

# Meet the New Scout Executive Juan F. Osorio

*Mayflower Council's new Scout Executive, Juan F. Osorio, arrives in Milford, Massachusetts, from the Chattahoochee Council in Columbus, Georgia, where he has served as Scout Executive since 2018. Before assuming this position, Juan held various roles in the Narragansett Council (Providence, RI), where he grew up as a Scout and earned his Eagle Scout Rank. He began his tenure at the Mayflower Council at the beginning of March, succeeding Bryan Feather, who retired in December 2023. Osorio recently sat down with MayflowerBSA.org to provide insights into his personality and hopes for the Mayflower Council and Scouting overall.*

**This is the first of a two-part Q&A.**

---

**John Bishop for MayflowerBSA.org:** Juan, please tell us about your beginnings in Scouting.

**Juan Osorio, Scout Executive, Mayflower Council:** I started Scouting in the first grade. My next-door neighbor was a Cub Scout. Every Saturday, he would attend a Cub Scout meeting across the street at the church. One Saturday, I asked him where he was going; he said, "Come and join me," and I have been in Scouting ever since. I was instantly hooked on the program, and ultimately, I became the second Eagle Scout of Troop 3 Central Falls, Rhode Island, a ScoutReach unit. During my time in the troop, our Scout Executive, Dave Anderson, would take ScoutReach kids hiking at Mount Mercy. When I was 16, I had the opportunity to go with the group and Dave. During that campout, I realized I wanted to do what Dave did and work for the BSA for the rest of my life. I wanted to be a Scout Executive. I wanted to give back to the program that's

given me so much and be devoted to offering Scouting to kids nationwide.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** Explain “ScoutReach” to people unfamiliar with it.

**Juan Osorio:** ScoutReach is the BSA’s vehicle to reach inner-city, at-risk youth. The Narragansett Council has a solid ScoutReach program. They went to schools and community centers in areas that had a high poverty rate, where there’s a higher percentage of single-parent families, kids being raised by grandparents, aunts, and uncles, and families that face increased adversity. They offered the Scouting program to those families at a heavily subsidized cost through ScoutReach, allowing them to enjoy Scouting and attend summer camp. When I started my profession with the Boy Scouts of America, I began as a ScoutReach Program Specialist. It was my job to go into these low-income communities and be the Cubmaster and Scoutmaster to multiple different Scout groups so that they could find a quality program locally.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** Are you born and raised in Rhode Island?

**Juan Osorio:** No, I was born in Medellin, Colombia. My mother brought my sister and me to this country when I was just three, and my sister was eight. I grew up in Central Falls, Rhode Island, and graduated from Central Falls High School. I lived in Rhode Island until I moved to Georgia to be a Scout Executive there.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** Now, just by showing up with the name Juan, you’re changing the look of the Mayflower Council. And the Mayflower Council itself has already earmarked diversity as one of the things it needs to improve. What are you bringing to the table, besides yourself, to ensure we reach as many different types of people as possible?



*Osorio with a group of Georgia Scout Executives.*

**Juan Osorio:** As a minority, diversity is critical and very near and dear to my heart. I have worked with the National Boy Scouts of America on the Citizenship and Society Merit Badge; I am a co-founder of the L.I.S.T.O.S., the Hispanic Work Resource Group for the BSA; and I was part of the first edition of the employee DEI training with the National Boy Scouts. Again, because I am a minority and have faced adversity as one in this country, I need to make sure that we are equitable across the board, not only in ethnicity but also in gender, sexuality, and age. All of them will be our focus as we move forward to ensure that we are fully inclusive to all our families and youth, allowing them to join and enjoy our great programs, regardless of background.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** That is in keeping with Baden Powell's original intent. For example, he brought poor and wealthy kids together and did his first experimental Scout camp. He also

helped start the Girl Guides. How do you speak to the traditionalists in Scouting regarding the future?

