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Scouting
America

CONNJAM 2025:

A SCOUTING CELEBRATION LIKE NO OTHER

Over 2,100 Scouts and Scouters from across the Connecticut Yankee Council gathered at the Orange Fairgrounds this May for ConnJam 2025, a once-every-three-years mega-event celebrating the very best of Scouting — adventure, community, and spirit.

With hundreds of activities spread across the grounds, ConnJam had something for every Scout — from climbing walls and ziplines to STEM displays, games, crafts, and friendly competitions. One of the most jaw-dropping moments? The dramatic landing of a Blackhawk helicopter, courtesy of the Connecticut National Guard, which drew huge crowds and plenty of applause.



Scouts also explored future career paths at the Trades Expo, a hands-on showcase of skilled trades. From wiring circuits in an electrical union trailer and testing a virtual reality paint simulator, to rotating tires, virtual welding, and building wooden toolboxes at the Home Depot workshop, Scouts discovered new talents while working with real tools and professionals. “I remember how big it was and how many different activities there were for the Scouts. They were so impressed!” one leader shared.

The Trade Show and Trade-O-Ree added to the festival atmosphere providing everything from collectibles to career insight. “Having an abundance of activities, the Blackhawk, and meeting and associating with other troops made it unforgettable,” another Scouter added.



Evenings at ConnJam were just as memorable. Saturday night’s concert and fireworks show turned into a full-blown

celebration of Scout energy. “The concert and fireworks were the best part — it felt like the best night of my life!” wrote one Scout. Another said, “The nighttime show with the song ‘Firework’ and everyone jumping up and down — it was so cool.” And who could forget: “Our unit started the crazy long conga line at the concert — it was epic!”



performances, as well as a Cub Scout Pinewood Derby, and range activities like BB guns, archery, tomahawk throwing, and paintball — giving everyone a chance to challenge themselves in safe, Scout-led settings.

Scouts also took pride in setting up and tearing down their campsites, learning teamwork and leadership through action.



“Their interaction in putting up and tearing down the site as a new troop was a highlight for us,” said one leader. And of course, many simply cherished the chance to reconnect: “The most memorable part? Visiting with friends and trying new things,” one Scout reflected.

From patch trading to dancing in the rain, ConnJam 2025 was a powerful reminder of what makes Scouting so special: fun, fellowship, challenge, and growth. “Everything was great. The event was well planned and staffed, and all the volunteers did a great job,” said one adult leader.

Until the next ConnJam in 2028, thank you to all the Scouts, leaders, families, volunteers, sponsors, and staff who made it happen. The memories made will last a lifetime.

As a donor, thank you for helping make fun and adventurous programs such as ConnJam 2025 possible for the youth and adults that participated in this signature program event.

- **John Hanks**, ConnJam Co Chair



MEET ART LANDI

LEARN WHY HE SUPPORTS SCOUTING

Art Landi is an active Connecticut Yankee Council Executive Board member and a outstanding benefactor of Scouting America’s programs in Connecticut. When Art Landi joined Scouting in Brooklyn in 1950, he had no idea it would shape his entire life. From learning leadership as a patrol leader to discovering his career path through a chance encounter at a Pinewood Derby, Scouting gave him opportunities he never would have found elsewhere. “The one thing about Scouting was, everybody has a job, and I use those leadership skills every day,” Art shares. Decades later, as a successful business leader, he sees the same transformation happening in today’s Scouts—kids who stand out because of their confidence, discipline, and character. “These kids are different,” he says. “They go out of their way to shake your hand and ask how you’re doing.” Scouting America provides young people—regardless of background—the mentorship, skills, and leadership training they need to succeed. Your donation ensures that future generations have access to the same life-changing experiences that shaped Art’s journey.

EAGLE SCOUT HIGHLIGHT

WEST HAVEN LANDMARK GARDEN REBUILT IN EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT



WEST HAVEN, CT — A West Haven teen led the effort to rebuild a landmark city garden as part of his Eagle Scout project. With the support of more than 30 volunteers, Nico Antonucci rebuilt the planted garden at Sandy Point Overlook Park in

West Haven. The garden had been removed as part of the Beach Street Road Elevation Project.

Antonucci’s effort was recognized by West Haven Mayor Dorinda Borer, along with community leaders and residents. The original planting area that adorned the Park, flanked by Second Avenue and Beach Street, was completed in 2010 by then-Eagle Scout Candidate John Voss. Passersby have enjoyed the well-manicured gardens and “the bird” for almost 15 years.

Due to grading related to the City’s Beach Street Road Raise Project, the garden had to be dismantled. Neighbors were afraid the park would remain barren after the road project, but Nico Antonucci came along in late 2023 to take the restoration project on as his Eagle Scout project.

Antonucci spent the early part of 2024 planning the garden project, measuring the area of the garden to be paved and calculating the necessary quantities of bricks, gravel and sand that would be needed. He then secured material donations from Tractor Supply of Orange (posts for center of garden);

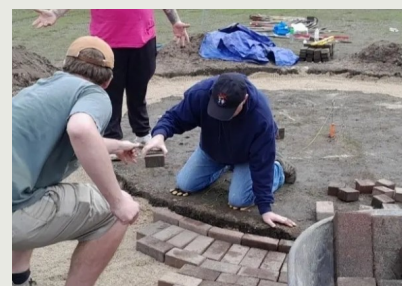
Grillo Services of Milford (gravel and sand); and Home Depot of Orange (loaned power tamper).

The bricks, originally contributed by the city, were salvaged from the last garden, and were recycled for use in this garden.

