

## **SCOUTING AT ST. MARTIN'S**

St. Martin's is the Charter Organization for Boy Scout Troop 601 and supports Cub Scout Packs 601 and 623 as well as Daisy Scout Troop 18 and the Venture Scout program.

All units would welcome new members. Anyone who has interest should feel free to contact me by email or phone and I will initiate contact with the appropriate leadership.

Lincoln Drake, Charter Organization Representative for St. Martin's

Troop 601 aims to prepare youth ages 11-17 for lives of leadership and service guided by the principles of the Scout Oath and Law. The Troop is a unit with Scouts BSA, the organization that many commonly refer to by its prior name Boy Scouts of America. In the spring of 2024 Scouts BSA announced that it will change its name to Scouting America effective February 2025. The change in name is intended to be more inclusive and provide a clear signal that all youth are welcome to participate in the opportunities Scouting offers regardless of gender. Although Troop 601 does not currently have any female youth members we would welcome any in the future and are pleased to be a part of an inclusive organization.

The Troop recorded 13 registered youth members at the end of calendar year 2024. Our current membership is made of mostly of high school aged Scouts working to complete their final rank advancements ahead of their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. The Troop has typically met 2-3 times per month at St. Martin's. As our Scouts age they take on new commitments at school, and for many of our youth at work as well. As our Scouts age it has become more challenging to schedule meetings and activities that accommodate the busy schedules of our youth. In consideration of this the Troop made a decision to reduce Troop meetings to 1-2 times per month beginning in the fall of 2024.

Youth lead camping remains a cornerstone of the Scouting experience. Camping provides opportunities for youth to plan, assign and share the responsibilities of cooking and cleaning and appreciate the outdoors in a device free environment. Troop 601 participated in summer camp this year at Camp Gamble near Farmington, MO. At camp our Scouts earned merit badges and engaged in outdoor activities including swimming, kayaking, fishing and star gazing away from the lights of the city.

Troop 601 strives for at least one high adventure camping opportunity per year at one or more of Scouting's national properties. In 2024 the Troop was pleased that two of our Scouts had the opportunity to visit Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia along with members of local Troop 677. At the reserve they travelled around 50 miles on the New River through a combination of

rafting and kayaking. While on the river they stopped at a different camp site each night, spent full days on the water and enjoyed a lot of sun.

The National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) program is designed to help youth strengthen leadership skills through a blend of activities, discussions, games and presentations in a team environment. In 2024 Troop 601 was fortunate to have Tej Atwal complete the program. Tej has brought the skills developed in this program back to our Troop to share with his peers. We are happy to share that Tej will return to NYLT as a member of the staff in 2025.

Merit badges are one of the most familiar aspects of Scouting. Merit badges help Scouts learn valuable life skills as well as explore interests that otherwise may not be accessible to them. Scouts select the merit badges they choose to pursue in at a pace to match their own goals and interests. Between them our Scouts earned 36 merit badges in 2024. Our Scouts earned badges in subjects ranging from cooking, kayaking, space exploration, wilderness survival and welding, among others.

In addition to earning merit badges our members earned 12 rank advancements. Among these advancements were two new Eagle Scouts, Eshwar Murali and Michael Gorzela. This is the highest rank in Scouting and is a significant achievement. It requires years of discipline and work culminating in a Scout lead service project where the youth apply the leadership skills they have developed through their Scouting career.

Service is another key aspect of Scouting. Acts of service create chances to learn leadership, organization, develop practical skills as well as creating a deeper appreciation of what it means to be part of a local, national and global community. In 2024 Troop 601 logged a total of 259.5 hours of service, including 10.5 hours of work on conversation projects.

Troop 601 remains grateful to St. Martin's for supporting Scouting America and Troop 601. Through your support we can offer opportunities for leadership, outdoor adventure and character development. The youth and adult leaders of Troop 601 would like to offer a heartfelt thank you and our best wishes for a great 2025 to all of the St Martin's community!

Mike Nagel, Scoutmaster