**Juan Osorio:** Scouting brought specific values to the United States from the UK, many of which have stayed the same for 114 years. However, the Scouting program differs today from 20 or 30 years ago. The world has changed, we in the BSA have evolved, and we must continue growing to meet today's families' needs. Millennial parents, our target audience, have a different philosophy on life from those of prior generations. And so, we have to meet that market. While Scouting has had an incredible history in our nation, we continue to evolve to stay relevant to today's society while staying true to the values found in the Scout Oath and Law. We're teaching character, and we should be able to teach character to all the kids in the United States of America.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** Part of that character and roots in the Scout Law makes it possible for the Scouts to adapt to people's schedules and have multiple focuses in the family. What would you say to a child or a child's family who says, "My kid plays baseball and soccer?" How does Scouting fit into that web of wonderful things that children do?



*Juan Osorio with Medal of Honor recipient Colonel Ralph Puckett, Distinguished Eagle Scout.*

**Juan Osorio:** For many years, Scouting has faced the challenge

of kids enjoying sports and many other activities along with Scouting. Our unit leaders have been very adaptable to allow those schedules. Scouting is one day a week, for the most part. We do outdoor activities and campouts but are flexible, which is excellent. Our parents can do much more with their child at home through Scoutbook and other interactive means that allow us to extend our program into their households. Technology is a great thing, but technology has caused us to work longer hours as adults. We go home, we're at the dinner table with our family or watching TV, and we might be on our cell phones looking at our emails. That's the challenge that we face in today's day and age. As we digitilize our program more, it gives those families more access to enjoy it. Again, we must continue evolving to stay relevant in our market.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** To that end, Scouts BSA are kids who are dealing with academics, athletics, art, and music – all those beautiful things that may make a focus solely on an Eagle Scout or an Eagle Scout project difficult.

**Juan Osorio:** As an Eagle Scout, I have a lot of love and respect for those of us who attain that rank. However, Scouting is much more than that, and too often, as an organization, we focus only on Eagle Scouts. We have to focus on the delivery of our program. Suppose a Scout in our program is interested in the outdoors rather than our advancement. In that case, they should be allowed to continue to be in the program and enjoy it. Advancing, while important, is not the only facet or purpose of our organization. Some Scouts might enjoy merit badges, others the outdoors. Some may enjoy the weekly meetings and not like to go camping. Others might want to make it to Eagle Scout by age 15, and others, like myself, might barely scrape by and hand in their Eagle Scout application the day before they turn 18.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** As adult leaders, we don't want to turn away anyone interested in Scouting, even if they aren't solely focused on the ultimate goal of the Eagle.

**Juan Osorio:** Our program is a well-rounded program that welcomes everybody. Suppose that means kids want to enjoy the program without the advancement? In that case, that is perfectly okay. As a former Scoutmaster who has produced 17 Eagle Scouts, outside of those 17 Eagle Scouts, I had hundreds of kids who benefited from our program that, to this day, see me in a grocery store and thank me for providing them with a quality program and values they continue to carry. They're not Eagle Scouts but retain many values that Scouting taught them. It's not a pass or fail; it's not "Eagle Scout" or "no Scout." There are a lot of other opportunities within our program for our Scouts to learn and grow.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** One of the things I've heard recently, anecdotally, is that being an Eagle Scout no longer helps people on the way to college and employment success. That's probably wrapped into some harsh realities the Boy Scouts of America have faced over the last few years. What do you say to that?

**Juan Osorio:** Being an Eagle Scout has directly opened doors for me. I went to Rhode Island College and was part of the PEP program. They only accepted about 30 incoming college students. The only reason I got accepted was that I was an Eagle Scout. It helped me in my life and continues to benefit me. As a Scout Executive, I meet and work with many C-suite corporate leaders. Time and time again, they will tell me that if they see a candidate is an Eagle Scout on their application, they will consider them. It's not a shoo-in, but a "Hey, this person has accomplished a lot at a young age; they can be great on my team," giving them more opportunities. There are still a lot of other skills that they must prove. However, Scouting generally teaches the soft skills our youth do not receive because of the other challenges they face. I think employers, now more than ever – especially after COVID – are realizing that. It's the soft skills that they're looking for in some of these new employees coming into the corporate

world.

