

GOOD KIDS DOING GOOD THINGS CARING IS CHILD'S PLAY

Eagle project a Kid Zone of fun and caring at United Way Resource Center

By KRISTYN ADAMS
For the Daily News

The bright, positive atmosphere of the United Way Resource Center in Hartford was officially zoned kid-friendly during a recent community event. In the company of family, friends, and United Way Resource Center administrators staff, Eagle Scout Hartford officially launched his project, and presented commemorative plaques to Director Capital Linker and Executive Director Kristin Branauer.

When Alex approached me as the author of this "essence," Linker said, "A year ago when we opened, it was a matter of how we could pull it all together. There are more than 20 United Way of Washington County partner agencies, this opportunity to make a difference in my community." Alex Richards said, "It means so much to know I can help someone else in my neck. I know how much the United Way Resource Center means to other people."

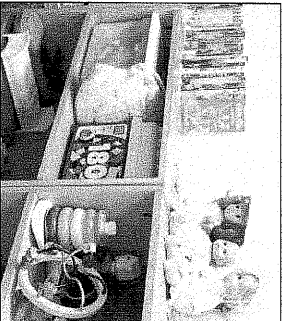
Richards said, "I've been a parent for 11, and Sean, 12 and Kyle Richards approach me about the 7th Boy Scout article. "We're a scouting family," said Melissa Richards in addition to seeing mutual inspiration is coming to Alex Richards' relationship with his parents. Motivation for the project comes from another source.

"You want to plan things like this in advance. Have it that this was I came to get done," Richards said. "I had help from my parents in keeping track of volunteers matter what you're doing, you have to have something that motivates you. It was Linker and he made this motivated me the most."

While volunteering for the Scout Bus program Linker through course of conversation, Linker and Richards discovered shared backgrounds in scouting and got along very well." Richards said. "(Linker) asked me to come see her work was really fun and why not? which she did. She and a co-worker explained the project to me and I thought it fit me well. I was working at a Cub Scout camp with children."



Kristyn Adams for the Daily News
Eagle scout candidate Alex Richards addresses attendees during dedication of the Kid Zone play area at United Way Resource Center in Hartford Tuesday, June 3, 2014. The play area is located in the basement of the United Way Resource Center before Richards' project.



Linker said a portion of need surfaced shortly after the facility opened. The facility is a remnant of infrastructure for area residents in need of transportation and Washington County residents with parents and young people who are struggling. The center is also host to program activities, training sessions, and workshops for community members. Alex Richards acknowledged a children's play area as a crucial element in the center's mission. Richards said that the center's classes, seminars, and their children alone. A place was needed for kids to have fun

materials in the play area will make a remarkable difference. Case Guatemala reading program here soon too — all of these programs will benefit from (Richards) Eagle project. The's weekend project is to get this accomplished."

Launched in November, Richards project featured 21 hours. Costs exceeding \$200 were offset by material or monetary donations from individuals, organizations and businesses, including The Bicycle Shop, GYD Tool and Manufacturing, Clean Hepler Inc., Great Clips, The Greater Woman's Club, Hann Ace Hardware, Hartford Community Center, Depot, JD Laser, Inc., Kettle Murrise Lays Club, Lorraine Club, Mainz Automotive, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, and Waynespress.

A plain hallway was transformed into an inviting play area, well-stocked with toys, puzzles, board games, and videos for children.

Linker through the project on a small space adjacent to the play area, thought by Richards to be a quiet reading zone in the making. The addition of a bookshelf, bookshelves, toys, board games, and framed wall-mounted motivational poster properly dressed the space for any child with a love of reading.

"It was quite a lesson to see (Alex Richards) in action. The extra reading so he changed the plan to include it and make it work. It was really impressive," Rich said.

Richards said, "I was at the Resource Center in the future. "I don't mean to be greedy, but I'm looking for a place to read. Linker said, "As a community, we're all in this together. It takes a community to raise a child. My duties as an assistant senior patrol leader of Boy Scout troop 724 directed by St. Kilian's in Hartford is a high priority. I'm at the High School where he enjoys participating with the tennis chess and robotics teams and cross-country to his list of activities. Advance placement classes are helping Richards on the road to becoming a physics teacher after attending college. For more information of the United Way Resource Center, visit www.wyrc.org or call www.wyrc.org.

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Eagle project a Kid Zone of fun and caring at United Way Resource Center

By KRISTYNN ADAMS

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The bright, positive atmosphere of the United Way Resource Center in Hartford was officially zoned kid-friendly during a special dedication Tuesday. In the company of family, friends, and United Way Resource Center administrative staff, Eagle Scout candidate Alex Richards of Hartford officially launched his project, and presented commemorative plaques to United Way Resource Center Director Cindi Limburg and Executive Director Kristin Brandner.

“When Alex approached me about this project, I was ecstatic,” Limburg said. “A year ago when we opened, it was a matter of how we could pull it all together because the needs are here.” There are more than 20 United Way of Washington County partner agencies.

“I’m so happy to have had this opportunity to make a difference in my community,” Alex Richards said. “It means so much to know I had so many people behind my back. I know how much the (United Way) Resource Center means to other people. We all did this together.”

