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Boy Scouts Launch SCOUTStrong Fitness Program in Central Indiana

Crossroads of America Council Joins National Effort Increasing Fitness among Scouts & Volunteers

Indianapolis, Ind., May 23, 2012 – Crossroads of America Council, Boy Scouts of America is launching a formal program in central Indiana to increase fitness and wellness among Scouts and volunteers through the SCOUTStrong PALA initiative.

The program is a Scout-specific Presidential Active Lifestyle Award or PALA and is part of a national effort by the Boy Scouts of America in collaboration with the President’s Challenge, the premier program of the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition. To earn the SCOUTStrong PALA, children and teens need to be active 60 minutes a day, five days a week for six weeks. Adults need 30 minutes a day.

More than 100 indoor and outdoor activities count toward the daily requirement including walking, running, gardening, canoeing and aerobics as long as major muscle groups are engaged at a moderate to vigorous activity level. Scouts, their families and volunteers can access a log to track their activity as well as activity suggestions and local events on the council’s website www.crossroadsbsa.org.

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“ ‘To keep myself physically strong’ has been a part of the Boy Scout oath for more than 100 years and this is a continuation of that effort to prepare Scouts for a lifetime of fitness,” said Dr. Pat Rankin, chief medical officer, Community Physician Network and SCOUTStrong committee chair. “This initiative is an excellent opportunity to incorporate fitness into everyday lives.”

Many of these activities also count toward Scout achievements such as Cub Scout belt loops and pins as well as Boy Scout merit badges. In 2011, Cub Scouts, Webelos and Boy Scouts earned nearly 21,000 fitness-related awards. The council’s goal is to increase that, by awarding 50,000 fitness-related achievements in the next two years. Nationally the Boy Scouts of America has set a goal of 500,000 Scouts to complete the SCOUTStrong PALA in the same timeframe.

To encourage fitness, the council is partnering with the Indiana National Guard to help Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, Explorer posts and Venturing crews set up their own fitness programs and goals.

“We are excited to join with the Boy Scouts on this initiative because both organizations believe in the importance of physical and mental fitness,” said John McGoff, brigadier general. “We look forward to helping Scout packs and troops build camaraderie through fitness-related programs.”

Additionally, the council is leading efforts to maintain, re-open and create hiking trails in central Indiana, adding new fitness programs at summer camps and developing a community run/walk for the fall.

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Boy Scouts of America is a youth development organization that’s designed to prepare young people to make ethical and moral decisions throughout their lifetimes. The goals of Scouting consist of citizenship training, character development and personal fitness. Throughout the Boy Scout program, young people are encouraged to advance through ranks by fulfilling requirements in the areas of leadership, service and outdoor skills. Crossroads of America Council is a United Way agency. To get more information on Scouting, call (317) 813-7125 or 877-925-1900 (toll free) or visit www.becomeascout.org.

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