



Scouts BSA

# JPL Troop 509

Est. 1952

La Cañada Flintridge, CA

[jpltroop509.org](http://jpltroop509.org)



## Letter from Your Scoutmaster

Dear New Life Scout,

Congratulations on earning the Life rank. You have made great progress on the Scouting trail, while facing many challenges and mastering them with confidence. Now you are ready for the challenges and opportunities to master the skills required for becoming an Eagle Scout. The last part of the Trail to Eagle will give you the chance to use all that you have learned in Scouting and more.

The troop's website has all the information you need, under the Life to Eagle tab. Read everything there, and sit down with a parent to discuss what you need to do and how you will do it.

Although you may have advanced to Life with less than your best effort and only met minimal requirements, advancement to Eagle requires that you do well in every area. Think about your record so far: your leadership in the troop and how many Scouts you have helped learn scouting skills and earn rank requirements or merit badges; your summer camp and camping history (including backpacking trips, or other “special” camping experiences); your participation and leadership in troop activities, outings, and camporees; your scoutmaster-approved service project hours; your support of other scouts’ service projects; your attendance at scout meetings - participation and proper uniform; and your Eagle-required merit badges. Are you “weak” in any area? Work out a plan with your parent and Scoutmaster to enrich areas where you are lacking. Map out a strategy to achieve Eagle rank – keeping in mind that school, sports and extracurricular activities are also important and need to be factored into your overall plan.

A significant part of becoming an Eagle Scout is demonstrating your leadership skills. One of the ways you do this is by planning and carrying out an Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project. “Leadership” means you will lead other people that do the project work. “Service” means you will be giving back something to your community. And “Project” means you will plan and carry out an activity to achieve specific outcomes within certain constraints.

### **1. REVIEW YOUR MERIT BADGE RECORD**

You do not have to earn all your Eagle-required merit badges prior to beginning your Eagle Project. However, you will want to give yourself enough time to complete your required merit badges before submitting your Eagle application. Look at TroopMaster.com to make sure the troop's records are complete and accurate, and if not, contact the adult Rank Advancement coordinator.

### **2. PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO THE TROOP**

A Life scout must provide leadership in the troop for a minimum of six months while a Life scout. You have already held positions of responsibility or provided leadership to earn your Star and Life ranks. Younger scouts look for Life scouts to set an example. This alone means you are

expected to conduct yourself as a leader. “Giving back” to the troop is an important requirement for a Life scout.

### **3. REQUEST LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION**

Another Eagle requirement is that you have at least six letters of recommendation. You can request these at any time after you become a Life scout, even before you start your project. It can take several months for people to submit these letters so requesting them early is recommended. Carefully consider whom you ask to write these letters, how well the person knows you, and their commitment to write the letter. Ask the person in advance if it would be okay if you listed them as a reference. The troop’s Eagle Advisor will mail letters to your references, asking them to write a letter of recommendation and mail it back to the coordinator. The envelopes containing these letters of reference will not be opened until your Eagle board of review, and will be read only by the board members and then shredded. You’ll need to first prepare a resume of your scouting activities, and a second non-scouting resume. The Eagle Advisor will include these resumes with the mailed letters requesting letters of reference. Give the Eagle Advisor a list of your references, letters for the Advisor to sign, stamped envelopes addressed to the references, stamped return envelopes addressed to the Advisor, and copies of your resumes. Sample resumes and templates for the letters and envelopes are on the troop’s website.

### **4. PLAN AND CARRY OUT AN EAGLE SCOUT LEADERSHIP SERVICE PROJECT**

The hardest part of your Eagle Leadership Service Project is just getting started. Don’t procrastinate. The choices of what to do and how to do it are up to you, but the bottom line is it has to be something that you are committed to completing. The period of time from when you start thinking about your project to the time it is finished is typically 4-6 months, but it isn’t uncommon for a project to take as much as a year. Your project has to be approved in advance by the Scoutmaster, the Troop Committee, the beneficiary of your project, and the Council, so take into account how long this could take. Your presentation to the Troop Committee should be in the form of a PowerPoint presentation. Get a signed letter from the project beneficiary that specifies the scope of your project, and when the project is complete get another signed letter from the beneficiary acknowledging that you have completed the project.