Finally, Nico organized a large group of volunteers from his own Scout Troop (899) and neighboring Scout Troops (1633 and 633) to help build the garden on April 20 and worked with residents of the area to identify additional volunteers from the neighborhood who showed up to help with the project.

Several local organizations contributed to the project at Antonucci’s request. The West Haven Parks and Recreation Commission unanimously approved the project in March and gave him permission to rebuild the garden at this location.

Members of the Sandy Point Neighborhood Association participated actively in the project the day of construction and contributed funds to help purchase perennial plants that were added to the garden in mid-May.



Individual neighbors of the garden also made contributions to the plants and materials that will be installed over the next few weeks. The West Haven Beautification Committee plans to also contribute several annual flowers that will give the garden color through the summer and into the fall.

THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF SUMMER CAMP 2025:

YOUR INVESTMENT IN ACTION — SUPPORTING TODAY'S YOUTH

Research in the Journal of Youth Development shows that attending summer camp helps youth develop skills essential to success in academics and in the workplace. What researchers found by studying camp attendees was that the experiences intrinsic to summer camps — trying new activities, living with your peers, being required to be more independent — all inspired personal growth.

After their experiences at camp, young people displayed higher levels of skills in three areas:

- Teamwork and collaboration
- Positive self-image
- Work ethic and conscientiousness

Here are some excerpts from the Journal of Youth Development study:

Teamwork and Collaboration

Relationship skills was the most central theme interviewees found applicable to academic and workplace readiness. Almost half of participants thought the relationship skills learned at camp helped them reach out and make friends at school. Relationship skills were also beneficial for participants in their jobs; they felt it helped their ability to provide superior customer service at work.

Positive Self-Evaluation

Confidence learned at camp helped former campers at school when talking to their teachers, “I’m not afraid to ask for help. If I have a question, I’m not scared to go to office hours or to a tutoring session.” At work, participants developed the confidence to talk to older adults (e.g., bosses or customers) or complete an assigned task. One interviewee said, “Camp had an effect at



my work helping instill in me a sense of confidence and getting done the task I have in front of me effectively.”

Work Ethic and Conscientiousness

Camp helped individuals learn organization. In academics, participants felt they were able to better organize their time. Additionally, participants used organization learned from camp at work, “the organizational value is really important because we’ll have so much paperwork from so many different cases [at work] and we need to make sure we’re on top of that.”

Former Campers learned responsibility from attending camp, which was most useful in their jobs. One individual said, “For my cleaning job there’s not a set schedule and I don’t report to anyone. I kind of just go on my own and clean rooms. Camp taught me how to be responsible because people were always depending on you and the rest of your cabin was expecting you to show up to places on time.”

Thank you for your support of our summer camp programs at Camp Sequassen, Sailaway Sailing School, and Hoyt Scout Reservation. Over 3,000 Scouts and volunteers attend our summer programs for the fun, discovery, and the adventure.

In 2026 and 2027, our two legendary camps, Hoyt Scout Reservation and Camp Sequassen will be celebrating anniversary milestones of their impact on the youth we serve. Hoyt will be celebrating its 60th year of service. Sequassen will be celebrating 100 years of providing outdoor adventures to thousands of Scouts since 1927. Thank you for your support of our Council and our wonderful camp facilities and programs.

Connecticut Yankee Council
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**“My favorite thing about Scouting
is you get to make people smile!”**

– Nathaniel, 9

Your generous donation helps the
Connecticut Yankee Council to
provide life-changing programs to
youth in our communities.

Thank You!

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Inaugural Edition

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JAMES E. WEST DONORS

WHY YOU SHOULD BECOME A JAMES E. WEST FELLOW AND LEAVE A LEGACY

The Scouts in our units can tie several knots with their eyes closed. They can set up a tent in mere minutes, and their first-aid skills are first-rate. But for all the great life lessons they've learned in Scouting, they probably don't know much about how the program is funded. And that's the way it should be.

Let the Scouts worry about growing into fine young citizens and having fun while you and the other adult supporters help keep the program financially stable. Like most nonprofit organizations, Scouting America heavily relies on gifts from generous donors to provide program support. While direct support of our operating funds to fund day-to-day operations is critical, an additional legacy gift to the James West Fellowship fund provides stability for the long-term health of Scouting programs.

Since 1993, Scouting Supporters from our Council have made a permanent contribution of at least \$1,000 to our endowment fund to ensure the future of Scouting for generations to come. The Connecticut Yankee Council has had 212 donors contribute \$228,046 to the corpus of the endowment fund through the James E. West Fellowship program.

Over the past decades, the James West fund was increased dramatically since the date the original gifts were received.

While protecting the initial gift of those restricted funds, the Council's investment spending policy has generated over \$182,600 in program support from the James West donations.

A gift to the Connecticut Yankee Council, designated by the donor to the council endowment fund, qualifies for membership as a James E. West fellow. Many individuals and corporations make these gifts either on behalf of someone else—such as in honor of an Eagle Scout, Silver Beaver recipient, a retirement, a special accomplishment, or anniversary-or in memory of special individual.

The gift should be in addition to—and not replace or diminish - the donor's annual support. A minimum gift of \$1000 in cash or marketable securities qualifies for the Bronze level membership. Donors may make cumulative gifts to reach Silver (\$5,000), Gold (\$10,000), and Diamond (\$15,000) member levels. For example, 5 years of giving at the Bronze level would qualify for Silver level membership.

**Thank you for your support. Scan the
QR Code to learn more about the
James E. West Fellowship and
download the application today!**

