

# SHAPING TODAY'S SCOUTS: YOUR IMPACT IN ACTION

Serving Fairfield, New Haven and parts of Hartford Counties of Connecticut



## EAGLE SCOUT TO HERO:

### HEROISM HONOR MEDAL AWARDED TO WILEY VAN STEENBERGEN

The Connecticut Yankee Council is proud to recognize **Wiley Van Steenbergen** for his extraordinary bravery and composure in a life-threatening situation. Wiley, an Eagle Scout with **Troop 444**, formerly **Troop 471**, in Guilford, comes from a long and distinguished Scouting family and is one of six Eagle Scout grandchildren.

On **July 19, 2022**, while spending a hot summer afternoon at Misquamicut Beach in Rhode Island, then-14-year-old Wiley demonstrated exceptional courage. At the time, he was a Second class Scout swimming in the surf with his father, John, when a series of large waves struck them. In the moments that followed,



Wiley realized he could no longer see his father. While searching in the water, he bumped into a submerged figure and discovered it was his dad, unconscious.

Acting quickly and with remarkable presence of mind, Wiley secured his father and, with assistance from another swimmer, carefully brought him to shore. Despite his age, Wiley took great care to support his father's, head and neck, ensuring that any potential injuries were not worsened. Once they reached the beach, lifeguards immediately began CPR. Throughout this intense and frightening event, Wiley remained calm and communicated clearly with first responders, providing all necessary information.

Wiley's mother, Linda, later shared that even after arriving at the hospital—during a time when she was understandably distraught—Wiley continued to demonstrate maturity far beyond his years. He answered questions from medical staff, stayed composed, and contacted family members, all shortly after saving his father's life.

For his courage, skill, and the steady leadership he displayed during this emergency, Wiley has rightfully earned the **Heroism Honor Medal**. His actions exemplify the Scout Oath and Law and reflect the very best of Scouting's values.

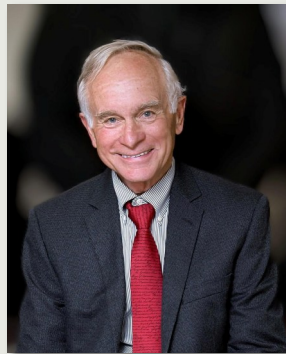


**Congratulations to Wiley Van Steenbergen—your Council is proud of you!**

## MEET GEORGE MULVANEY:

### LEARN WHY HE SUPPORTS SCOUTING

George Mulvaney, President of Mulvaney Mechanical in Danbury, CT truly lives by the Scout Law. George is at the heart of many not-for-profit organizations throughout the Danbury area. His accomplishments range from combating domestic violence, racism and housing insecurity through the Association of Religious Communities to creating opportunities to take Ability Beyond's clients with disabilities from isolated workshops into corporations, small businesses and other area workplaces to become part of the greater community. George also serves on the board for many non-profit and other organizations throughout the Danbury area.



Because of George's selfless commitment to serving others, he was honored at the 2010 Danbury Good Scout Reception. Recognizing the value of Scouting and the importance of funding the program, George has continued to lead the Danbury Good Scout Reception committee. George has tirelessly worked to identify honorees for the reception, to invite his many friends to the event, and to serve on the event committee.

George's commitment to Scouting and the Danbury Good Scout reception has generated funding which creates program opportunities for many Scouts—opportunities that would not have happened without George. Additionally,

George has been very generous with his business services. Recently the Council Service Center air conditioning was not functioning properly. The last thing any not-for-profit needs is an additional expense. A quick phone call to George and he immediately sent over a member of his team.

This type of generosity makes it possible to focus our funding on how we can best serve our youth.

To thank George for his dedication to our Scouts, he was presented with the **North Star award at the 2025 Danbury Good Scout Reception**. The North Star Award is the highest award a Council can bestow on a non-registered volunteer who has made a significant contribution to Scouting and the community.

In his acceptance speech, George emphasized that the Scouting program builds a solid moral and physical foundation through the valuable lessons of leadership, teamwork, problem solving, perseverance, preparedness, integrity, ethical behavior and having the persistence to follow through to achieve one's goals.

The Scouting program creates tomorrow's leaders and is a program where values are taught, leaders are grown and the future is built. Your donation assures that future generations will have access to life-changing experiences that prepare them to possess the persistence and resilience so they can navigate an ever-changing world.