**MayflowerBSA.org:** Soft skills? Meaning teamwork, civics, and leadership training?

**Juan Osorio:** It is as simple as conversing and looking your manager in the eye. Something as simple as knowing how to interact in a team setting. Those are things that we teach. Those are the types of soft skills that colleges and employers are looking for.

***Look for Part 2 next week...***



# Captain Curtin Still Uses Scouting in the Navy

## *Submarine Base Commander Started as a Scout...*

The Mayflower Council's professional Scouters recently attended the three-day 2024 New England Councils Planning Conference.

Beyond the cross-council camaraderie displayed by the numerous BSA pros at the Mystic Marriot in Groton, Conn., the highlight for many team members attending the event was the appearance of Captain Kenneth Curtin, the commanding officer of the nearby Naval Submarine Base New London.

"You have to take care of the people by *taking care* of the people," said Curtin. "To be a commander, my job is to be an enabler; I need to enable you to do *your* job, right? I need to enable my team to do *their* job.

"They want to get out there and make a difference in the world," explained the sub base commander. "They want to do something to better themselves, to better the world, in some small way. And so my job is to keep that fire lit, to do everything I can so they can do their job.

"Your people have to know that you care about them, that you respect and appreciate them," he said.

With over 38 years of Navy experience leading people and solving problems, Captain Curtin clearly employs a deep

understanding of leadership, risk management, human behavior, and infrastructure in his daily duties.

Beyond the professional accolades and knowledge – perhaps most importantly to the gathered crowd – as a young man in Brooklyn, New York, Curtin was a Boy Scout.

Moreover, he still employs the Scouting lessons he learned as a boy in his Navy career.

“You’ve got to ***do it***,” said Curtin, of setting goals, working hard, and achieving during his keynote talk on Day 1.

“I started learning that in the Boy Scouts,” he said. “No one’s going to give ***anything*** to you, right?”

“And there’s nothing worth [anything] that anyone will hand you.”

“Just never give up,” he added, summarizing his philosophy.

Meanwhile, the long-time Nave officer doubled down on one of the Scout Laws: “A Scout is trustworthy...”

“In 38 years, I’ve screwed up my fair share,” explained Curtin. “Yet, I’m still here because of integrity.”

“When I sign my name on something, it means something, right? And even if I have to tell on myself and say, ‘Hey, I didn’t get this right.’”

“The most important thing is your integrity,” continued Curtin. “That’s the only thing you’ve got.”

“You lose that. Then, you start behind the eight ball when it comes to business or life. It’s so hard to regain that.”

“And some people, you’ll never regain,” he said.

Of course, Curtin pointed back to his old Scoutmaster, Walter Better.

"Oh my God, I learned so much from this guy... and I still tell stories about the camping trips with him," said the captain. "He wouldn't take [any foolishness] from you."

"But I learned so much from that man," he added, wearing a broad smile as he hit upon another Scout Law: "A Scout is cheerful..."

"I still laugh about it," said Curtin.

---

# Stoughton Scouts Attain Eagle

## ***Congratulations to Neil G, Aadil K.***

Their local school system recently lauded the accomplishments of two new Mayflower Council Eagle Scouts.

**Neil G.** and **Aadil K.**, seniors at Stoughton High School and stalwart Scouts BSA of Troop 516 Stoughton, completed their Eagle Scout Project and passed their Board of Review.

The official Stoughton Public Schools Facebook page explained:

*For his service project, Neil built several bat houses out of wood and constructed them with the help of his Troop. These bat houses are placed throughout the wooded areas to shelter these valuable animals.*

*Aadil made two historical signs at the newly renovated Glen Echo Park describing two lost buildings on the property: the Dance Hall and the Hotel Inn. You can visit Glen Echo to see the signs and learn more about each structure!*

According to recent statistics from the Boy Scouts of America,

only about 6% of Scouts attain Scouting's highest rank. To achieve the high rank, an individual must take on leadership roles within their Troop and community and earn at least 21 merit badges covering various topics such as first aid, safety, civics, business, and the environment. Additionally, they must research, organize, and complete a significant community service project.

