



Scouting is for everyone, no matter their ability

Article V of the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America reads: “Special Registration Status. The Chief Scout Executive may authorize guidelines and policies governing the registration of persons with special needs to accommodate those who are deemed qualified for special registration status outside of the otherwise prescribed program age requirements.”

Terminology

Current recommended terminology

Scouts with special needs and/or
Scouts with disabilities

Discouraged terminology

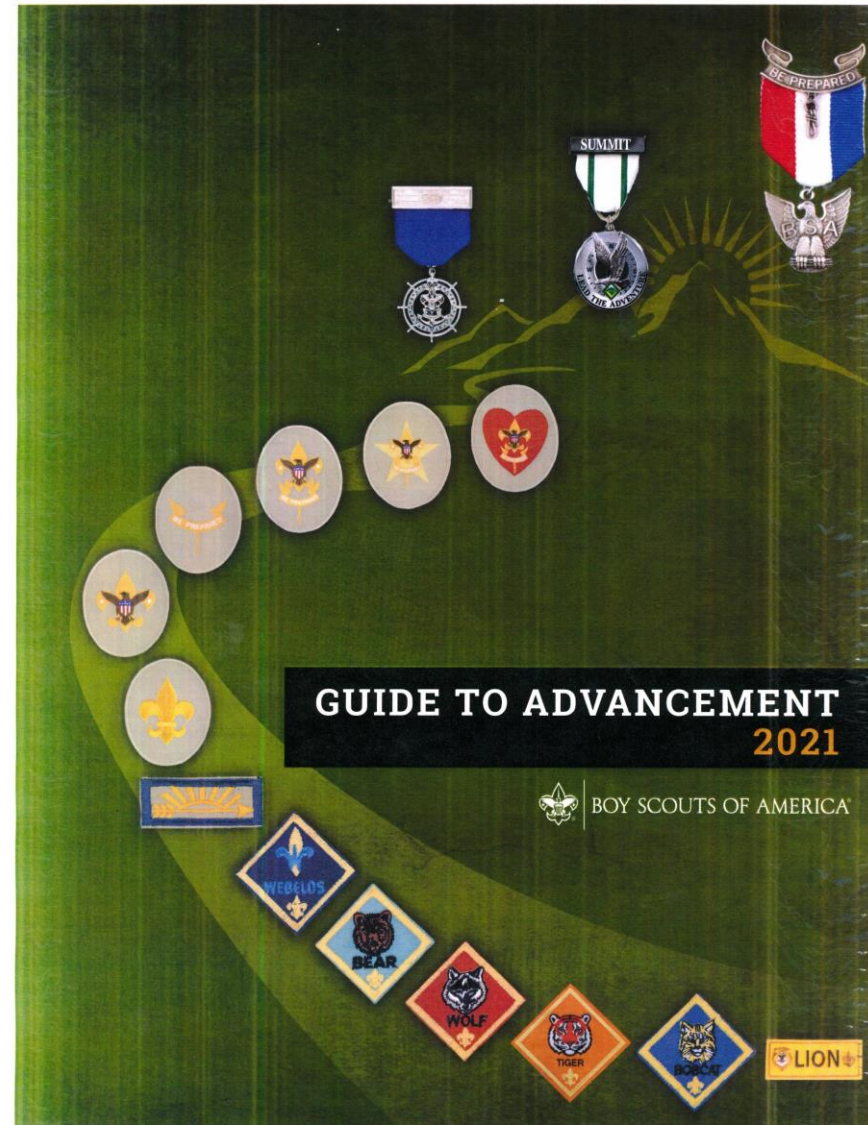
Disabled scouts

Scouts with handicaps

Handicapped scouts

1. Alternative Advancement for scouts with special needs
2. Working with scouts with special needs
3. Troops 1197B and 1197 G (Ortonville, MI)

Advancement



Advancement and membership for youth and adults with physical disabilities, developmental or cognitive challenges are welcome in the Boy Scouts of America.

These youth do not need to join a special unit oriented to serving members with disabilities, although those exist and may be beneficial in some cases. The severity of disability “might” indicate how members should be registered.

