

# Scouts find fun in cold, snow

Yukon Days brings out troops from across the Southland

BY JOHN K. RYAN

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Kyle Pulliam had a frozen grin on his face after "rescuing" one of his fellow Cub Scouts from icy waters Saturday afternoon.

"Yeah, we saved Joey!" Pulliam, 10, of Calumet City, yelled.

Actually, his friend had been pulled off a blue plastic tarp that was substituting for an icy pond on the ground at Midlothian Meadows Forest Preserve near 153rd Street and Pulaski Road.

Pulliam, along with about 100 other Cub Scouts who belong to packs making up the Nishnabec District of Calumet Council, Boy Scouts of America, were taking part in the annual Yukon Days event.

The district is made up of Cub Scout packs from as far east as Dolton and as far west as Orland Park.

The "ice rescue" set-up was just one of five stations spread across the sizable preserve in Midlothian to give the Scouts, ages 7 to 10, a fun way of learning valuable lessons.

Besides being taught how to save a person who has broken through the ice, Scouts had a chance to toss snowballs through targeted holes, navigate their way across a rope bridge, learn team play in a game of snow soccer and work together to maneuver their way on "buddy boards."

The day would end with the Scouts participating in a race of sleds built by each Scout pack involved in the event.

Each Cub Scout was given a rating score between one and 10 on performance and "Scout spirit" (enthusiasm) at each station.

"It gets kids out of the house to do some good winter activities and teaches them about such things as teamwork," said Dave Baczewski, a Scout leader from Tinley Park who coordinates the event.

Sebastian Salas, a 10-year-old from Tinley Park who is part of Cub Scout Pack 400 in Orland Hills, said it took awhile for him to get the hang of the buddy board in which three Scouts each tie their feet to the same left-foot board and right-foot board.



**Walking high:** Cub Scout A.J. Buttala, of Troop 398, walks a monkey rope Saturday during Yukon Days at Midlothian Meadows Forest Preserve. | MATT MARTON-SUN-TIMES MEDIA

"We had to learn to lift together," he said. "We'd go one, two, three lift left board. Then, one, two, three lift right board. That made it easier."

Supervising the buddy boards was Herman Ruiz, who knows something about Scouts. He's been involved with the organization since he joined as a 10-year-old 54 years ago in Blue Island.

"Scout is a worthwhile program," Ruiz said. "It helps boys grow and teaches them to be self-reliant."

Eight-year-old Anthony Noska, a Homer Glen boy in Orland Park Cub Scout Pack 381, was grateful for the help he was getting from Boy Scouts on Saturday as he tried to maneuver along the precarious rope bridge without falling.

"That was challenging," said Noska,

who also learned what sub-freezing temperatures do to a soccer ball.

"It doesn't go very far when you kick it," he said, smiling.

Many of those out to help were Eagle Scouts who remembered how much Yukon Days meant to them or parents of adult children who left scouting years ago.

"It's something I enjoy doing each year," said Jon Stahulak, 18, an Eagle Scout and leader of Boy Scout Troop 385 in Tinley Park.

"I see these kids mature and help them along the trail to becoming an Eagle Scout. That part is rewarding."

Sue Tilton, of Tinley Park, keeps coming back despite her two sons being out of scouting for nearly 20 years.

"I just really believe in what the

## WHO WAS THERE

Among the Boy Scout troops helping their younger brethren get through the five stations of activities at Midlothian Meadows were Troops 395 and 911 in Tinley Park, 318 in Orland Park, 437 in Midlothian and 296 in Posen.

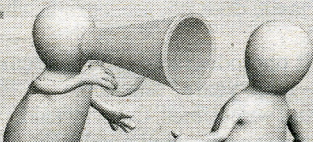
Cub Scout packs on hand included ones from Crestwood, Dixmoor, Dolton, Harvey, Markham, Oak Forest, Orland Hills, Orland Park, Phoenix, Posen, Riverdale, South Holland, Thornton and Tinley Park.

Scouts are all about," she said.

"The values they instill — honesty, God and country, integrity. All those are good things."

## BEST OF SPEAK OUT

Many thanks to Jim Kruse and his people at the Hickory Hills Community Center. They pack and ship boxes



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