

Boy Scout creates gaga ball pit for Eagle Scout project

BIG BEND — When he decided to pursue becoming an Eagle Scout, Eli Abraham decided to install a gaga ball pit, which he completed at St. Joseph Catholic School in Big Bend.

Abraham needed to find a service project that he felt would benefit the community and allow him to lead his peers to complete this project.

According to an email, he wanted to help provide entertainment and fun to the school that he attended through eighth grade – St. Joseph Catholic School in Big Bend.

Gaga is a form of dodgeball that began in Israel in the 1970s. Players in an octagonshaped court hit and roll the ball with their hand to eliminate other players.

Once he had the project, he needed to request time to meet with the principal for approval. Once the principal was OK with the idea, Abraham needed to present and get approval from the pastoral council, business manager and pastor. He received his approval and then presented to his troop committee, scoutmaster and district council. Then he was able to start fundraising.

Abraham presented his design and received a generous supporter to make the brackets and support him financially, according to the email. He had an idea to do a car wash and brat fry as a fundraiser. His troop’s charter organization, the Vernon Fire Department, allowed the Scouts to use their garage bays and mini fire hoses to have fun and clean up vehicles for a freewill donation.

The car wash event raised close to \$2,000. Abraham continued to receive in-kind donations and raised over \$5,500 to purchase the needed materials.

Through St. Joseph, Abraham connected with Bob Pfeil, owner of Bob’s Grading, to help ensure the team had the appropriate plans to make this pit last a really long time. In discussions with Pfeil, the Boy Scout troop learned it needed to get additional stone for drainage, which wasn’t budgeted. Pfeil connected them to Payne and Dolan, who donated all the base gravel needed. Pfeil spent two days digging and helping set up level lines to ensure the base would be flat. Pfeil provided the final chip stone layer and Abraham led Troop 26 Scouts (working on one of the hottest days of the summer) to get the entire flooring and walls of the game pit

built in one long 10-hour day. Abraham has put in 60 hours and has led adults and Scouts for over 400 combined hours.

St. Joseph officially opened the game pit on Friday. Abraham is in the process of completing the necessary paper work and final meetings and board of review to officially earn his Eagle Badge.

Abraham joined the Cub Scouts as a first-grader and has been in Scouts going on 10 years. He’s experienced numerous camp outings and week-long summer camp trips, Boundary Water canoe trips to Canada and living on an island in the Florida Keys at Sea Base, and many local weekend trips and community service outings.



Boy Scout Eli Abraham stands with the Rev. Andrew Kysely of St. Joseph Catholic School in Big Bend, where he built a gaga ball pit for his Eagle Scout project.

Submitted photo