When knowledgeable parents, guardians, or volunteers are able to provide assistance and oversight, almost anyone can be a member. While leaders should be enthusiastic about helping those with special needs, they should also recognize the demands that will be placed on their patience, understanding, and skill in working on advancement.

10.1.0.0 Registering Qualified Members Beyond Age of Eligibility

Youth members and adults who are developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired, or youth members with severe physical challenges, may be considered for registration beyond the ages of eligibility: age 11 or older for a Cub Scout, 18 or older for a Scouts BSA member, or 21 or older as a Venturer or Sea Scout.

Requests to extend registration beyond the age of eligibility for youth members and adults on the basis of developmental disability or cognitive impairment may be submitted at any time. **Requests for youth members on the basis of severe physical challenges must be received before they reach the end of age eligibility for the program.**

For example, a request for a youth member to extend participation in the Scouts BSA program must be received before the youth reaches their 18th birthday. A disability, to qualify an individual for registration beyond the age of eligibility, must be permanent and so severe that it precludes advancement even at a rate significantly slower than considered typical.

Note that registration beyond the age of eligibility is intended as a permanent arrangement to allow ongoing participation as a youth member. This is different from a “time extension,” which is available to a Scout working toward Eagle rank should certain circumstances arise that preclude timely achievement.

Extensions of time are available only for the Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster ranks.

10.1.0.1 Possible Criteria for Registering Beyond Age of Eligibility

In considering registration beyond the age of eligibility, members with conditions, such as those listed below, may meet the severity requirement, but every case must be considered individually.

If members are able to take advantage of the flexibility already built into Scouting advancement and participate in essentially the same way as typical youth, then they **must not be** registered beyond the age of eligibility.

Examples of conditions that, if severe, may be criteria that qualify an individual for registration beyond the age of eligibility include the following:

1. Developmental
2. Emotional
3. Deaf or Hard of Hearing
4. Learning Disability
5. Intellectual Disability
6. Physical Disability
7. Blind or Low Vision
8. Multiple Disabilities

“Multiple coexisting disabilities” refers to a diagnosis of two or more disabilities, none of which alone may be significant enough to warrant registration beyond the age of eligibility.

For example, sight or hearing impairment, or other physical disabilities, or a moderate learning disability or ADHD may be insufficient for qualification on its own. It is possible, however, when considered in combination with other disabilities, including medications involved, that the cumulative impact may rise to the level of the severity requirement.

10.1.0.2 How to Register a Member Beyond Age of Eligibility

To register an individual who will participate as a youth member beyond the age of eligibility, the following documents must be assembled and submitted to the local council.

The Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility, No. 512-935, found in the appendix and at www.scouting.org/advancement, should be submitted in addition to:

Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility

Criteria

In order for an individual to qualify for registration beyond the age of eligibility, the individual's disability must be permanent and so severe that it precludes advancement even at a rate significantly slower than considered typical. If ranks can be achieved through accommodations or modifications stated in official BSA literature, then the individual's disability probably does not rise to the level required to apply for this request. Additional information can be found in section 10 of the *Guide to Advancement*.

Parent or guardian: Fill in this page where appropriate and provide documentation as requested.

REQUEST for:

Member's name _____ Date of birth _____

Unit No. _____ District _____ Council _____

Objective: The request for registration beyond the age of eligibility, once approved, gives the individual unlimited time to participate in the Scouting program, if so desired.

Required process: All pertinent documents listed below must be attached to this form and labeled in the appropriate order. Submit the completed request form and attachments to your Scout executive or a designee.

Required Documents	Date Sent	Date Received	Date Reviewed
1. A letter from a parent or guardian describing the disability and its severity and permanence, and petitioning the council for approval of registration beyond the age of eligibility. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 1.)			
2. A completed youth membership application or proof of current membership. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 2.)			
3. A completed and signed BSA Annual Health and Medical Record form (parts A, B, and C), online at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr . (Documentation labeled as enclosure 3.)			
4. A signed statement from a qualified health professional attesting to the nature of the disability, its severity, and <i>permanent</i> limitations connected with it. For physical disabilities, this must be a licensed physician; for developmental or cognitive issues, a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, or as appropriate, a neurologist or other medical professional in a specialty related to the disability. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 4.)			
5. A letter from the unit leader advocating and supporting the registration. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 5.)			
6. Other supporting documentation, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), treatment summaries, etc., which are optional but can make a difference in the decision. (Documentation labeled as enclosure 6.)			