### **5. WRITE REPORTS, CRITIQUE AND ESSAY**

There is a fair amount of writing you’ll need to do, so give yourself enough time. Don’t procrastinate. You will fill out the Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, write a critique of your project, write an essay about your ambitions and life purpose, and fill out the Eagle Rank Application.

### **6. ASSEMBLE YOUR EAGLE BINDER**

All of the paperwork goes in a three-ring binder, which needs to be submitted to the Eagle Advisor for approval. A document on the troop’s website gives greater detail about what goes in the Eagle binder.

### **7. CONFIRM THAT YOU HAVE COMPLETED ALL YOUR EAGLE REQUIREMENTS**

Make sure you have fulfilled all of the Eagle rank requirements:

- 21 Merit Badges including 13 Eagle-required
- at least six letters of recommendation received by the Eagle Advisor
- troop leadership position(s) of responsibility requirements fulfilled
- Eagle binder neat, complete, and ready for final signatures

## **7. HAVE YOUR SCOUTMASTER CONFERENCE**

After the Eagle Advisor has reviewed and approved your binder, schedule your Scoutmaster conference. Bring to the scoutmaster conference the Eagle binder and your Scout Handbook to show you have completed all requirements.

## **8. HAVE COUNCIL CONFIRM ALL REQUIREMENTS COMPLETED**

After the Scoutmaster conference, you'll take your binder to Smiser Scout Center to the Rose Bow District's executive for Council to confirm that you have satisfied all the requirements for Eagle rank (before dropping your binder off, make a copy of everything in the binder, and get a receipt from Smiser, just to be safe). Once Council has approved, and the Eagle Advisor has received your letters of recommendation, then the Advisor will arrange your Eagle board of review. Your parents will be asked to attend this board, so consult with them as to their availability. Anticipate at least a one-month time frame to organize the board. Do not ask or expect any expediting of your Eagle board of review or the processing of your Eagle application at National headquarters in Texas.

## **9. HAVE YOUR EAGLE BOARD OF REVIEW**

You will attend your Eagle board of review with your parent(s). Bring your Scout Handbook for signing. Your binder will be brought to the board of review by the representative from Council. Wear your full uniform. Look neat, like an Eagle candidate. Be prepared to talk with the Eagle board members about your Scouting experiences, accomplishments and lessons learned. You will not be quizzed on knots, compass or any other skills you previously learned. Relax. The board members will speak to your parent(s) separately. Your Eagle board of review should take about an hour, including the signing of the Eagle application and congratulatory photos.

## **10. GET YOUR EAGLE PORTRAIT TAKEN**

As soon as you've passed your Eagle board of review, go to Arcadia to get your free Eagle portrait taken. Don't delay doing this. Details are on the troop's website.

## **11. PICK UP YOUR EAGLE SCOUT CERTIFICATE**

After you've passed the Eagle board of review, the Eagle Advisor will submit your signed Eagle application to Council, which then sends it to National in Texas. It takes about a month for approval to come back from National. Smiser Scout Center will notify you when they have received your Eagle Scout certificate from National. When you go to Smiser to pick it up, you'll also go to the Scout Shop to purchase your Eagle award kit, Eagle neckerchief, and Eagle slide.

## **12. PLAN YOUR EAGLE COURT OF HONOR**

The troop does Eagle courts of honor at the same time as troop courts of honor, generally in September, January and May. You'll want to check on the availability of family and friends when

picking the date of your court of honor. If you have any special requests, be sure to advise the Eagle Advisor well in advance. If more than one scout will be honored for the Eagle rank, you will work together on the details of the ceremony. You will be expected to give a short speech, arrange for someone to introduce you, and have a short video or slide show of your scouting experiences. Details are on the troop's website.

If you think it takes a lot to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout ... well you're right. That is why only five percent of all scouts ever earn Eagle rank. It takes dedication and determination to get to the top, but *just as in mountain climbing, the view (of life) from the summit to distant horizons (your future) will help you chart a life course to even greater achievements.*

Yours in Scouting,

Your Scoutmaster