# A YEAR OF SCOUTING GROWTH FOR OUR COUNCIL IN 2026:

BUILDING A BETTER COUNCIL — AND YOU MAKE IT HAPPEN!



Volunteers and our community supporters are the heartbeat of Scouting, and 2026 is our year to create unprecedented opportunities for youth across our council. We are stepping forward with ambitious goals, powerful new innovations, and the unstoppable energy that only committed Scouters can deliver.

## Grow Scouting Like Never Before and Expand Our Footprint Across the Council

Your leadership fuels our mission. This year, we will:

- **Recruit 15% more new youth** into traditional Scouting programs.
- **Retain 70% of currently registered traditional Scouts**, ensuring stability, adventure, and continuous engagement.

Every new Scout represents a life changed—and every returning Scout proves the program is working.

We're bringing Scouting into new neighborhoods and creating even more opportunities for families to join.

- **Add 9 new Cub Scout packs in 2026.**

This growth strengthens our communities and ensures more young people experience the values and adventure only Scouting provides.

## Raise the Bar for Unit Excellence

This year we will have strong, thriving units delivering top-quality programs.

- **50% of all traditional units will achieve Trailblazer Unit status.**

Trailblazer units model the very best in Scouting—and with your leadership, many more will rise to that level this year.

## Invest in Camps that are Inspirational

Great programs require great places to grow, lead, and learn.

In 2026, we will:

- **Invest over \$1 million in capital improvements at Camp Sequassen and Hoyt Scout Reservation** to elevate program delivery resources and enhance the outdoor experience for every Scout.

These improvements ensure our camps remain along the finest in the region—safe, innovative, and adventure-ready.

## Celebrate the Best of Scouting

Our council is proud of the young people who earn Scouting's highest honor—and the alumni who continue to lead in their communities.

- We will **launch a Building Character Celebration** to honor current Eagle Scouts and recognize the remarkable impact Eagle Scout alumni have made across our communities.

This annual celebration will shine a spotlight on leadership, achievement, and lifelong champions of community service.

## Build a Culture of Giving & Appreciation

A stronger Scouting program begins with strong relationships.

- **40% of all traditional units will receive a Stewardship Society presentation.**
- Throughout the year, we will **highlight our appreciation for volunteers and community supporters** with inspiring quarterly postcards and donor newsletter publications.

Volunteers and supporters deserve to be celebrated—in 2026, they will be.

## Strengthen Our Financial Future

A strong fiscal foundation allows us to deliver excellent programs and support volunteers effectively.

- **We will strive to balance the 2026 budget and ensure a financially viable council to support our life-changing programs for youth.**

This commitment ensures sustainable growth and reliable resources for units and families.

## Let's Do This — Together!

2026 is our year to grow bigger, reach farther, and serve more youth than ever before. It's the year we elevate our camps; The year we celebrate our Eagles; The year we strengthen units, expand opportunities, and deliver even more life-changing adventures; And none of it is possible without **YOU**—the dedicated volunteers and community supporters who make Scouting thrive every single day.

**Thank you for your passion, your leadership, and your commitment. Let's charge into 2026 with purpose, energy, and unity.**

**Onward, Team—this is our year!**



# GOOD TURN SOCIETY

## CELEBRATING A GOOD TURN SOCIETY INDUCTION — Rudy Escalante

Scouting America introduced the **Good Turn Society** in 2023 to recognize donors who make a new contribution, pledge, or planned gift of **\$25,000 or more**, with additional levels of honor for even greater investments in Scouting. Members of the Good Turn Society embody the very best of Scouting—service above self, a commitment to going above and beyond, and the courage to lead through their investment in future generations. They are true Scouting heroes.

At our **Council Recognition Dinner** this past **January**, the Connecticut Yankee Council was proud to welcome one of our own Past Presidents and current Vice President of Major



Gifts, **Rudy Escalante**, into the distinguished group. Rudy was honored as a **Scout Oath level member**, representing an investment of **\$100,000 or more**.

Rudy has done more than make a generous gift—he **has invested in the future of Scouting**. His support strengthens programs that teach young people living in at-risk communities the values of courage, leadership, and compassion.

His commitment helps build trails where adventure begin, camps where friendships grow, and opportunities where dreams take flight.

**Congratulations to Rudy.** His generosity is making a meaningful difference and reflects his belief in the power of service, his dedication to leading by example, and his conviction that one good turn truly deserves another.

