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Orland Park Eagle Scout Project Promotes Pedestrian Safety



Carl Sandburg High School Junior Joe Boyce was working on his traffic safety merit badge when he chose to focus on pedestrian safety with his Eagle Scout Project.

"I wanted to do something that would help people all over Orland Park," Boyce explained. "I heard that Mayor McLaughlin has been working to make Orland Park more pedestrian friendly and I was introduced to the idea."

Boyce's project included the creation of pedestrian flags, buckets and signs to promote pedestrian safety in Orland Park. Walkers grab a florescent flag from the bucket at a high pedestrian traffic area, carry it as they cross the street so motorists see them and place the flag in the bucket on the other side of the street.

"I saw an article about cities around the world using flags to help make pedestrians more visible," McLaughlin said. "I held onto the story knowing it would be a great Eagle Scout Project."

To reach the rank of Eagle Scout, realized by just five percent of scouts nationwide, a Boy Scout must complete the six prior ranks, earn 21 merit badges with 13 required badges and while a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, any school or community.

"Pedestrian safety and being a pedestrian friendly community is very important in Orland Park," said Mayor Dan McLaughlin. "We appreciate what Joe has done and thank everyone with Troop 318 who helped make the flags."

Towns across the country and around the world have implemented similar programs encouraging pedestrians to help make themselves more visible.

"I wanted to help make Orland Park more pedestrian friendly," Boyce explained. "My family and I all walk, jog and ride bikes so this project was perfect for scouting, for my community and for me."

"We had more than 35 scouts and 10 to 12 leaders help make the flags and buckets for the project," Boyce said. "Without the adult leaders in my troop and the scouts from Troop 318, this project would not have been successful without the manual labor devoted to it."

Boyce raised all of the funds for the project, inviting local businesses and community groups to contribute and by creating an online fundraising campaign. Boyce reported that a number of local businesses donated goods and services, including OneUp Signs, WalMart, Dunkin Donuts, Home Depot and more. Major donors to the project included the Rotary Club of Orland Park, the Knights of Columbus, Joe Rizza Ford, Bettenhausen Dodge and Orland Park Village Clerk John Mehalek.

Pedestrian flags and buckets have been installed 143rd Street at Beacon Avenue; Fun Drive at West Avenue; 149th Street at Ravinia Avenue; 147th Street at Ravinia Avenue; and at Wheeler and Hemlock Drives. Other intersections in the village are also slated for pedestrian flags.

“The reactions to the flags have been overwhelmingly positive with many nice comments on my fundraising page as well as the village’s social media outlets,” Boyce said. McLaughlin added that pedestrians have called his office to compliment the program.

Boyce has been in scouts since joining as a Tiger Cub in first grade, having been a scout for the last 10 years. A junior at Carl Sandburg, Boyce plays on the football team and wrestles. He is a member of the Sandburg Athletic Leadership Council, Mathletes, Mu Alpha Theta, Key Club and WYSE/JETS.

McLaughlin added, “We know that Orland Park is a great walking community and Joe’s project will help make it even more pedestrian friendly.”