

John D. Harkey Jr.

Renaissance man embraces the adventurous side of Scouting.



Adventure runs in John Harkey Jr.'s blood, which is why he supports the John D. Harkey Jr. X-Zone, a program at the Summit Bechtel Reserve. His family — including his partner, Peni Barfield (left), and daughter, Meredith — supports him during his active pursuits like Harkey's victory at the 2014 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf tournament (above).

John D. Harkey Jr. knew immediately that Scouting was designed for guys like him. Guys who love adventure.

"It was a very natural fit for me," he says.

Of course, adventurous activities come naturally to the Brownwood, Texas, native. Things like flying in his jet and winning the 2014 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf tournament. (He was partnered with professional golfer Jim Renner.)

Harkey founded and heads a worldwide Dallas-based restaurant enterprise and has served on eight public company boards, in addition to helping run a family cattle ranching operation. In the narrow spaces between, he finds time for mountaineering, skeet shooting, horseback riding and other adventurous challenges.

The fact that such an extraordinarily accomplished and engaged individual finds time for Scouting says something. And today Harkey finds plenty of time for Scouts and volunteering.

An Eagle Scout at age 14, Harkey diverted his energies to activities like golf as an older teen. He attended the University of Texas in Austin, where he graduated with busi-

ness honors and law degrees to combine with a Stanford University MBA.

About 20 years later, Harkey reconnected with Scouting as an adult when a partner at his restaurant company, Consolidated Restaurant Companies, was asked to affiliate with Circle Ten Council.

"He didn't know Scouting, so I was asked to join the meeting," Harkey recalls.

That introduction sparked a relationship that over the past 15 years has shown the dynamic Texan having a significant impact on the council as a member of the executive board.

Using his extensive background in law, finance, marketing and general business, Harkey helped lead a successful rebranding of the annual popcorn drive to "Poptober," which helped the council become the No. 1 popcorn seller in the nation, with more than \$4 million in sales. He later served on the steering committee for a centennial fundraiser that added \$90 million to the council endowment. Recently, he chaired the council's long-term strategic plan for 2016 to 2020.

On a national level, Harkey leveraged his restaurant expertise to oversee food service

KEVIN PERRY; COURTESY OF JOHN D. HARKEY, JR. (2)

refreshments for 40,000 Scouts at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree. Today, he's putting his stamp on the John D. Harkey Jr. X-Zone, which serves as a high-energy introduction to the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve's most adventurous activities, including skating, zip-lining and BMX.

All that is right in Harkey's wheelhouse.

"From skydiving to bungee jumping to hang gliding to climbing the face of El Capitan, skateboarding, motocross, surfing and scuba diving, I've been fortunate to be healthy and extremely active," Harkey says. "It's a very broad, active level of interest. That's how we came up with the John D. Harkey Jr. X-Zone at the Summit Bechtel Reserve."

Harkey's lifelong adventure started in Brownwood, where summer camp at nearby Camp Billy Gibbons was one

of his most memorable Scouting experiences.

Other notable Scouting experiences included a multiple-day survival outing and learning to cast animal tracks in plaster. He also appreciated the exposure and impact of the leadership opportunities and the introduction to Scouting's value system.

"I had an extraordinarily positive experience as a young Scout," Harkey says. "It's one of the few things you pursue in life as a teen that you continue to reference long into your adulthood."

After resuming the Scouting adventure as an adult, he completed Wood Badge training at Philmont, where he recalls learning about BSA founder Lord Baden-Powell and the program's early history that he

hadn't fully appreciated as a young Scout.

In his varied career as an investor, dealmaker, attorney, entrepreneur and high-level corporate executive, Harkey says he's repeatedly found himself working alongside other Eagle Scouts. And he's consistently found that they, too, have been strongly and enduringly influenced by their Scouting experience.

"Those things — the Scout Oath and Scout Law — truly do make a permanent impact in your life," he says. "Scouting

John Harkey Jr. (center) with BSA National President Randall Stephenson (left) and National Executive Board Member Jack Furst at the 2013 National Jamboree.

today is truly building our leaders of tomorrow. My personal journey in achieving my Eagle laid the cornerstone of a foundation for many wonderful successes. My life is truly richer and more rewarding, thanks to incredible Scouting adventures.

"The Scout ideals of God, country and character are timeless guide posts for us all."



WHY WE GIVE

Because Scouting teaches invaluable values.

JOHN D. HARKEY JR. and his partner, Peni Barfield, are both accomplished business executives. So when they get deeply involved with something, as with Scouting, it's with a definite end goal in mind. And for this couple, that goal is mostly about encouraging the spread of Scouting's values.

"What is so remarkable about Scouting is the value system and that the organization works hard to connect young men to the values," Barfield says. "Scouting has always stayed true to that mission. And one of the most valuable things it has to offer is to show young men it's OK to

possess those values, that it's not odd. It's actually a good thing."

Harkey echoes her endorsement. He considers Scouting's systematic approach to imparting values like charity, service and giving back to the community an invaluable aid for parents who, while well-intentioned, might lack the skill and experience to build and consistently deliver on their own approach.

"There really is not another good mechanism to transfer values and principles to young men," he says. "I believe ultimately we build a much better and more connected world if we can instill

those values in more and more people."

One particular thing Barfield appreciates about Scouting is the opportunity it gives for exceptionally accomplished people like Harkey to have outsized influence as examples for future generations.

"Boys and young men can see men like John who have started exactly where they are — and see where he is today — and be able to say, 'He was a Scout, too,'" she says. "It's just remarkable."



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