# COMMUNITY IN ACTION

## 2025 THANKS FOR GIVING FOOD DRIVE — MILFORD RESULTS

For more than two decades, the **Thanks for Giving Food Drive** has stood as one of Milford's strongest examples of community compassion in action. What began as a simple call to help families during the Thanksgiving season has grown into a major annual effort supporting thousands of residents facing food insecurity.



Since its inception, the drive has helped **more than 5,000 Milford families**, partnering with **over a dozen local food distribution charities** to ensure neighbors in need have access to nutritious meals. Sponsored by **Prepared 2 Help** and supported each year by dedicated **Milford-area Scouts**, the drive continues to strengthen a vital safety net for the community.

### A Two-Decade Legacy of Service

Across its 21-year history, the Thanks for Giving Food Drive has collected an extraordinary:

- **200,000+ pounds of food**
- **6,830 turkeys**
- **\$85,000 in financial support**

These contributions have fueled the work of organizations including the **Milford Food Bank, John Rigley Food Pantry, Cornerstone Food Pantry, Purple Pantry Boxes, Food2Kids, Saint Gabriel's Food Pantry, First UCC Food Pantry, Beth-El Shelter**, and many others. Together, these groups help ensure that families struggling to afford groceries can obtain the essentials they need.

### 2025 Impact: Scouts Leading the Way

This past season, Milford's Scouts played a major role in delivering support directly to local families. Through their coordinated effort:

- **365 families**, representing roughly **1,200 individuals**, received complete Thanksgiving meals
- Each family also received substantial additional food including tuna, pasta, peanut butter, vegetables, and more.
- **377 turkey** were distributed
- **Two full truckloads** of surplus food were delivered to local charities to replenish their shelves and meet ongoing needs

The Scouts' contribution reflects not only the spirit of service at the heart of Scouting, but the generosity and solidarity that define the Milford community.

### Recognizing Leadership and Volunteers



This year's success would not have been possible without the remarkable dedication of **Co-Chairs Tom Mercaldo and Todd Munn**, along with the many volunteers who gave.

**Thank you to everyone who donated, volunteered, and helped uplift our community. Your generosity changes lives—one meal, one family, one act of kindness at a time.**

# INTRODUCING THE SCOUTING STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

SUSTAINING THE FUTURE OF SCOUTING IN THE CONNECTICUT YANKEE COUNCIL

The Connecticut Yankee Council is proud to introduce the Scouting Stewardship Society, a new recruiting-giving program designed to strengthen Scouting today while building a thriving foundation for tomorrow. This initiative gives supporters the opportunity to make a meaningful, ongoing impact—at a level and pace that works for them.

## Flexible, Meaningful Giving

Becoming a member of the Scouting Stewardship Society is simple. Supporters choose a monthly or annual recurring gift, set at an amount that fits their budget. Each Society level includes unique recognition, offering our appreciation for your consistent commitment to local youth.

But what makes this program special is the power of choice.

## One Gift—Four Ways to Make an Impact

Society members direct their contribution to one of four targeted Pathways to impact. Each pathway supports a core pillar of our council's mission:

### Unit-Based Scouting Programs

Strengthen local packs, troops, crews, and ships by supporting leader development, membership growth, youth advancement, training, and essential council services.

### Outdoor Adventure Programs

Enhance our camps and outdoor experiences by funding skilled staff, innovative program features, facilities improvements, and safety-focused infrastructure.

### Community Outreach Programs

Ensure every young person has access to Scouting through camperships, scholarships, program outreach, and opportunities for youth in underserved communities.

### Maritime & Workforce Development Programs

Empower older Scouts and Ventures through hands-on learning, maritime training, skilled-trade exposure, and workforce readiness.

Members may allocate 100% of their gift to their chosen pathway—or direct 85% toward the pathway and 15% toward capital improvements or endowment support that keeps Scouting strong for generations.

## How to Join

Simply scan the QR code provided in council materials. From there, you'll be guided through our secure giving portal to set up your recurring contribution.

## Your Commitment Makes the Difference

By joining the Scouting Stewardship Society, you help ensure that every young person in the Connecticut Yankee Council has access to the leadership development, character-building programs, and outdoor adventures that Scouting uniquely provides.

Together, we are building stronger Scouts, stronger families, and a stronger future for our communities.



## Join Today!

Scan the QR Code to join or learn more about the Scouting Stewardship Society!

