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Boy Scouts emphasize "Zoom free" activities during pandemic

Submitted by Dean Smith



Assistant Scoutmaster Paul Mason instructs Scouts for the golfing merit badge. Photo provided

Boy Scout activities during COVID-19? No problem for Troop 243 in Lafayette!

Troop 243 Scouts were out recently practicing their swings, drives, and chips, while sporting their masks and being physically distanced from each other. The golfing merit badge is an example of one of the many outdoor "Zoom free" Scouting activities organized by the Scouts during the pandemic of 2020. While some groups have emphasized Zoom meetings and remote learning programs, Troop 243 has tried to provide Scouts with a safe program to interact with their fellow Scouts in an effort to allow the Scouts to keep their bonds intact.

Paul Mason, assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 243, is the golfing merit badge instructor for the council. Two patrol meetings were dedicated to learn the basics of golf, in addition to first aid and safety related to the merit badge. The Scouts are required to play 18 rounds of golf to complete the merit badge. This activity is an excellent example of a Scout related activity, conducted outdoors, and in full compliance with COVID-19 protocol. Each Scout brings his own clubs, and masks are mandatory at all times.

COVID-19 presented many challenges for camps, group activities and schools, but Troop 243 has addressed these incredible challenges by dividing up into small patrols and focusing on outdoor activities. With the

county guidelines always being the roadmap for groups gatherings, the troop has strict activity options and the Scouts keep coming up with new ideas to keep them busy and working on advancement. Future plans for the patrols include Scouting for Food, hiking local trails, mountain biking and community service projects.

"We feel strongly that students spend enough time online. Scouting can be an escape to meet in person, as long it meets local county and Scouting COVID-19 protocol," said Dan Rogers, committee chair for Troop 243. "Over the last few months, four patrols have met weekly outdoors doing a wide range of activities. We are confident our formula is working, as the Scouts are excited to attend to get out of the house and see their friends!"

Since its formation in 1955, over 210 Scouts from Troop 243 have been awarded the Eagle Scout rank. Troop 243 is based at the Lafayette Christian Church at 584 Glenside Drive in Lafayette.

If you would like more information about joining Troop 243, please email Troop243CA@gmail.com.

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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