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Local Boy Scout Zachary Zwahlen earns 121 merit badges

College student plans to remain involved in Scouting

By MADELON HYNES
REVIEW-JOURNAL



Zachary Zwahlen earned all 121 Boy Scout merit badges.

Zachary Zwahlen, 18, succeeded in earning all 121 Boy Scout merit badges after seeing a fellow Scout accomplish the same feat.

Zachary says he set his goal when he was 12 or 13 years old, inspired by older Scout Zachary Tippetts, who was working toward earning all of the merit badges.

"I saw how much fun he was having," says Zachary Zwahlen, who was a member of Troop No. 469 of the Las Vegas Area Council of the Boys Scouts of America. "Zachary

Tippetts' parents set up a group to work on badges since it's not as easy to get some of them done by yourself."

"I decided that it would be fun to get them all," he adds. "I went to classes and Scout camps and did some on my own."

A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Zachary joined the Cub Scouts and then Boy Scouts through his church.

"Some people thought I was crazy, but my family was supportive," says Zachary of his parents Eric and Sue Zwahlen, brother Cory, 12, and sisters Brittany, 19, and Amy, 15.

"We're impressed and very happy about it," says Sue with a laugh.

The purpose of merit badges, Zachary says, is "to get experience on topics you wouldn't be exposed to learn about otherwise."

The merit badges he earned included studying and learning about wildlife and the environment, participating in arts and crafts and sports activities, and learning first aid and emergency preparedness.

"Water skiing was a lot of fun, I had never done that before," recalls Zachary. "For the theater badge, the group worked together writing and acting out a small skit."

Zachary heard from Tippetts after he achieved his goal.

"He was really excited for me," says Zachary. "It was really inspiring to have someone else accomplish it."

Zachary, who was home-schooled, received his associate of arts degree in music from the College of Southern Nevada. A junior and organ performance major at Brigham Young University, Zachary plans to be involved with the Boy Scouts organization either as a troop leader or scoutmaster in the future.

"Boy Scouts gave me a lot of leadership skills," says Zachary, who adds that his goal helped him to overcome his shyness by forcing him to "do things instead of sitting around waiting for them."

"It helped me to become a little more self-confident," he says.

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• Local high school choirs from the Clark County School District will be performing holiday songs Saturdays and Sundays through Dec. 16 at Walker Furniture, 301 S. Martin Luther King Blvd. The choirs performing include: Coronado High School at noon Saturday; Basic High School at 3 p.m. Saturday and noon Dec. 15; Sierra Vista High School at 3 p.m. Sunday; Arbor View High School at 3 p.m. Dec. 15; and Las Vegas Academy of International Studies, Visual and Performing Arts at 1 p.m. Dec. 16.

If you know of a worthy candidate for this column, mail information to Youth Spotlight, Las Vegas Review-Journal, P.O. Box 70, Las Vegas, NV 89125-0070, or send faxes to 383-4676.

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