[ctyankee.org/scouting-stewardship-society](http://ctyankee.org/scouting-stewardship-society)

# 2025 POINTS OF PRIDE

CELEBRATING THE IMPACT YOU MAKE POSSIBLE



Thanks to the unwavering support of our Scouting family, this past year has been filled with remarkable achievements, growing opportunities, and life-changing experiences for young people across our council. Here are just a few points of pride that highlight the difference you make:

## Growing Scouting—One Future Leader at a Time

Your investment opened the door to adventure, leadership, and character development for over 10,000 youth across all Scouting programs. We also welcomed nearly 1,000 new Scout members, reflecting a 1.5% increase in youth recruitment—a testament to the strength and relevance of today’s Scouting experience.

## Transformational Programs

- More than 3,000 Scouts and volunteers participated in high-quality summer programs at Camp Sequassen, Sail Away Sailing School, and Hoyt Scout Reservation.
- 213 new Eagle Scouts, who together contributed an inspiring 30,232 hours of community service, strengthening parks, schools, nonprofits, and neighborhoods across our council.
- \$832,000 invested in camp improvements, ensuring safe, modern facilities that will serve generations of Scouts to come.

## Expanding Access & Opportunity

Your philanthropy ensures that every young person—regardless of background—has the chance to experience Scouting. Through our outreach efforts:

- 3,400 youth engaged in Scouting programs in New Haven and Bridgeport.
- Over 300 young people experienced the magic of Scoutreach Day Camp and overnight adventures.

## Preparing Tomorrow’s Workforce

Innovation continues to drive our program forward. This year we:

- Launched an underwater drone STEM program for 150 students, with support from Electric Boat and the U.S. Navy.
- Introduced 414 youth to aviation and engineering careers through AVELO Aviation Career Day at Tweed Airport and Camp Sikorsky at Lockheed Martin’s world-class helicopter facility.

## Direct Community Impact

Scouting continues to live its mission of service by helping families in need:

- Provided food assistance to 326 families.
- Distributed 214 winter coats in partnership with the City of New Haven.
- Delivered holiday toys to every Cub Scout in New Haven, ensuring joy reaches every corner of our community.

Your generosity and our Scouting volunteers makes these moments—and thousands more—possible. Thank you for believing in the power of Scouting to shape leaders, strengthen families, and build brighter futures.

## TOP 10 MERIT BADGES EARNED IN 2025

Merit Badges	Total
1 Citizenship in the World	250
2 Citizenship in the Nation	219
3 Citizenship in Society	215
4 Environmental Science	206
5 Citizenship in the Community	201
6 Camping	197
7 Communication	182
8 Personal Management	181
9 Personal Fitness	177
10 Cooking	174

OVER 6,600 MERIT BADGES EARNED IN 2025

# SEA SCOUTING EXPANDED

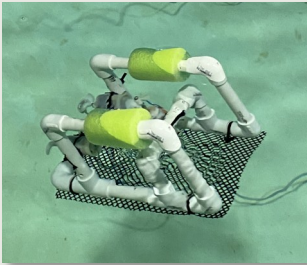
## DISCOVERING MARITIME SCIENCES, TECHNOLOGIES, AND CAREERS

Built upon a proud legacy of Sea Scouting on the Long Island Sound dating back to the early 1930s, the Connecticut Yankee Council's Maritime Program remains as vital today as ever. The Sound's 1,100+ square miles are a cornerstone of Connecticut's economy and quality of life. As the submarine capital of the world—and home to the United States Coast Guard Academy—Connecticut has long been a center of maritime innovation, industry, and education.

With such rich maritime heritages comes significant opportunity. The sciences, commercial industries, recreational resources, and educational institutions connected to the Long Island Sound represent lifelong career pathways and civic responsibilities. Preparing young people to navigate these opportunities is at the heart of the Connecticut Yankee Council's mission.

To meet this need, the Council operates the Sailaway Sailing School in Bridgeport, a Maritime Explorers program for youth ages 10-14, and a Sea Scout program for ages 14-20. These initiatives are supported by a broad range of related Merit Badges—including Oceanography, Fish & Wildlife Management, Environmental Science, Swimming, and Small Boat Sailing. Through these offerings, youth participate in year-round learning experiences that build maritime knowledge, technical proficiency, and confidence on the water.