Richards’ younger brothers Tyler, 11, and Jason, 12, smiled as parents Melissa and Kyle Richards applauded with pride. All were wearing their troop

741 Boy Scout attire. "We're a scouting family," said Melissa Richards. In addition to setting examples for his brothers, mutual inspiration is core to Alex Richards' relationship with his parents. Motivation for the project was fuel personified from another source.

"You want to plan things like this in advance. Have it all set. I was never scared that this wasn't going to get done," Richards said. "I had help from my parents in keeping track of volunteers and other details, but no matter what you're doing, you have to have something that motivates you. It was Limburg and how much this all means to her- that's what motivated me the most."

While volunteering for the Stuff the Bus program in 2013, Richards met Limburg. Through course of conversation, Limburg and Richards discovered shared backgrounds in scouting.

"We talked for a long time and got along very well," Richards said. "(Limburg) asked me to come see her when I was ready to begin my Eagle project, which I did. She and a co-worker explained the project to me and I thought it fit me well because I had spent three weeks in the previous summer working at a Cub Scout camp with children."

Limburg said a particular need surfaced shortly after the facility opened. The United Way Resource Center facility is a conduit of information and referrals for area residents in need of non-profit and Washington County program services. The center is also host to program activities, training sessions, and workshops conducted by countywide agencies. Alex Richards acknowledged a children's play area as a crucial element; moms and dads who arrived to attend parenting classes oftentimes had their children along. A place was needed for kids to have fun while family members addressed their needs.

"People come here to learn how to be stronger parents," Limburg said. "Often, there are also groups like Cub Scouts or Girl Scouts here with parents and younger siblings who need to be along because there is no one at home to watch them. When there are nurturing classes, early childhood excellence or Head Start programs, the existence of educational materials in the play area will make a remarkable difference. Casa Guadalupe will start their summer reading program here soon, too — all of these programs will benefit from (Richards') Eagle project. He's worked long and hard to get this accomplished."

Launched in November, Richards' project teamed 21 volunteers for 160

manhours. Costs exceeding \$2900 were offset by material or monetary donations from individuals, organizations, and area businesses including Affiliated Clinical Services, The Bicycle Shop, CDM Tool and Manufacturing Co., Casa Tequila, Douglas Jewelers, Fireside Books, Glenn Hepfner, Inc., Great Clips, The Greater Women's Club, Hahn Ace Hardware, Hartford Lions Club, Home Depot, JD Laser, Inc., Kettle Moraine Lions Club, Lioness Club, Mantz Automation, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, and Walmart.

A plain hallway was transformed into an inviting play area well-stocked with donated books, toys, educational games, and videos for children.

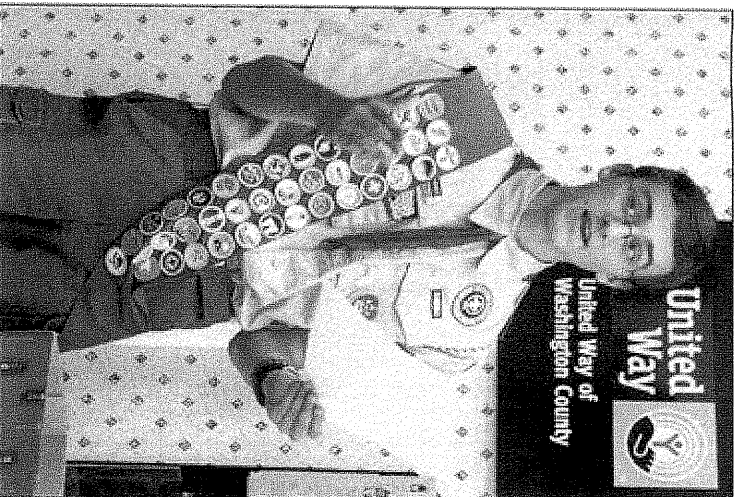
Midway through the project, an unused space adjacent to the play area was thought by Richards to be a quiet reading cove in the making. The addition of a colorful hanging light fixture, beanbag chairs, and framed wall-mounted motivational poster properly dressed the space for any child with a book in hand.

"It was quite a lesson to see (Alex Richards) in action. The extra reading area wasn't part of his plan, so he changed the plan to include it and make it work. It was really impressive," Kristin Brandner said.

Richards plans to assist at the Resource Center in the future. "I don't mean to be greedy, but I'm looking forward to even more help," Limburg said. "As a community we're all in this together. It takes a community to raise a child."

Aside from duties as assistant senior patrol leader of Boy Scout troop 741 chartered by St. Kilian's Church, Richards is a freshman at Hartford Union High School where he enjoys participating with the tennis, chess and robotics teams. Next school year, he hopes to add cross-country to his list of activities. Advance placement classes are helping Richards on the road to becoming a physics teacher after attending college.

For more information of the United Way Resource Center, visit www.unitedwayofwashingtoncounty.org



Eagle scout candidate Alex Richards addresses attendees during dedication of his Kid Zone play area at the United Way Resource Center in Hartford Tuesday. **BELOW:** This Kid Zone play area with handcrafted shelves of toys and games was an empty space at the United Way Resource Center before Richards' project.

Kristyn Adms/For the Daily News