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1. A letter from a parent or guardian describing the disability and its severity and permanence and petitioning the council for approval of registration beyond the age of eligibility.
2. A completed youth application or proof of current membership for individuals under the age of 18, or a completed adult application for individuals 18 years of age and older.
3. A completed and signed BSA Annual Health and Medical Record form (parts A and C), which is available online at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr.
4. A signed statement from a qualified health professional attesting to the nature of the disability, its severity, and permanent limitations connected with it. For physical disabilities, this must be a licensed physician; for developmental or intellectual disabilities a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, or as appropriate, a neurologist or other medical professional in a specialty related to the disability.
5. A letter from the unit leader advocating and supporting the registration.
6. Other supporting documentation, such as pertinent parts of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), treatment summaries, etc., which are optional, but can make a difference in the decision.
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10.2.0.0 Advancement Flexibility Allowed

Cub Scouts, Scouts, Venturers, or Sea Scouts who have disabilities may qualify for limited flexibility in advancement. Allowances possible in each program are outlined in the following slides. **It does not necessarily matter if a youth is approved to be registered beyond the age of eligibility.**

Experience tells us those members whose parents or guardians are involved, or at least regularly consulted, progress the farthest. Some units have also followed the example set by Individualized Education Plans and have established “individual Scout advancement plans” with the same benefits.

A sample ISAP, Individual Scout Advancement Plan, No. 512-936, found in the appendix and at www.scouting.org/advancement, may prove helpful.

11.5.0.0 Individual Scout Advancement Plan

The approval of alternative requirements or merit badges should be discussed with the Scout, parent or guardian, and unit leader. An agreement is reached and forwarded to the council advancement committee for approval before starting to work on the specific task. The ISAP is the basic plan that can be used for all Scouts to document proposed and approved alternative advancement requirements. The ISAP is modified by addendum. Additional information can be found in the *Guide to Advancement*, section 10.

Individual Scout Advancement Plan for:

Member's name _____ Date of birth _____

Unit No. _____ District _____ Council _____

Statement of belief: Though it is true every Scout must have the overall ability to fulfill BSA advancement requirements as written, members with a documented disability deserve the opportunity to utilize their remaining abilities to fulfill alternative requirements that represent the same challenge and essential outcome as those written. The only limitations for members with sufficient abilities to achieve approved alternative requirements should be their individual desire, focus, and perseverance.

Objective: Scouting literature provides the requirements, policies and procedures, and related supporting content. It cannot address each individual Scout's abilities, but it can help those involved to reach an understanding as to how certain goals can be met. The ISAP is a road map that Scouts, their parents or guardians, mentors, and other leaders can reference and update as necessary.

Methodology: Within reasonable guidelines, the ISAP will provide Scouts with the opportunity to achieve their personal goals and, through creative thinking and action, remove unnecessary barriers that may impede their advancement. This is done so as not to lessen the relative challenges of the Scouting experience and the primary goal of personal growth.

Expectations of performance: Scouts are expected to do their best to the limits of their abilities and resources.

I, _____ (Scout's name), promise that on my honor, I will do my best in working toward my personal advancement goals.

I am a (check one): ☐ Cub Scout ☐ Scout ☐ Venturer ☐ Sea Scout

Signed _____ Date _____

I, _____ (leader's name), _____ (title), promise to do my best to deliver upon the statement of belief, objective, and methodology expressed above.

Signed _____ Date _____

The complete form is available for downloading at www.scouting.org/advancement.

512-936
2021 Revision

10.2.2.0 Advancement in Scouts BSA for Scouts With Special Needs

Members must meet current advancement requirements as written for merit badges, all ranks, and Eagle Palms—no more and no less—and they are to do exactly what is stated. If it says, “Show or demonstrate,” that is what they must do; just “telling” isn’t enough. The same holds for words and phrases such as “make,” “list,” “in the field,” “collect,” “identify,” and “label.”

