

## Easier recycling is Palm Harbor scout's good deed

By Julie Church, Times Correspondent

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Eagle Scout candidate Andrew Bogdan on Saturday tends to vegetation he planted at the East Lake Community Library Palm Harbor. Bogdan, of Boy Scout Troop 475, organized an effort to put and maintain a recycling center outside the library, including finding the site and gathering donations. The center was completed July 3. Bogdan and his family recycle there once each week.



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A plaque dedicating Eagle Scout candidate Andrew Bogdan's successful efforts to put a recycling center outside the East Lake Community Library in Palm Harbor awaits permanent mounting. He rode his bike to the site every day this summer to oversee it.

**PALM HARBOR** — The residents of East Lake have a new recycling center adjacent to their library, and they have the efforts of a 14-year-old Eagle Scout candidate to thank for it.

When Andrew Bogdan, a member of Boy Scout Troop 475, decided he would attempt to earn the rank of Eagle Scout, choosing a service project was easy. It was accomplishing his goal that would prove to be more challenging.

Andrew, a freshman at East Lake High School, had always envisioned setting up a recycling center in his own community.

"When I was little, I used to recycle a lot," he said.

He approached the Pinellas County Solid Waste Operations Department, and his idea was met with enthusiasm.

There were several potential locations available in Pinellas County, but it would take Andrew, with the help of Joe Fernandez, solid waste project manager for the county, three tries and almost a year before they found the perfect site.

"We started out in Tierra Verde, but that didn't work out," Andrew said. "Then we tried East Lake High School and the Church on the Hill, but they wouldn't accept it, either."

Finally, they found a location in the parking lot of East Lake Community Library and knew they had hit pay dirt.

"Andrew got to experience what I do when I try to find a place for a recycling site," Fernandez said. "I facilitated it, but he made it happen. He grew up and matured a lot in the process."

Andrew, who is somewhat on the quiet side, presented his proposal to the library board at a meeting. He was granted permission to locate on the library grounds, but the troop had to agree to keep the facility clean.

"They've done a great job so far," said librarian Trish Johnson, who helped Andrew and his troop with the project. "At first, there were some concerns about tidiness, but the scouts have made a special effort to keep it neat."

Since the project was completed in July, the scouts have visited the recycling center frequently to make sure items are being deposited in the correct bins and see that there is no trash in the surrounding parking lot.

On his summer vacation, Andrew visited the site every day to oversee the project, riding his bike back and forth from his home in the Ridgemoor subdivision through the heat, humidity and several thunderstorms.

He also coordinated donations of materials and raised nearly \$1,000 for the recycling center.

The two large blue recycling bins at the site and the concrete pad on which they sit were donated by Pinellas County.

The drought-resistant plants, decorative poles, heavy chains and other materials needed to complete the project were donated through local businesses and the Coast Guard.

"It was a real community effort," Fernandez said. "And it is a win-win situation for everyone."

Andrew's dad, Karl, 47, is the troop's scoutmaster. A former Boy Scout himself, he sees scouting as a great way to expose his son and the other boys to new activities and challenges.

"It creates leaders," Karl Bogdan said. "It creates opportunities for boys to do other things than sit in front of video games all day."

**Fast facts: East Lake Recycling Center**

**Where:** 4125 East Lake Road, Palm Harbor.

**What's taken for recycling:** Paper, cardboard, newspapers, aluminum cans, plastic bottles, steel cans.

**What's not:** Glass containers.

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