One of the most exciting hands-on projects in the maritime program is the construction and operation of remote-controlled submersible drones, known as Unmanned



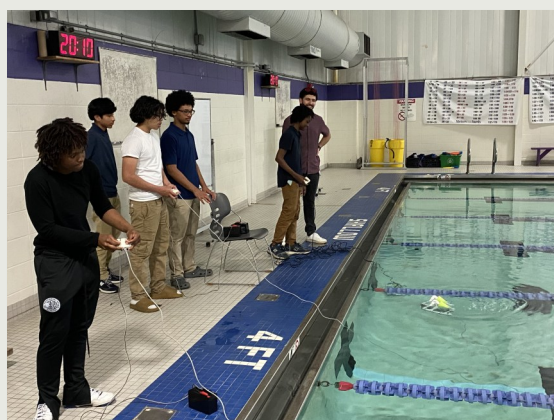
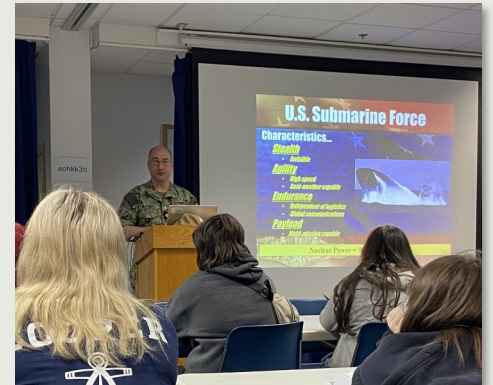
Underwater Vehicles (UUVs). This rapidly developing technology is central to modern ocean exploration, research, and industry. Thanks to generous support from the Electric Boat Company, the U.S. Navy Maritime industrial base, the University of Bridgeport, and our partnership with New Haven public schools, more than 150 youth will build their own Sea Perch underwater drone this year.

After construction, Scouts test their drones in a pool setting, competing to see who can navigate an underwater obstacle course with the best speed and accuracy. Along the way, they gain firsthand experience with buoyancy, propulsion, electronics, engineering concepts, and problem-solving skills directly tied to real-world maritime careers.

Beyond robotics and technology, Scouts in the Maritime Program strengthen their swimming skills, practice boating safety, learn maintenance



and navigation, and develop teamwork and leadership. Through these experiences they cultivate a lasting connection to the Long Island Sound and the oceans beyond.



# ONE SCOUT, TWO AWARDS

## LOCAL EAGLE SCOUT HONORED WITH TWO NATIONAL AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP

**E**agle Scout Charlie Welch of Troop 76 has achieved an extraordinary milestone in Scouting, earning not just one, but two national-level awards recognizing his exceptional leadership in environmental stewardship and community service.



### Distinguished Conservation Service Award:

This past summer, Charlie earned the Distinguished Conservation Service Award, one of the highest honors a youth member can receive for conservation work in Scouting. To qualify, Charlie completed a rigorous set of merit badges—including Environmental Science, Fish & Wildlife Management, Forestry, Soil & Water Conservation, and Sustainability—along with two elective badges.

The capstone of this award required Charlie to plan and lead two major conservation projects. His first project involved installing beach dune fencing to protect and stabilize fragile coastal ecosystems. His second project focused on constructing and installing tree swallow nesting boxes to improve habitat for migratory songbirds.

Together, these efforts represented over 1,000 hours of volunteer service, reflecting an impressive level of commitment and community engagement. Charlie successfully completed all requirements and passed his Board of Review on July 2, 2025.

### Messengers of Peace Distinguished Service Project Award:

Charlie's impact didn't end there. This year, he was also selected to receive the prestigious Messengers of Peace Distinguished Service Project Award. Only five projects nationwide earn this honor annually, as determined by the International Commissioner of Scouting America and the National Messengers of Peace Committee.



Charlie's conservation initiatives—focused on protecting coastal dunes and restoring nesting habitat for tree swallows—advance global priorities by directly supporting United Nations Sustainable

Development Goals related to Life on Land, Climate Action, and Sustainable Communities. His work strengthens coastal resilience, enhances biodiversity, and provides ongoing educational benefits for the local community.

### Leadership That Inspires:

Charlie's ability to design complex conservation projects, mobilize large volunteer teams, and deliver meaningful environmental outcomes demonstrates leadership well beyond his years. His work embodies the highest ideals of Scouting and the spirit of the Messengers of Peace program.

In recognition of the depth and consistency of his service, Charlie has also completed the requirements for both the Messengers of Peace Champion and Messengers of Peace Ambassador Awards, further highlighting the significant impact he has made locally and globally.



