councils throughout the United States and its territories. For more information on the Boy Scouts of America, please visit www.scouting.org.



How to Join Scouting

For information on joining the Boy Scouts of America, please visit BeAScout.org.