

From Timid Beginnings to Engineering the Future

When Megan G. first stepped into a Troop 355 Newton meeting in the 10th grade, she was one of only three girls in the room. Nervous and admittedly timid, she was following in her brother's footsteps but uncertain of her own. Today, Megan stands as an Eagle Scout and a robotics engineering student at Purdue University—a transformation fueled by mountain peaks, productive failures, and the relentless pursuit of self-advocacy.

Finding Her Footing

Megan's Scouting journey didn't start with grand ambitions of the Eagle rank; it started with the simple joy of a **Reading** merit badge and the inspiration of a peer. She watched her friend, Brianna M., successfully navigate summer camp and earn an astounding 14 merit badges in a single week.

"She was a good role model to see succeed," Megan recalls. That inspiration helped Megan transition from a quiet observer to a leader who understood that growth requires stepping into the unknown. This shift was put to the ultimate test during a troop meeting where a shortage of leaders forced Megan, as Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), to delegate on the fly and teach stations herself. It was her first real taste of the "productive failure" that Scouting uses to forge leaders.

The Trials of the Trail



Megan at Shaffer's Peak during sunrise

If leadership was the mental hurdle, **Philmont Scout Ranch** provided the physical one. Standing at 5'2", Megan faced treks that would intimidate seasoned hikers. She remembers the grueling climb over Trail Peak—a path most crews detour to see, placing their packs at the bottom, hiking and coming back down all to see a 1940s plane crash. Megan's crew went straight up and over.

However, the hardships were balanced by humor and breathtaking beauty. "We ended up finding everything Funny," she laughs, recalling a moment when a friend fell out of a camping chair, or when her height became a unit of measurement: "You're one Megan off the ground!" during a spar climbing activity the crew began encouraging a scout afraid of heights (a nod to her 5'2" stature). The reward for the climb was a sunrise breakfast at **Shaffer's Peak** —a moment of serenity that remains her most beautiful Scouting memory.

The Eagle Project: A Welcoming Transformation

Megan's Eagle Scout project was a labor of love for her charter organization and church. The project was two-fold:



A More Welcoming Room: Transforming a small, drab space between the handicap entrance and the elevator by cleaning carpets, patching walls, painting, and building a custom bench.

The "after" picture of the welcoming room that churchgoers through the

handicap entrance
use

The Nativity Restoration: Color-matching and repainting the church's life-sized nativity creche—a project that hit home since her troop handles the figures every year.



Painting the Nativity Figures during the project

Even a rainy project day and getting locked out of the church couldn't stop her. "It was rewarding to see the immediate difference in the space," Megan says, recalling the moment she finished the final carpet cleaning at 10:00 PM on a Friday.

Reflection & The "Eagle Slump"

Megan is candid about the "Eagle Slump" that hit her at the end of 11th grade. Balancing five AP classes, sports, and college applications made the finish line feel miles away. Her secret? **Self-advocacy.**

"It's all about self-advocacy," Megan advises. "You need to make sure you're on the path you want to be on and hold yourself accountable."

Engineering the Future

Today, Megan is an **Engineering Major at Purdue University** focusing on robotics. She's already applying her Scouting skills in the lab—keeping her peers on task and knowing exactly when to lead and when to delegate.

If she had to describe her journey in three words, she chooses a Philmont tradition: **"Roses, Buds, Thorns."**

- **Roses:** The great memories and friendships.

- **Buds:** The constant learning and improvement.
- **Thorns:** The rainy campouts and moments when motivation dipped.

As she prepares to head back to Philmont this summer, Megan has one final message for anyone on the fence about joining:
“Give it a try. Even for a little bit... I couldn’t imagine what I would have done instead.”