Neil and Aadil, who camped at Camp Wanocksett during the summer of 2023, join 2022 Eagle achievers Matthew H. and William B.M. on an ever-growing list of Troop 516 Scouts earning the BSA's most outstanding achievement.

Troop 516 Stoughton, established in 1957, documents their first Eagle as **David Conrad '62**.

"In earning this rank, young people gain new skills, learn to overcome obstacles, and demonstrate leadership among their peers and in their communities," said Roger Mosby, outgoing president and CEO of the Boy Scouts of America in 2021. "Scouting's benefits are invaluable, and we are elated that the opportunity to become an Eagle Scout is now available to even more youth—young men and young women alike."

Congrats to Neil, Aadil, and all of their fellow Scouts who attained Eagle status in 2023.

---

## Always Room for More – Earn A Recruiter Patch

Always Room for More

Earn your "Recruiter" patch in 2023

The founder of the Scouting movement, Sir Robert Baden Powell – better known as B-P in Scout circles – once said:

“An invaluable step in character training is to put responsibility on the individual.” In the spirit of that wise sentiment, the Mayflower Council is looking for some recruiting help.

And who better to ask than the Scouts themselves?

During the months of November and December, we encourage individual Scouts to look to their friend groups and ask potential Scouts to join them at a meeting.

Scouts who successfully recruit a friend will receive a “Recruiter” patch courtesy of the Mayflower Council – we’ll provide it free!

There are three steps to earn the badge:

1. Encourage your Scouts to encourage a friend to attend an upcoming meeting or event and join before December 31.
2. When a Scout recruits their friend, a Scoutmaster or Cubmaster completes this form.
3. We will ship the Recruiter Badge to your unit to award to your recruiters as part of your next Court of Honor or rank advancement. We will also send the newly enrolled Scout a “Welcome” letter.

It’s as simple as that.

Meanwhile, we’re hoping to build on the work everyone put in during “Join Scouting Day” and “Slices for Scouting” and bring even more youth into BSA membership via Mayflower Council.

And we know that our Scouts are up for the challenge. So, let’s get to it!

---

# Mayflower Partners With Spartan Race

***Join us on November 11 or 12 at Fenway Park...***

Have you heard the news?

Usually, Mayflower Scouts are *watching* the action at Fenway Park. However, this fall, our Scouts will *be in* the action at Fenway (just not in baseball).

Mayflower Council has partnered with Spartan Races and the Spartan Kids Foundation to provide complimentary racing tickets for any Scouts interested in participating in their Fenway Park Spartan Races on Nov 11th and 12th when they can join Spartan Races for the Epic Stadium Obstacle Course event.

Ages 5-13 may participate in the kid's event (two free spectator passes included), while ages 14+ will participate in the 5K stadium event (and spectator passes may be purchased).

Unit leaders should follow the QR code in the image below to request registration codes for their scouts.

So, be sure to share the flyer with your friends and family all around the United States.

## **Mayflower Scouts earn your Spartan Medal!**

Free Event at Fenway Park

November 11, 2023

**Scouts join us for an Epic Stadium Obstacle Course Event!**

**Kid's Event - ages 4-13** includes two free spectator passes for accompanying adults.

**5k Stadion Event - ages 14+**

Spectator passes can be purchased



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA  
MAYFLOWER COUNCIL



**SPARTANKIDS  
FOUNDATION**



Leaders to register your Scouts scan the QR Code and fill out the form that appears.



Registration is on a first come basis until all spots are filled. Last day to register is Oct. 27, 2023 We also have discounted registrations available for parents, siblings, friends, etc.

<https://race.spartan.com/en/race/detail/7942/overview> - just enter the code **MFBSAMA** at checkout and help us fundraise also!

