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Scout donates 250 reading glasses to Butler Hospital as Eagle service project

By Matt Bower



JOB WELL DONE: (Front row, left to right): Boy Scouts Gregory Goins and Matt Palmer pose with fellow Scouts and the collection of reading glasses that Palmer collected for his Eagle project. The Scouts helped Palmer package the glasses, which he delivered to Butler Hospital.



Palmer knew then and there he wanted to collect reading glasses for the patients to assist them in reading the tests and participating in other activities at the hospital.

“That was great because it showed that people cared enough to give the most [they could],” he said.

Troop members then assisted Palmer in boxing up the glasses, which he delivered to Butler last Tuesday. In addition to the glasses, Palmer said he collected about \$80 in donations, which went to purchasing more glasses. The total donated came to 250 pairs.

“I was looking for the community to come together and help out those in need, which is what the Eagle project is all about,” he said. “I realized that an opportunity to help out, even in the smallest way, can make a big difference and I think this [project] enlightened people that this was a pressing need.”

Palmer said when he dropped off the glasses; the head of pediatrics was “thrilled” and thanked him.

“It was exhilarating because I had a chance to work with the Scouts and the hospital to do something good and philanthropic,” he said. “I felt good as a person.”

Palmer said he was initially brought in to Butler to assist with the collection and evaluation of patient data from satisfaction surveys and questionnaires filled out after treatment.

“They needed someone who works well with data and computers to evaluate the data because it’s important for the hospital to know,” he said.

Palmer said no one on the staff had the spare time to attend to the data, and although there’s a healthy volunteer base, many did not have the skills necessary to work with the data.

“But it just depends on what the hospital needs,” he said. “There’s a hospitality suite where patients gather their

Matt Palmer has been volunteering at Butler Hospital since December and it was his work there that gave him the idea for his Eagle Scout project.

Palmer, who will be a senior at Pilgrim this year, is a member of Boy Scout Troop 49 Lakewood and when it came time for his Eagle project, he knew he wanted to do something to help out the patients at the hospital, but he wasn’t exactly sure how to go about it.

“I asked the director of occupational therapy about some good project ideas and I talked to the staff about some ideas,” he said. “They told me that the patients often take written tests and psych evaluations and many of them can’t see too well.”

Palmer knew then and there he wanted to collect reading glasses for the patients to assist them in reading the tests and participating in other activities at the hospital.

“This makes such a difference because it gives the patients the ability to participate in activities at the hospital they otherwise couldn’t,” he said.

Starting in April, Palmer set up collection boxes at Butler, as well as Lakewood Baptist Church, where the Troop is

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belongings after they're discharged and I helped out with that, as well as helping the patients get around the building, which can be confusing because the building is from the 1800s, but they keep adding on to it."

Palmer said the Eagle Scout project empowers kids who want to make a difference and help out in ways that were not imaginable beforehand.

"It gives me, the troop and the organization the ability to test a boy's commitment to his community and the world around him, and if he wants to make a difference, he can do that through the Eagle project," he said. "Then he can be held to a high standard, giving back to his community and country."

Palmer said he doesn't know what he wants to study in college yet, but he said, "Anything that grabs my passion in college, I'll be sure to pursue."

And he isn't done with Butler.

"For my senior project, I'm focusing on education at Butler and doing fieldwork in the children's center there," he said. "I'm looking at regular public school education versus education in a special setting, such as a psychiatric hospital."

Palmer said his favorite aspect of the project was getting to talk about the impact of it with the doctors, therapists and staff at Butler that were aware of the project and who participated in it.

"They were so pleased and it made their day to see this happen," he said. "I wanted to please them and the patients, so I was glad to see the impact of it. They were really touched by it."

Palmer said there are a few more steps before he completes the process to become an Eagle Scout.

"After the project, you have to complete some paperwork and then the state council, which is the Narragansett Council in Rhode Island, has to approve you," he said. "Following that is an Eagle Board of Review and then the Eagle Court of Honor, where you become an Eagle Scout, but I've already completed the hardest step."



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