

Addison Trail senior earns Eagle Scout status

Addison Trail senior Jackson Ustas has earned Eagle Scout status, the highest rank attainable in Boy Scouts of America.

Those who earn that rank earn at least 21 merit badges and demonstrate Scout Spirit through the Boy Scout Oath and Law, service and leadership, which includes organizing, planning and completing an extensive service project in the community.

District 88 recently sat down with Ustas to ask him about his experience with Boy Scouts, his Eagle Scout project and what he plans to do in the future.

Troop number: 410

In Boy Scouts since: I started in Cub Scouts in 2003 and continued on into Boy Scouts in 2008.

Received Eagle Scout status in: 2015

Achieving the rank of Eagle Scout has been a long and exciting journey. It represents hundreds of personal hours of volunteerism, leadership and service, but I am glad I remained committed to make Eagle Scout – even though I had a rigorous academic course load with numerous Advanced Placement (AP) and honors classes all four years of high school. Fortunately, I was able to successfully balance my studies (35 ACT score and 4.47 GPA) with being a scholar-athlete in multiple sports and also being involved with numerous musical groups and ensembles. Aside from working with other clubs and activities inside and outside of school, I also volunteer at my church, and I am a caddie at Medinah Country Club. Somehow, Scouting never took a backseat, and I eventually ranked up to Eagle Scout.

Eagle Scout project: My father, Glenn, is an avid golfer, and he taught my sister, Olivia, and me to play golf when we were very young. Olivia (Addison Trail class of 2014) and I became golfers on the Addison Trail golf teams, following in our father's footsteps, as he was on the Addison Trail Boys Golf Team as well (class of 1977). Our love of golf led me to Addison Park District's award-winning Links & Tees Golf Facility, and I decided my Eagle Scout Service Project would involve the beautification of Putter's Peak, the miniature golf course at Links & Tees. I wanted to give back to a place that provided much enjoyment and recreation for my friends, family and me throughout the years. I have volunteered at Links & Tees in years past for Park Pride Cleanup Days, and I wanted to continue with my service work for the Addison Park District. I planned and led the project, which involved the chopping and cleaning up of old brush, weeding, painting and placing new mulch. I am thankful that many, many volunteers helped me undertake this beautification project and bring it to fruition. After the plans were all in place, my team helped me implement and complete the project in just one weekend. We logged more than 100 man hours, and I am grateful to the numerous Scout volunteers and their families who helped me give back to Links & Tees.

Joined Boy Scouts because: In 2003, some of my first-grade friends and I decided to join Cub Scouts because we heard it was fun and we could learn a lot of cool things outside of school. Interestingly, only 1 out of 100 boys who start as a Cub Scout will make it to Eagle Scout, so it is somewhat remarkable that several of the boys from my Cub Scout Pack (Pack 420) and I have become Eagle Scouts. District 88 will feature the other four Eagle Scouts in a future newsletter. I

will attend college out of state, but when I am in town, I plan to work with Troop 420 on various projects, and I will continue mentoring the younger boys.

Future plans: I will attend The University of Alabama, where I have earned a full academic scholarship for engineering. I will be part of the Honors College and will double major in computer engineering and math. I also will begin my business studies this fall, working toward my Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree as a freshman in the STEM initiative program. Olivia also is enrolled in that unique program at Alabama and will continue her studies as a sophomore engineering student this fall.