Questions: Please contact [Logan@mayflowerbsa.org](mailto:Logan@mayflowerbsa.org)

---

# The Doctor Is In (The Spotlight)!

Dr. Sara Grady is the complete package, from land-loving Cub Scouts to shore-loving horseshoe crabs, this amazing volunteer has every living creature's best interest in mind.

Tiger Den Leader for Pack 47 Plymouth, Sara is a watershed ecologist and – when she is not with her unit – can most often be found in the water, in the woods, on a trail; any place in nature, really.

Of course, those who take a “hike” with Dr. Sara know she will traverse 100 yards in 10 minutes and share more knowledge about plants and animals than they ever thought possible. All of which makes her a perfect person to lead a Den.

Moreover, as a SuperNOVA mentor, Dr. Grady has been an invaluable Mayflower Council resource the past few years, helping to run stations at Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (meanwhile earning BALOO, mind you), volunteering at the Klondike Derby, Webelos Woods, and the Wilderness Survival Camporee.

Currently, Sara works on her Wood Badge ticket by improving the “nature trail” at Camp Squanto.

However, everyone also knows Sara's hidden talent: a beautiful singing voice often used acapella.

One wonders if both Tigers and tiger sharks alike would respond equally well to her dulcet tones!

*Thank you, Sara, for all your hard work on behalf of your*

*council, district, and unit. Like so many den leaders, you truly shine bright for all of our Scouts.*

---

## **Fabled Fabion**

Adam Fabion paces Pack 56.

A proud Eagle Scout, Adam Fabion of Pack 56 in Holdbrook returned to Scouting when his son joined Cub Scouts as a Tiger.

Of course, Adam immediately became a den leader and started helping to plan the Pack events. Moreover, like many adults in Scouting, Mr. Fabion loves taking the kids hiking and exploring in the woods.

Now that his daughter is also a Cub Scout, Adam again became a den leader and continues to work hard to create unforgettable experiences for the Scouts of Pack 56.

However, Adam's commitment to Scouting hasn't stopped with the Cubs in his den and pack – he is also the Committee Chair for Troop 56 and an Assistant Scoutmaster for Troop 13 G.

Thank you for all your hard work, Adam! Den leaders like you light the way for the next generation of Scouts.

---

# Mary Millette of Den 1 in Pack 3104 in Hudson

Mary the Mentor

Now in her third year in charge of Den 1 (her son Ben's den; older brother Connor recently crossed over to Scouts BSA, Troop 77 in Hudson), Mary says this year's highlights include volunteering with "Kylee's Care Kits" and the "Feed A Neighbor" programs. "I like connecting scouting to our community and providing opportunities for the Scouts to make a difference," she explained.

Next up was the "Super Science Adventure" and working toward the Up and Away Nova award. "It was great to see the parents and kids work together on science experiments," added Mary. "This year, we did so much with science between this adventure and the Nova award. I am blown away by what my scouts know and the ideas they bring to the table."

Finally, attending "Snore and Roar" at the Roger Williams Zoo was very high on Millette's list.

"But getting to know my scouts and their families" remains the ultimate highlight for Mary.

"We have such a great group of kids," she explained. "They are funny, eager to learn and help, and have such great ideas."

*Congratulations to Mary and her Pack 3104 Den 1 Bears!*

---

# Scouts Honor: Everett L., Troop 89 Medfield

"On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

That's what the "Scout Oath" says. And for all BSA Scouts, that serious statement remains omnipresent. But for certain Scouts, the desire to live by the Scout Oath becomes a primary focus.

For that reason (and many others, certainly) Everett L., of Medfield's Troop 89, will soon receive a Congressional Award gold medal – the U.S. Congress' highest award for youth civilian service; an achievement that "recognizes initiative, service, and achievement in America's youth."

Much like Scouting, participants in the Congressional program set goals across four areas – public service, personal development, physical fitness, and exploration.

Those who earn the Congressional Award complete a minimum of 400 hours of community service, 200 hours of personal development, 200 hours of physical fitness, and a minimum of a five-day, four-night expedition/exploration (over two years).