Requests for alternative requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class ranks can be made. Alternatives are not available for the **Star, Life, and Eagle rank requirements**.

Scouts may request approval for alternative merit badges, but the other requirements for those three ranks must be fulfilled as written.

APPLICATION FOR ALTERNATIVE EAGLE SCOUT RANK MERIT BADGES

A youth in Scouts BSA or qualified Venturer or Sea Scout who has a physical or mental disability may achieve the Eagle Scout rank by qualifying for alternative merit badges. This does not apply to individual requirements for merit badges. Merit badges are awarded only when all requirements are met as stated. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.2.2.3, for details.

The physical or mental disability must be of a permanent rather than of a temporary nature (or a disability expected to last more than two years or beyond the 18th birthday). This request must include a written statement from a qualified health-care professional related to the nature of the disability. This person may be a physician, neurologist, psychiatrist, psychologist, etc., or an educational administrator as appropriate.

Before applying, a Scout must earn as many of the Eagle-required merit badges as possible. However, if a permanent disability clearly precludes completing specific merit badges, a Scout who has earned at least First Class may apply for an alternative merit badge without waiting until all other Eagle-required merit badges are complete. Any alternatives must present the same challenge and learning level as those they replace. Unless the Scout has been approved for registration beyond the age of eligibility, all merit badges must be completed by the 18th birthday (reference *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.1.0.1–10.1.0.2).

1. Obtain a clear and concise statement related to the nature of the disability from a qualified health-care professional.
2. The unit leader meets with the candidate and the candidate's parent or guardian to determine the alternative merit badges to replace those the candidate is unable to complete.
3. The unit leader, parent or guardian, and the Scout (if possible) prepare supporting letters to accompany the application.
4. The district and council advancement committees, in turn, review the proposed alternative merit badges. They may choose to speak with the Scout, the Scout's parent or guardian, or the unit leader. If the council advancement committee approves, then the candidate may start work on the merit badges.

Note: In approving the application, the district and council advancement committees must utilize the expertise of a health-care professional involved with youth who have disabilities.

5. Upon completion of the Eagle Scout rank requirements, using the alternative merit badges, the candidate appears before a board of review. This approved application must be attached to the Eagle Scout Rank Application.
6. Following a successful board of review, the council processes both applications and forwards them to the National Advancement Program Team. Local council action on alternative merit badges does not require national approval.

The Purpose of the Eagle Scout Award

Recipients of the Eagle Scout Award are youth in Scouts BSA, or qualified Venturers or Sea Scouts, who apply the principles of the Scout Oath and Law in daily life. They have achieved the qualities below with determination and persistence.

- Capacity for leadership and a concern for others
- Ability to help others through skills they have learned
- Ability to live and work cooperatively with others by meeting their responsibilities to the unit
- Concern for self by improving their physical fitness to the limits of their resources

Possible alternatives for required merit badges*

CAMPING	COMMUNICATIONS	EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS OR LIFESAVING	ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE OR SUSTAINABILITY	PERSONAL FITNESS	SWIMMING, HIKING, OR CYCLING
Backpacking	Digital Technology	Fire Safety	Energy	Archery	Archery
Canoeing	Electronics	Motorboating	Fish and Wildlife Management	Athletics	Athletics
Kayaking	Graphic Arts	Public Health	Forestry	Backpacking	Canoeing
Pioneering	Journalism	Radio	Nature	Climbing	Kayaking
Rowing	Moviemaking	Rowing	Oceanography	Golf	Motorboating
Search and Rescue	Photography	Safety	Soil and Water Conservation	Horsemanship	Rowing
Wilderness	Public Speaking	Traffic Safety	Weather	Rowing	Small-Boat Sailing
Survival	Radio	Wilderness Survival		Skating	Snow Sports
	Salesmanship			Water Sports	
	Signs, Signals, and Codes				

*These possible alternatives are merely suggestions that *could* provide **similar learning experiences**. The list is not considered all-inclusive. It is important for unit leaders to use reasonable accommodation and common sense in the application of the alternative merit badge program.

