

From: [Public Relations Division](#)
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Connecticut teen named The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year

INDIANAPOLIS (May 10, 2013) – A Salem, Conn., student has been named The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year for 2013.

Mark E. Chmielewski, 16, a junior at East Lyme High School, earned the award and a college scholarship worth \$10,000. The award was announced during The American Legion's board of directors meeting here.

The award recognizes Chmielewski's practical citizenship at school, scouting, and his passion and commitment to community service. Chmielewski's Eagle Scout project was the restoration of a 100-year-old historic dam and creation of an adjacent public park. As a member of the Salem Historical Society, he became interested in the historic Dolbeare Dam site. Working with the Salem First Selectman and the Historical Society, he planned, developed, managed and led more than 50 community volunteers in removing brush and debris, dead and rotted wood, cutting down dead and diseased trees and cutting them up as fire wood to donate to the Lions Club for distribution to needy families in town. As a direct result of Chmielewski's project, area residents now are able to walk down to the pond and dam to observe nature, fish and enjoy a beautiful, well maintained park next to the historic dam.

Chmielewski also volunteered as a customer service assistant for more than three years at the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store, a volunteer at the Connecticut Veterans Home and currently serves as Junior Vice Commander of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 128. He received the Lions Young Leaders in Service International Gold Award for more than 100 hours of community service in a year from 2009 to 2012.

"I am blessed to have a support system that includes all my family, teachers, coaches, scout leaders and military veterans," Chmielewski said. "Service to my community, to my country and to our military is part of who I am. I come from a family that has gravitated to public and military service. We are proud to have more than 200 years of combined membership in the American Legion, SAL and the Auxiliary."

Chmielewski plans to become a health and physical education teacher and perhaps, in time, a school principal.

"In this career path, I can help mold the minds of our children and help instill in them a sense of patriotism and community service," he said.

The American Legion also awarded a \$2,500 scholarship to Chandler Burke of Dallas, Texas; Jonathan Chapman of Germantown, Tenn.; and Travis Thornburgh of New Virginia, Iowa.

The American Legion has supported scouting since its first national convention in 1919. Legion posts sponsor more than 2,500 scouting units, serving more than 68,000 young people, at a cost of more than \$1.7 million.

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