In 2021, over 50,000 students across the US enrolled, with only 5,000 being recognized for any award and only 517 receiving the gold. Nearly 2,000 of the applicants came from New England, and last year, just one gold was given out in New Hampshire and eight in Massachusetts for 19 total across the six New England states.

Since the program's inception in 1979, approximately 6,000

gold medals have been awarded and Scouts BSA has been a partner program of the Congressional Award since 1999.

"Most of my activities for the Eagle Scout rank counted towards the requirements of the Congressional Award," explained Everett, whose family lives in Meredith, New Hampshire. "I also looked for ways to use technology in service projects; STEM tutoring for local students, 3D printing of objects for the handicapped, and creating educational drone videos."

Of course, service is a way of life for the Scout, who attends New Hampton School (also in New Hampshire) as a member of the Class of 2024, twice earning the NHS award for "100 Hours of Service."

"Everett is a very hardworking, independent young man. He accepts new challenges without second guessing and is a perfect model of a community citizen," said Mr. Ryan Daye, Everett's advisor at NHS. "I am grateful to have him in my advisory group here at The New Hampton School."

"Everett comes in and gets the work done," added Mr. Tony Mure, also of NHS. "Everett is a shining example of hard work, discipline, and focus. His ability to work independently and follow directions is second to none."

"He is a natural-born leader."

Everett's Scouting resume says the same.

"Everett is a 'Scout's Scout' who came in as a sixth grader with no background in Cub scouts," said Scoutmaster Jim Hatch in his commendation for the Eagle Badge [completed in May of 2022].

"His passion for engineering is very clear," added Hatch. "His integration of his love of technology and the medal's service requirements is very creative."

A member of the Tantamous Lodge of the Order of the Arrow, where his ordeal and vigil hours counted towards his Congressional Award service requirements, Everett used Scouting as a scaffold for the Congressional program.

“It really builds off of Scouting,” he said. “And then it gives you the flexibility to create service projects that you design, which is where I was able to look for ways to use technology and engineering to help my community.”

Meanwhile, pursuing the Congressional award is also a family affair, Everett’s mother, Wendy,, was recognized for the Bronze Medal out of Culpeper, Virginia as a high school senior in 1994. Everett’s sister, Lillian, Inter-Lakes class of 2026, is currently pursuing a medal.

“Service is important to our family, the award is a great program, and Troop 89 is a wonderful way for young people to learn about helping others,” said Wendy.

“I’ll get a degree in engineering,” added Everett. “My service projects have really shown me how to use technology and science for the betterment of the community and I will continue that.”

However, for now, the Scouting adventure continues.

Everett is one of the 14 members of Troop 89 who will be hiking through the New Mexico back country at Philmont Scout Ranch in July of 2023 and plans to attend the Troop’s annual week at Camp Squanto near Plymouth, MA.

Congratulations and “Good Scouting!” Everett.

—

Fred Lybrand contributed to this report.

---

# New Board Member Believes Scouting Is Integral

In 2017 when her son **Arnav** earned Eagle, **Sangeet Srikanth** told fellow parents at his **Troop 355 Newton** Court of Honor:

**“It structures their lives and gives them the most valuable experience that even the best high school education cannot provide.”**

“None of the experiences in Scouting can be measured in terms of letter grades, GPA, test scores – but you can witness and experience it everyday in your son’s life,” added Srikanth. “As a parent, I can attest that scouting makes parenting easier.

“But Scouting also does something no other activity can: It helps [children] develop a strong, positive moral character – it is integrity, courage, fortitude, honesty, loyalty, being fair and just; caring, trustworthy, and responsible.

“As a high school teacher, I can say that our education system does not teach several life values & skills in classrooms; you learn them outdoors.

“It is a latent collection of all these experiences that make them, in the end, self-reliant human beings!”