To: The District Advancement Committee

We are submitting this application on behalf of _____ of Unit No. _____

Because of the disability (see the statement below from a qualified health-care professional), we believe that the candidate is physically or mentally unable to complete the requirements for the following merit badge or badges required for the Eagle Scout rank:

Following a personal conference with the candidate and the candidate's parent or guardian, we recommend the following alternative merit badge or badges be approved. **These must not be merit badges previously earned (Guide to Advancement 10.2.2.3).** Please see the attached documentation supporting this recommendation.

Parent or Guardian Statement

In view of the medical or administrative statement attached, and following a conference with our unit leader, I approve the alternative Eagle Scout rank merit badges. My/our letter supporting this recommendation is attached, and also one from our Scout (if possible).

☐ An Individualized Education Plan or other documentation is attached (optional).

Statement From a Qualified Health-Care Professional

I have attached a statement describing the disability, the Scout's capabilities, limitations, and prognosis, and outlined why the merit badges to be replaced cannot be completed.

District Certification

We have reviewed this application for the above-named Eagle Scout candidate, and in review of the medical or administrative statement, we believe the Scout should follow the alternative Eagle Scout rank merit badge method. We recommend to the council advancement committee that the merit badge or badges indicated above be approved as alternatives.

Signed _____
District executive

Council Committee Action*

We have reviewed the district's recommendations and provide our approval.

Signed _____
Scout executive

*The local council action on the alternative merit badge(s) for the Eagle Scout rank does not require National Council approval.

10.2.3.0 Advancement for Venturers and Sea Scouts With Special Needs

With a parent or guardian, Venturer-age or Sea Scout-age youth with disabilities must consider the programs presented by individual crews or ships. The activities involved must fit within the capabilities of the prospective member.

Discussions with crew Advisors or ship Skippers can reveal what is possible and what is not. Generally, crews may be more able to offer flexibility for members with disabilities than ships. For example, safety concerns onboard a vessel may present barriers difficult or impossible to overcome.

10.2.3.2 Working Toward Venturing Ranks

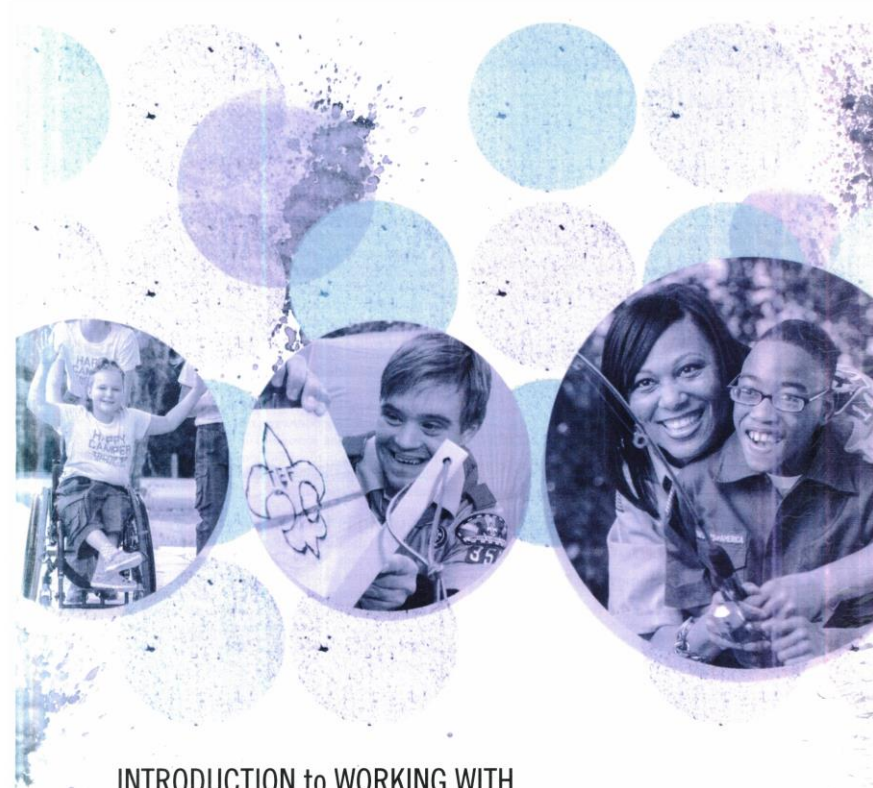
The candidate must meet all current rank requirements. There are no substitutions or alternatives permitted except those specifically stated in current requirements.

