



Teen serves community in multiple roles

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"I'm 15," said Boy Scout, Explorer Post 1 Commander, baritone player, Student Council President, Rowlett Fire Corps member and recipient of the Do Something Disaster grant Jonathan Dutsch.

Rowlett Explorer Post 1 will install an Amateur Radio Station in their meeting room in the upcoming months thanks to the \$500 grant Jonathan received from DoSomething.org. The new equipment will give the team a broader communication range to provide a quicker response in emergency situations.

"I think getting the grant is awesome for the Explorers. It will challenge more of us to get radio operator licenses," Dutsch said.

Dutsch joined Cub Scouts in fifth grade, where he met Erik Ernst, a Rowlett Citizen Corps Council and CERT volunteer. Although he was too young to become a member, Ernst described Dutsch as eager to help out with RCCC programs .

"He ... would assist us, even then, by being a volunteer victim in our drills and arranging for other Cub Scouts to ... volunteer," Ernst said.

As a result, Jonathan helped create the Rowlett Explorer Post 1 program in January 2008. Before this, there wasn't an opportunity for children under 14 to be involved with RCCC if their parents weren't also volunteers. With Explorer Post 1, he was able to become a member right after his 14th birthday.

"Explorers provides rehab and helps out with [community] events. They help out with CERT," Dutsch said. He explained how explorers are some of the first responders with tornadoes and other disasters.

"We are very proud of Jonathan and are grateful for the time and contributions he makes to the post and Rowlett in his capacity as post commander," Ernst wrote in his recommendation letter for the Do Something Disaster grant.

Today Jonathan is the Explorer Post 1 Post Commander and the youth advisor on the Board of the RCCC. He has created an Explorers Post 1 promotional video that includes pictures of events the post helps organize.

When asked about receiving the 2008 Rising Star award, Dutsch explained that he tries to be involved in everything and likes to offer his ideas in problem-solving.

Dutsch is CPR certified and is working on getting his Amateur Radio license. He was chosen for the Order of the Arrow Boy Scouts of America Honor Society, and he served as president of his middle school student council. Jonathan is a member of the Rowlett Fire Corps and plays baritone for the Rowlett High School Band.

"Jonathan conducts himself with a maturity well beyond his years when the matter is serious, yet he is a teenager when it's time to play," said Dr. Michael D. Lucas, director of the City of Rowlett CERT. "He participates in pretty much everything and takes the lead in taking CERT or RCCC operations back to the Explorer group and motivating teens to take up the challenge."

Lucas described a number of occasions where Dutsch has helped to maintain control and provide safety in a potentially dangerous situation. Recently, after a fallen tree interrupted power in a neighborhood for a long period of time, Dutsch helped direct traffic to keep residents away from the area. Dutsch also served on bike patrol serving water to volunteers at Fireworks on Main.

In his recommendation letter for the Do Something Disaster grant, RCCC President Whitney Laning highlighted Jonathan's time commitment, leadership skills and ability to take initiative as some of his key qualities.

So what's next for this busy teenager?

Jonathan plans to continue volunteering with the RCCC programs.

"I plan on being a volunteer for the rest of my life, as long as I can," he said.

He is already making plans for college, and eventually hopes to help out his community as a firefighter paramedic.

http://www.lakeshoretimes.com/articles/2009/07/29/rowlett_lakeshore_times/news/9410.txt