

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in regards to my volunteer working relationship with Mark Pennington Assistant Scout Executive for Shenandoah Area Council (SAC). My name is Erik Harris and I am a government contracted cancer researcher for the National Cancer Institute. I am also an Eagle Scout and have been a volunteer leader for the Shenandoah Area Council for over 10 years.

Mark was the first person I met in SAC when I came to enroll my son in tiger cubs at a scout recruitment night held in our area. That evening he captured my son's imagination with stories and examples of all the fun that scouting could provide. As for myself he reminded me that Scouting is mostly a volunteer organization and as an Eagle Scout I should consider taking on a role within scouts and share the experience with my son. I took him up on his offer and I'm very glad I did. As our Assistant Scout Executive Mark has many different responsibilities on the council level but as with many small Council's he has had to fill many different roles and responsibilities including the position of Mannahoac District Executive.

During my years as a volunteer leader I have worked with Mark as a unit leader, a commissioner and district commissioner. In all my various roles he has always been willing to help out with answering questions and giving advice on how to handle the various problems that come from running a unit as well as overseeing them. It has been my experience that many paid professionals are often disliked by volunteers because they are paid to do the job that all of the rest of us do because we love Scouting and believe in the program. However, Mark demonstrates his belief in this organization by all of the personal time he gives to SAC beyond his 40 hour work week. He is out most nights helping area units, constantly meeting with various groups throughout the council and is the first to volunteer his help when called upon. He works tirelessly on all the projects he is assigned whether it be fundraising, recruiting, leader training, summer camp, Jamboree or high adventure. Mark is usually ask to lead the way including providing support for all of the current District Executives.

As an Assistant Scout Executive he conducts his council responsibilities in an efficient and productive manner. However, the role that I know Mark best as and that in my opinion makes him the ideal scouting professional is his personal relationships with the volunteers. He is a good leader and has the ability to place the right volunteer in the right role for that person and the district to have success. Personally I have watched at a scout recruitment night as he has inspired a room full of young boys about the adventures that await them in Scouting and provided the core values of Scouting to the parents so they know their sons our doing something that goes beyond just having a good time. It is clear that he believes in what he is doing and it goes well beyond just a job. Mark demonstrates the core principals of Scouting every day by living the Scout Oath and Law.

Overall, I consider myself to have benefitted greatly by having Mark as the DE in our area during my son's and my own tenure in Scouting. I fully believe that whatever Council or organization that Mark is a part of will also benefit as I have from his experience and tireless work ethic. If any further information is needed concerning Mark please contact me.

Yours in Scouting

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