

Teen organizes
toy and book
drive in pursuit
of elite ranking

For years, KayLee Murray was a Girl Scout but decided to join Scouts BSA (previously known as Boy Scouts of America) in February 2019 when gender equal participation was allowed, more than 100 years after the Boy Scouts began.

"I joined Scouts BSA because when I was younger I would always see the cool and fun things my brothers would do in Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts and I wanted to do them too, but wasn't allowed to go camping or on many of the activities because I was a girl and not officially in the troop/pack," Murray said.

“My parents put me in Girl Scouts thinking we would do similar activities and lessons as Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts, but that wasn’t the case.”

At her first summer camp with Girl Scouts, Murray was excited to learn how to use a knife, start a fire, and set up a tent, but the group was only shown how to do things; they weren't allowed to hold or carry a knife, they were able to build structures for fires, but not actually light them, and they didn't sleep in tents.

Murray eventually quit Girl Scouts in the fifth grade after earning her bronze star because she wasn't having fun and her troop didn't like outdoor activities. When the ability to join Scouts BSA opened, she jumped at the chance to do all the things she had watched her brothers do.

Murray said that within her Scouts BSA troop, males and females have their own factions but are partnered together to streamline services. Boys and girls are comfortable interacting at meetings and activities, while still doing other activities separately.

Murray is in Troop 5033, which is associated with Troop 33. There are 14 male Scouts; the female group has only five



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

KeyLee Murray hikes Silver Falls State Park with her Scouts troop. Murray joined Scouts when gender equal participation was allowed earlier this year.

“Being a Scout has enriched my life by making me realize what’s most important.”

— KayLee Murray

Murray has 17 of the 21 merit badges needed to achieve Eagle Scout rank. Her Eagle project involves holding a toy and book drive for Providence Children's Health. She is spreading the word through social media and flyers, along with asking local churches to help.

Due to COVID-19, Murray and her helpers will wear masks, socially distance, wash their hands often and sanitize all donations. A student at

Clackamas Community College, Murray plans to transfer to Mt. Hood Community College next fall where she will continue her education toward earning a bachelor of arts in graphic design. In her free time, Murray swims competitively and is a bookworm.

“Being a Scout has enriched my life by making me realize what’s most important. I can do anything I set my mind to, even with strict deadlines I have to

meet. It has brought me even closer to the other Scouts and their families in the troop that I knew before," she said. "The other Scouts and our adult leaders have really become my second family in the last two years that I have seen them almost weekly, if not twice a week. I knew many of the families before, but getting to go camping with them and making memories together brought us that much closer together."

WANT TO HELP?

WHAT: KayLee Murray is organizing a toy and book drive to earn her Eagle Scout rank.

WHERE: Drop off items at Valley View Evangelical Church 11501 S.E. Sunnyside Road.

WHEN: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturdays and 1-5 p.m. Sundays, Nov. 7-22



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