

“Pay It Forward”, Kind Cubmaster’s Minutes

◆ “Acts of kindness that are helpful to our friends, our family, and our community create a wonderful domino effect. Those we help will think about what they can do to spread kindness to others. We can do nice things for others every day, and we should not expect something in return—for we are trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. We are Scouts!”

◆ Kind

Recently I had the pleasure of teaching Nature to Cub Scouts at summer day camp. One of our activities was building a water scope, which allows someone to view animals underwater without interference from surface glare or ripples. The boys, adult leaders, and I were viewing all sorts of neat critters along the edge of the lake, when one of the boys yelled that there was a snake. I went to where he was, and found a tiny water snake, probably hatched this past spring. Amidst all the exclamations of “Cool!” I made sure most of the boys got to see this harmless little snake. As you might guess, as soon as I left the area, one of the boys threw a rock at the snake. I can only hope it got away and wasn’t crushed.

The sixth point of the Scout Law is, “A Scout is Kind.” By my definition, this youngster wasn’t obeying this point of the Law, although he could be excused for being young and ignorant of the effects of his actions. Kindness extends to people, but also to animals and to the environment. In fact, the original statement of this point of the law by Lord Baden-Powell, founder of Scouting, was “A Scout is a friend to animals.” A Scout knows there is strength in being gentle. He treats others as he wants to be treated. Without good reason, he does not harm or kill any living being. He obeys the rules of Leave No Trace camping, or posted rules on public land. Now, some of you are hunters or may be when you get older. Are you obeying the Scout Law?

The key words in this point of the Law are, “without good reason.” A Scout does not hurt or kill without reason. If you’re going hunting for food, or to kill pests that are destroying property, or are hunting animals that are dangerous to man, you’re not hunting without reason. So, you are not violating the Scout Law. The young Cub Scout in my story intended to hurt the snake without any reason, because no one was threatened by it. This is what I told him—don’t hurt a snake unless it is threatening someone. I hope he learned a lesson and will be kind next time!

◆PAY IT FORWARD

Most of you will recall a movie of a couple of years ago called *Pay it Forward*. The basic plot of this movie concerned a boy who developed a plan to improve the world. This involved him doing good deeds for three other people, with the stipulation that they had to “pay it forward” by doing good deeds for three other people. Thus, the benefits would eventually go to millions of people from the first three good deeds

Today I'm taking up the job of Cubmaster. Some of you may think this is a task that you would never do, because you are too busy, think you don't have the talents to do the job, or are already involved with other youth programs. I like to think one of the reasons I'm up here in this job is because I'm paying it forward. My dad was willing to volunteer when I was a Cub Scout and be "Den Mother" for my den, when not enough mothers were available to do it. He continued to do this, even after I lost interest in Scouting at the Webelos stage. Although I lost interest at the time, he instilled something in me: that you step up when your children need for you to help out.

In encourage all of you adults to "pay it forward." We expect, indeed we hope, that all of our sons will grow up to be good citizens and good people. We have to provide the example, though, and step up to help them do this. I also challenge all of you boys to remember this when you have children in Scouting. Step in to help out, and pay it forward!