

Six Young Men Soar: Cranford's Newest Eagle Scouts Honored

A Cranford Eagle Scout was also named the VFW Scout of the Year for the state of New Jersey



By Jennifer Glackin

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CRANFORD, NJ - An honor many years in the making, six young men from Cranford soared on Sunday as they finally were able to attend a Court of Honor in person to recognize their earned rank of Eagle Scouts. It was a day to "celebrate their faith, commitment, and service," said Scoutmaster Bob Meier.

In order to attain the rank of Eagle Scout, a young man must complete each Boy Scout rank, complete 21 merit badges, serve six months in a leadership position, and develop and lead a service project. According to Assistant Scoutmaster Andy Koneski, roughly 1 in 100 scouts in Cranford become an Eagle Scout. The six young men honored Sunday were Eagle Scout number 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, and 160 in the history of Cranford Troop 75.

Many of the young men from Troop 75 are already in college. Some completed their Eagle Scout projects in 2019 and 2020, but no Courts of Honor were held due to the pandemic.

Jack Gard led a team of scouts to build a community garden in Hanson Park in 2019. They used the square foot gardening method and harvested and donated over 50 pounds of food to Cranford Family Cares.

Thomas Cutro completed his project in 2020. He built a Little Free Library in Hampton Park. He also led a group of volunteers to clean up the park in order to accommodate the library, a small bench, and a stone path.

Max Kapetanakis renovated the St. Michael's School playroom, where he was once a student. Kapetanakis rebuilt the steps, put in a railing, and added book bag cubbies for the children who use the room for aftercare.

Harrison Brown painted, cleaned, and repaired the inside of the Cranford Dramatic Club during the pandemic when the Club was unable to perform shows. He cleaned cables, painted walls and steel beams, and repaired the vinyl floors.

Logan Gard, a senior in high school, built insect houses for Groundwork Elizabeth, and organization that provides plants and seeds to the community. The insect houses encourage pollinators to spend time at the micro-farm.

Joshua Schwartz is also a senior. He built a [Little Free Pantry](#) at the Cranford United Methodist Church to help assist families during the pandemic. The Little Free Pantry allows people to take what they need anonymously.

Troop 75 has had a partnership with the Cranford United Methodist Church for over 100 years, since its inception in Cranford, Meier said during the ceremony.

Cranford Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty congratulated the Scouts on their accomplishment. "It's an honor to meet these very remarkable young men," she added.

"Your community is so proud of you, and Union County is so proud of you," said Union County Commissioner Bette Jane Kowalski. Kowalski also called Meier "a Cranford treasure" for his commitment to scouting.

Mark Schwartz, and Jim Silkensen, of Cranford Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 335, presented the Eagle Scouts with certificates of recognition. Schwartz also awarded Eagle Scout Joshua Schwartz with the VFW Scout of the Year Award for both Cranford and for the state of New Jersey.

Jack Gard spoke on behalf of his fellow Eagle Scouts. "The scouting program has brought us all a long way," he said. "We have the opportunity to succeed and do great things with our knowledge from scouting."

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