### A Model for Future Leaders:

Charlie Welch's achievements stand as an inspiring example of what young people can accomplish when passion, leadership, and service come together. The Scouting community proudly celebrates his contributions and looks forward to the positive impact he will continue to make in the years ahead.

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2026

### Coastal Connecticut Generations Breakfast

Honoring Generational Success in Business, Community and Scouting  
**Date:** May 27th  
**Location:** Housatonic Community College, Bridgeport

### Building Character Leadership Celebration

A Celebration of Eagle Scouts. Building Character, Strengthening Communities, Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders.  
**Date:** June 25th  
**Location:** Trumbull Marriott, Trumbull

### Generations of Success Breakfast

Honoring Outstanding Role Models & Members of the Community  
**Date:** October 29th  
**Location:** Carriage Barn Art Center, New Canaan

### Lower Fairfield County Good Scout Award Dinner

Honoring Members of the Lower Fairfield County Community Who Exemplify Scouting America's Ideal Values, Character and Leadership.  
**Date:** November 5th  
**Location:** The Stamford Hotel

### Greater Danbury Good Scout Award Reception

Celebrating Community Leaders Who Exemplify Scouting America's Ideal Values, Character and Leadership.  
**Date:** TBD November  
**Location:** Amber Room Colonnade, Danbury

### Greater New Haven Good Scout Award Reception

Honoring Members of Our Community Who Exemplify Scouting America's Ideal Values, Character and Leadership.  
**Date:** December 9th  
**Location:** Amarante's Sea Cliff, New Haven

Connecticut Yankee Council  
60 Wellington Road  
Milford CT, 06461

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## Thank you!

Your support helps the Connecticut Yankee Council to serve over 10,000 youth through life-changing Scouting programs.



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[ctyankee.org/support](http://ctyankee.org/support)

# PLANNED GIVING 2026

## THE LASTING VALUE OF PLANNED GIVING: Building a Legacy for Tomorrow's Scouts

For more than a century, Scouting has shaped young people into leaders of character-instilling values like service, courage, and responsibility. As Connecticut Yankee Council, Scouting America continues this mission today, planned giving offers a powerful way for supporters to create long-term impact. Through thoughtful estate planning, donors can help ensure that future generations have access to the same transformative experiences that shaped so many lives before them.

Planned giving is more than a financial decision; it is an expression of personal legacy. For many supporters, Scouting has played a meaningful role in their own lives or in the lives of those they love. A planned gift allows donors to honor those memories by extending their support into the future. These gifts become a statement of belief in the next generation—a declaration that the values learned around a campfire, or high adventure treks, and in service projects must continue to flourish.

One of the greatest strengths of planned giving is its flexibility. Donors can craft a gift that aligns with their personal goals, family considerations, and financial circumstances. Whether through a bequest in a will, a beneficiary designation on a retirement account, or a charitable trust, each option offers unique advantages. Some gifts may provide tax benefits, while others may allow donors to support Scouting America while still retaining lifetime income. Whatever the method, every planned gift contributes to building a stable financial foundation for Connecticut Yankee Council, Scouting America.

Importantly, planned gifts help sustain the programs that make Scouting so distinctive. These gifts can support camp maintenance and improvements, youth outreach initiatives, leadership training, and scholarships that ensure

every young person—regardless of background or means—has access to Scouting's opportunities. When a donor includes Connecticut Yankee Council, Scouting America in their estate plans, they are investing in outdoor adventure, skill-building, community service, and character development for decades to come.

Planned giving also fosters community. While annual giving keeps programs running today, planned gifts help guarantee that Scouting remains strong tomorrow. Endowment funds supported by planned giving grow over time and provide reliable income that helps councils weather economic changes and sustain long-term initiatives. This financial stability allows Scouting America to innovate, expand, and meet the evolving needs of youth across the country.

For donors, planned giving is deeply meaningful. It offers the chance to reflect on the values that shaped their lives and to pass those values forward. Many donors express that creating a legacy gift brings a sense of purpose and satisfaction—knowing that their support will help prepare future leaders, adventures, and community builders.

By choosing to include Connecticut Yankee Council, Scouting America in their estate plans, donors become part of a distinguished tradition of stewardship. Their generosity ensures that the spirit of Scouting—its commitment to service, leadership, and outdoor adventure—endures for generations yet to come. Planned giving is not just a contribution; it is a legacy of impact, hope, and belief in the potential of every youth we serve.

If you, or someone you know, who would be interested in learning more about Planned Giving, please visit <http://scouting.planmylegacy.org>