In his famous essay “Self-Reliance,” transcendalist philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson said of boyhood education:

**“The power which resides in him is new in**

**nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried."**

Over 180 years later, Emerson's fellow philosopher Srikanth – who emigrated to the United States to achieve a Master's Degree at Boston University – told the BSA's official blog, "As a driven and motivated woman, I have been in pursuit of academic achievement all my school years.

"But after coming to the U.S. and getting exposed to a lot of activities that kids can get involved in, I wanted them to be holistically educated and not focus only on academics."

Through Scouting, Sangeet, a recent addition to the Mayflower Council board, says her son and now her daughter Anishka have done just that and have tried much more than they would have solely in the classroom.

"Many scouting skills prepare them to face a challenge, learn teamwork, and plan ahead of time. And if things go wrong, they go wrong," Srikanth recently told *MayflowerBSA.org*. "You bounce back and try to try a different way or a different thing.

**"For example, when they're doing an Eagle project, many things go differently than planned. The deadlines, the project proposal, and many aspects help them understand it's not always as you plan; you must just be ready for things to change."**

"And you should be willing to change and make newer plans because the old one doesn't work anymore," she said.

Of course, Scouting recently changed, too, just in time for Sangeet's daughter **Anishka** to join **Newton Troop 209G**.

"Fortunately, the BSA started enrolling girls in 2019, and the next thing she did was enroll in Scouting," said the elder Srikanth, who marveled at the maturity and confidence her daughter garnered through Scouts BSA. "She became accommodating but at the same time stood up for justice and started speaking for herself.

"Her ability to differentiate and make correct choices helped her mature much faster than some of her peers."

Through the eyes of her children and with her own Scouter's eyes (Sangeet is also the Scoutmaster of Troop 209G), Srikanth recently enlarged her Scouting family – several hundred times over.

You see, Sangeet joined the Mayflower Council Board with a focus on Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion (DEI), and alongside peers across the BSA landscape, will look to ensure Scouting truly is for everyone.

Srikanth believes the national organization is moving closer to the truth of the Scout law through its inclusion initiatives.

"Now that we have started taking girls, it's more diverse... including kids from different socioeconomic backgrounds, people of color," she explained.

"My son, I think, was the only South Asian child. But now I see many Indian families putting their kids into Scouting, whether a boy or a girl," continued Mayflower's Diversity Chair. "And I know quite a few families that I can proudly say got inspired by my talking to them in the last three years about how Scouting has shaped my son.

"And I can definitely tell you that if my son were not in

Scouts, with those seven years of Scouting and what it did for him, he would've been a completely different person in terms of his personality, taking up responsibilities, and being able to face failure," she said. "In high school and college, he faced many failures, but he accepted failure and dealt with it much better than I did when I was his age."

To that point, Sangeet believes Scouts give kids a safe space to try, fail, *and* try again.

"Failing in front of a boss, a team, or an office, or even in college, is scary," explained Srikanth, whose son Arnav will soon graduate from the University of Illinois. "But if things have gone wrong [at times in] 5th, 6th, and 7th grade and in front of 20 other Scouts, they learn how to deal with it pretty fast."

Today, and with those valuable experiences in mind, the new board member is ready to spread the message about the merits of Scouting to an ever-expanding group. Being independent, speaking up to themselves, and being able to go in front of an audience and present themselves are all skills developed through Scouting, explained the Scoutmaster.

Meanwhile, the fun – especially fun found outdoors – remains a program highlight.

Seeing her children have experiences she did not makes Sangeet Srikanth want to give others the same opportunities.

"The camping and outdoor trips, outdoor experiences with the hiking and the swimming and all the activities that we do, [Arnav and Anishka] both have enjoyed and loved the outdoors," she said. "I come from a background where I never had any of these [experiences]. I grew up in India and was raised in a very conservative time; there were not many things girls were allowed to do... There were so many restrictions.

"So I had always wanted to do something adventurous but

couldn't," she added. "When Scouting came my way, it was like living my life again through my kids."

*And Sangeet's adventure continues! Look for more from Srikanth and Mayflower Council's DEI work in the coming months.*