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**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

**BOY SCOUT AIDEN ARIAS ACHIEVES EAGLE RANK:  
PROJECT CONNECTS TO RENOWNED ANCESTOR**

**SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ, February 14, 2024** – Aiden Arias of Highland Lakes, a member of Vernon’s Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Troop 912, has achieved the organization’s highest rank—Eagle Scout. The Court of Honor was held on Saturday, February 3 in the sanctuary at Unity of Sussex County in Lafayette. Following the ceremony, family and friends celebrated in Wakeman Hall, the church’s fellowship area named for Arias’ great-great grandmother.

**Eagle Project**

To complete his path to Eagle, the prestigious title held by only an estimated six percent of all BSA members, Arias managed a three-fold community service project indoors and outdoors at Unity’s Mudcut Road property. “I was very grateful the church gave me the opportunity, and it was a lot of fun. I never really did a big project like that,” he said.

First, Arias led a team that cleared the church’s former bookstore and boxed its contents so that the space could be converted to its current café-style meeting room, replete with fireplace and ample seating. “I cleaned it out and did many tiny things,” he said. Now that the reconstruction is complete, the church is considering making that space available for public use.

Next, Arias assisted in wiring Unity’s building for Ethernet access. He climbed above the dropped ceilings and into the attic to pull cable wires through and into each room. Now, the church has improved Internet and WiFi connectivity throughout.

The third phase of Arias’ Eagle Project involved power washing Unity’s patio area and furniture, prepping for stain and waterproof sealer. These were appropriate maintenance projects for the outdoor drumming circles and other such events that the church holds and invites the public to attend, just as they did last May for the widely popular World Labyrinth Day.

**Grateful Congregation**

“We wanted to celebrate Aiden for all the help he offered us, and we want to keep the memory of our benefactor alive, so we were glad to have hosted the ranking-up ceremony and the subsequent gathering here at our Center. We’re so grateful for him and his family,” said Reverend Shea Maultsby, Senior Minister at Unity of Sussex.

## **Family Ties**

This church has a familial connection to Arias that spans generations. His great-great maternal grandmother Vivien Noble Wakeman, of the lineage that co-founded Barnes & Noble Booksellers, had been a member of Unity when the group was meeting in homes and storefronts. In 1996, she donated the 10 acres of Lafayette farmland along with enough funds to build a structure in which those seeking to learn Unity teachings, which provide a positive and progressive path for spiritual living, could gather. Ground was broken in April 1997, and on September 6, 1998, the first worship service was held in the new building. Shortly afterwards, Wakeman Hall was dedicated in her name.

## **Moving Forward**

Now, Wakeman's great-great grandson is an Eagle, a Boy Scout since fifth grade. A senior at Sussex County Technical School, Arias has already been accepted to two schools of higher education: Stevens Institute of Technology and the New Jersey Institute of Technology. "Those are my two main schools. It's really hard to choose between them," he said.

## **Unity of Sussex**

Unity of Sussex County is a joyful, accepting spiritual community in Lafayette at 25 Mudcut Road, which runs parallel to Meadows Road, between Routes 15 and 94. It's more than a church; it's a spiritual Center. Learn more by attending Sundays' 11 a.m. ET services in person or on Facebook Live. For further information, call 973-383-6277 or email Reverend Shea Maulsby, [Minister@UnityOfSussex.org](mailto:Minister@UnityOfSussex.org).

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