



Wayne Brock, the Chief Scout Executive of the Boy Scouts of America, speaks to guests at the Jacksonville Rotary Tuesday afternoon at the Jacksonville Country Club.

The Boy Scouts changed Harvey Hoopes's life.

The Dixon High School senior told the Jacksonville Rotary that he joined Cub Scouts in third grade and "slowly began to find fulfillment" through the program.

At age 11, he joined Boy Scouts Troop 937 and began to learn about being trustworthy, friendly and kind.

He said he learned how to be independent during a one-week summer camp, his first experience of being away from home, and continues to learn skills and character traits during camping experiences, including an upcoming scouting adventure with his father.

"Scouting is by far the most fulfilling thing I've done and I wouldn't trade it for anything," Harvey said.

Harvey is one of more than 1,360 youth in Onslow County who participate in Boy Scouts, according to information from the East Carolina Council of Boy Scouts of America.

There are 19 Boy Scout troops and 17 Cub Scout troops in Onslow County, according to information from the White Oak River District of the council.

In 2013, 18 scouts earned the rank of Eagle Scout while 85 area Boy Scouts attended Camp Boddie for summer camp on the Pamlico River. Another 178 Cub Scouts attended the district's day camp and learned new skills and took part in outdoor programs.

The district also collected more than 16,000 pounds of food to be distributed throughout Onslow County.

Each participant in Boy Scouts has the opportunity to learn and grow as Harvey has, according to Wayne Brock, the chief scout executive of Boy Scouts of America.

Brock was the guest speaker at the Tuesday afternoon Jacksonville Rotary meeting.

He said he joined the scouts at 8 years old because his father, a law enforcement officer, didn't want him to get into trouble and found the children who got into trouble were idle.

"I was so thankful he did that," Brock said, laughing that his father did not ask him if he wanted to join. He told him. "Outside of church and family, scouting had the biggest influence on my life."

Through the scouts, young boys learn life skills, engage in extracurricular activities and are provided role models, he said.

Brock said that many boys no longer have role models teaching them to be protectors, bread winners and head of household.

"The Boy Scouts fills a void," Brock said.

It also teaches youth with troubled home lives how to be productive citizens.

Brock shared the story of a young man whose parents were drug addicts and told him that everything he learned about being responsible, he learned from the scouts.

"That's why scouting is important," he said.

To register, call Dan Cross, field director of the East Carolina Council, at 910-340-7774. For more information, visit eccbsa.org.

By AMANDA HICKEY - Daily News Staff

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