

Last year I had the honor of serving as the Lodge Chief of the Amangamek-Wipit Lodge, the largest Order of the Arrow Lodge in the nation, to serve and represent over four-thousand of my fellow Scouts and Scouters in NCAC. Through this experience and my time in the Order of the Arrow, I have gotten to meet many along the trail, including you. Our Scouting community needs us all to help build our endowment for future generations of youth!

One of my favorite stories to tell of my own journey along the trail—one that truly defines what it means to be in the world of Scouting—originates at our very own Goshen Scout Reservation. Not that long ago, I was sitting with all my friends in my Pack at Camp Ross. We were laughing, singing along to “Froggy,” chanting “Ross is Boss” at the top of our lungs, and having a fantastic time. Just along the ridge of the mountain came these giant, barreling purple clouds that threatened the camps that surrounded our Lake Merriweather. As those clouds grew closer to us, the winds picked up, and rain began to pelt our backs. The incredible Staff gathered all these crazy Cub Scouts in the dining hall, our new accommodations for the night. As the evening was coming to a close, the stories and skits and songs had dissipated from the room, the next question was “how do we sleep” came up. Without hesitation, those Camp Staffers ventured back into the storm to gather their own beds, blankets, pillows, and anything they could muster. In the end, we made it through the night, we woke up the next day and headed home having grown up a little.

Each time I recount that story, it continually inspires me. The young men and women that the Scouting program has developed were willing to give everything they had to seemingly random strangers, and those Scouts were bound together by the ties of brotherhood in Scouting—the pinnacle of the Scout Oath and Law, executed without hesitation, showing the incredible resiliency and dedication of Scouts.

But what strikes me, each time I look back on my time or listen to others describe their times in Scouting is that this story is not unique. Looking back on our journeys along the trail, it becomes wholly apparent that the most important thing that Scouting has provided each and every single one of us: a community.

Like almost every organization, this pandemic has shaken our community to the core. With every meeting, event, and class moving online, the continual question gets asked: “Why do I stay?”

For me, I stay for the immense opportunity to grow in a safe environment, where I can learn immeasurable skills that will apply to my everyday life. This organization has been a second home for me and millions of my friends. Years ago, when we were sitting around the fire at Camp Ross, gearing up for the Centennial Celebration of Scouting, we were made a promise that this family would build these children into young adults. The challenges we face, a pandemic exacerbated by a bankruptcy, can only be overcome if we have local leaders to ensure the future of Scouting is still burning bright. At the end of the day, it is not about endowing tomorrow, but endowing the next century of Scouting and ensuring that the promise I had as a Cub Scout is still there for tomorrow.

I encourage you to visit [www.ncacbsa.org](http://www.ncacbsa.org) to see all the fantastic opportunities we give the young people of the National Capital Area Council. To learn more about how you can ensure that our

community of Scouts and Scouters will live on, give Jenna Welle (301-214-9113) or Forrest Horton (703-919-4636) a call soon!

Yours in Scouting,

William Gouker  
2019-2020 Lodge Chief