

It is 7:30 and a beautiful morning as I pull out of my driveway, beginning the drive to the Boy Scout camp. I quickly grab my sunglasses, because the glare off the snow is blinding me. I'll pick up my friend Kurt along the way, and hope he is dressed in more than the light jacket he wore last time.

At the curvy road along the ridge near my house, I kick up the engine to 35. I remember past times: splitting wood and waxing floors, cleaning cabins, building trails. I love camp work days, not only because I work with some of my closest friends, but for the feeling of success after eight hours of service. Somehow, driving home covered in dirt feels like a noteworthy accomplishment.

In school when we would discuss our weekends, I would always have the oddest stories to tell, because most of my weekends were spent doing Boy Scouts. Maybe I'd been on a campout, or a work weekend, or putting on an event. Even my summer is devoted to Scouting. 2010 will be my fourth summer on Boy Scout camp staff, which is the best job a high-schooler could have.

I always knew I was really involved with Scouting; chiding from my friends told me I was an odd duck. Still, I was taken off guard last summer when Russell, a Scout who had been in my rowing merit badge class in 2008, walked up to me after the closing campfire. We started talking about the week, and Russell kept saying how great it had been. Russell mentioned he wouldn't be able to make it to camp next year, because he needed to help on his family's farm. I knew he was disappointed; he had planned to work on staff. Our conversation was winding down and I was turning to leave, when Russell told me what I'll never forget.

You have made these past two years of summer camp the best weeks of my life. He started to cry. I cried too.

Camp staff is a paid position, but looking back, I've done "camp staff" work in all my volunteer jobs in Scouting: Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop Instructor, Order of the Arrow Lodge Chief, and OA Section Vice-Chief. Each job I do with the same passion, and after talking to Russell, with the same purpose: helping people grow.

I pull into Kurt's driveway as he jogs down his steps, this time with his thick Carhartt jacket. He slides into the car. "Ready to split some wood?" "Sure am," I reply, and put the car in reverse. The physical service I give through Boy Scouts, be it working at camp, walking door to door in the fall food drive, teaching scouts on a campout, or running OA events as lodge chief, will always give me a feeling of satisfaction. But it is the chance to make lives better, to show I care, and to watch a person grow that gives me my purpose in life.