

Article From Salem Community Patriot

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Service Project Helps Life Scout's Alma Mater - St. Joseph School



Luke Latino is very happy with the new sign.

submitted by Arlene Quaratiello

Students and teachers returning to St. Joseph School in Salem in a few weeks will be welcomed back by a large new school sign, and visitors who have never been to the school will have an easier time finding it along Main Street thanks to Eagle Scout candidate and St. Joseph alum Luke Latino.

Luke, a 16-year-old Life Scout in Salem Boy Scout Troop 409, hopes to become an Eagle Scout, and his community service project fulfills one of the main requirements for attaining this prestigious rank that is earned by less than five per cent of Boy Scouts.

Luke was aware that his former school needed a new sign and saw a chance to help his alma mater. "I chose this project to help the school that helped with my education for eight years," explained Latino. "I wanted to pick a project that would have a positive effect on the school in the future."

Latino's project began with a pasta dinner fundraiser in March at St. Joseph's gym where the Boy Scouts and families of Troop 409 assisted Luke in raising over \$4,000 for his project.

"I am grateful to my troop, family, friends, local businesses, and organizations who have supported me in this project," shared Luke. "I was overwhelmed with people's generosity and willingness to help."

The sign was installed in time for St. Joseph's eighth grade graduation back in June. It features changeable text so that passers-by can instantly be informed about what's new at the school. "This is what education at St. Joe's is all about," said Dr. Noreen McAloon, principal of St. Joseph School. "Luke is a fine example of our graduates' desire and skill to find solutions to meet the needs they encounter. We become a community. In this case, we are the fortunate recipients."

Beginning as a Cub Scout in second grade, Luke has considered scouting a big part of his life. His troop, which serves boys between the ages of 11 and 18 in Salem and surrounding towns, is sponsored by the Ernest W. Young Post 63 of the American Legion and is led by Scoutmaster Don Bohnwagner, Sr. "Scouting has helped me grow as a person," Latino explained. "It has taught me many great life lessons and skills."