

Three Eagle Scout Projects Going to the Dogs

By JANET ROSE

A place where dogs can be off-leash to romp freely. Big dogs. Little dogs. A special place with tunnel and seesaw, jumps and obstacle course. No, not a playground for children, but a training area for dogs. Not too far from where you live. East on Research to the turnaround that touches Tutt Blvd. and just up a few blocks on the left. This special place. How did it come about? With heart and hard work and the leadership of three brothers.

When Zack Hullings of Boy Scout Troop 62 achieved Life Scout Rank, he aspired to the elite Eagle Scout Rank. One of many requirements would be to plan, develop, and successfully complete a leadership service project.

Zack wanted a project to benefit the community. But what? With him were his two best friends, the family pets, Koda the Red Fox Labrador and Leckie the Black Lab/ Golden Retriever mix, who seemed to be following his every thought. That's it! A mini-park for dogs, a "Woof" Ranch Park.

Zack made a convincing presentation to Scoutmaster Dan Lahman and Eagle Scout Coordinator Dennis Bay, whose role

is to help projects get underway. Encouraged by Bay's guidance, Zack approached Ralph Braden, VP of the Nor'wood Development Group, Colorado Springs, and manager of Wolf Ranch, whose positive response resulted in generously providing the property to establish the park. It was almost like, help yourself!

With deliberation, Zack analyzed the needs of the park, and what he could, in a practical sense, accomplish, considering constraints of time and money. The selected property of one and a quarter acres is beautifully situated in an open space facing the mountain range.

The wide path leading to it has been overlaid with gravel provided by Braden. Zack engineered the dimensions and divisions required, designating with signage, the entry, small dog, large dog, and training areas.

With the assistance of heavy equipment, the post hole digging was accomplished. Zack, with his youthful volunteer crews of scouts, friends and neighbors carefully made level each metal post, securing them in concrete mix. They installed the chain-link fencing. One hundred-forty-five metal posts, fourteen hundred feet of fencing and hundreds of work hours later, the land was beginning to look like a park.

Zack outlined each detail including the installation of the donated Dogi-Pot with courtesy litter bags. He went online doing a comparative survey of regulations by which dog parks throughout the country self-govern. He studied, modified, then devised ten rules, which he titled the "Laws of the Pack" and are now prominently posted on the entry gate.

With everything in place, Zack submitted to the Pikes Peak Area Council Eagle Scout Review Board the completed official Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, with meticulous record-keeping and proper signatures, before his 18th birthday deadline. He felt good about what he had accomplished.

With parents, Kristi and Dean Hullings, and brothers Josh and Jake, the family traveled to

Laurel, Maryland, where Zack, a 2011 Liberty High graduate and entering freshman at Capitol College, is majoring in astronautical engineering.

Hold on! That's just a third of the story. It happens that brother Josh, a junior at Liberty High, who just "loves, loves, loves math", and Jake, a freshman there, where both brothers are members of the Marching Band, area Isom embersof Troop62. They look forward to Monday evenings when about thirty students from rival area schools, meet at Sunrise United Methodist Church, Briargate Blvd., to proudly assemble as a unified troop within the brotherhood of the Boy Scouts of America.

Like Zack, Josh and Jake, with their Life Scout prerequisite, aspire to Eagle Scout Rank. Like Zack, they each have a separate, distinctive project that has been planned, approved, and in progress.

Josh's project is the Training Area. It was he who stipulated the space requirements to make it work. Zack accounted for that in the master plan, making the Training Area the core.

Josh has been designing, building, painting nine essential agility features and equipment including: the A-Frame, Ramp Up Ramp Down, a contact obstacle challenge; the Teeter-Totter or Seesaw, another contact obstacle; the Tunnel; the Weave Poles course which dogs must navigate; the Dog Walk; the Pause Table; the Horizontal Bar Jump, and the Hoop Jump.

To enhance safety for dogs and owners, Josh concreted the equipment into the ground when appropriate. This area should prove to be a favorite addition.

Jake's project relates to the aesthetics of the park, refinement, general improvements, including the design and construction of the handsome standing bulletin board with plexi-glass front, the stands for water bowls, the wooden benches, and plantings. Jake is exuberant, about this "amazing learning experience." The brothers concur that it has developed their skills in organization and

Continued on page 9

Eagle Scouts

from page 2

leadership.

On a recent Saturday, one in a series of scheduled workdays, severe winds prevented the volunteers from working in the park, but that did not stop them from working. Everyone shifted to the Hullings' house, and with garage doors open, proceeded with construction and painting.

Josh and Jake have seen their work come alive and realize the joy of labor and perseverance.

An impressive welcoming sign at the edge of the gravel walkway is being erected.

The official opening of the park is imminent. It is a testimony to the quality of Boy Scout leadership, parental involvement, and the goodwill and generosity of people. So we have three loyal brothers, remarkable scouts, caring parents, two lucky dogs Koda and Leckie, and one special park going to the dogs. Woof! Woof!