Requests for alternative requirements for Venturing, Discovery, Pathfinder, and Summit ranks, and the various Venturing awards may be made, however, using the same qualifications and process outlined under “How to Apply for Alternative Requirements,” 10.2.2.2

10.2.3.3 Working Toward Sea Scout Ranks

All current Sea Scout rank requirements must actually be met by the candidate. There are no substitutions or alternatives permitted except those specifically stated in current requirements. With the full cooperation of a ship committee and Skipper, it may be possible for some youth with disabilities to participate in Sea Scout advancement.

Working with Scouts with special needs and disabilities



INTRODUCTION to WORKING WITH

Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities



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- <https://ablescouts.org/toolbox/>

I. Leadership Techniques

Scout leaders prepare for problems and plan accordingly. Everyone has different needs. Leaders must be able to recognize when and what type of assistance may be required.

Give the Scout respect, and help the Scout gain the respect of others. This will be much easier to do if you know the Scout and his or her parents or guardians, as well as the Scout's background, likes, and dislikes.

A small word of praise for a job well done can mean a lot to a Scout who receives little elsewhere. Judge accomplishment by what the Scout can do, not by what someone says the Scout must do or by what you think he or she cannot do

Rewarding achievement will likely cause that behavior to be repeated. Reward can be in the form of a thank-you, a recognition made by the group for helping them perform at a higher level, a badge, a prize, or a chance to go on a trip.

The Scout and the Scout's parents or guardians should not use the Scout's disability as an excuse for not trying. Expect the Scout to give his or her best effort.

II. Giving Instruction to Scouts With Disabilities

Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction (except when this is inappropriate in the Scout's culture or if this is not possible).

Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with instructions.

Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.

Make sure the Scout comprehends the instructions before beginning the task.

Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.

Help the Scout feel comfortable with seeking assistance.

Encourage other Scouts to actively participate in helping scouts with special needs become enabled—it will be rewarding for both parties.

III. Providing Supervision and Discipline

Listening is an important technique that means giving the Scout an opportunity to express himself or herself. Whether as a part of the group or in conversation, be patient, be understanding, and take seriously what the Scout has to say.

Address behavioral problems that radiate potential, undue criticism or bullying. Remember, often the behavior is a manifestation of the disability, and positive constructive responses are more effective.

Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the Scout.

continued on next page

When a Scout is behaving in an unacceptable manner, try the “timeout” strategy or redirect the Scout’s behavior.

Administer consequences immediately and recognize proper behavior frequently

Make sure the discipline fits the offense and is not unduly harsh.

Enforce unit rules consistently.

Do not reward inappropriate behavior.

Praise when the Scout exerts real effort, even if unsuccessful, and/or when he or she shows improvement over a previous performance. Never praise falsely.

Do not accept blaming others as an excuse for poor performance. Make it clear that you expect the Scout to answer for his or her own behavior.

Behavior is a form of communication. Look for what the behavior is saying (i.e., does the Scout want attention?).

Troops 1197B and 1197G

Scouting with Special Needs and Disabilities



We Support:

- ⇒ Physical Disabilities
- ⇒ Intellectual Disabilities
- ⇒ Learning Disabilities
- ⇒ Spectrum Disorders
- ⇒ Behavioral Disorders
- ⇒ Multiple Co-existing Disorders

All Youth, Age 11 and beyond have a place in Scouting. We are looking to establish a unit in conjunction with the O.A.T.S. program in Ortonville Michigan (Offering Alternative Therapy with Smiles). So we are looking for volunteers and youth to join this very unique unit!



"Scouting is for everyone no matter their ability"

More Information:

Doug Rohrbaugh -
586.209.7608

drohrbaugh@gmail.com



FIND OUT MORE AND JOIN!

Paul Hardy

248.670.4144

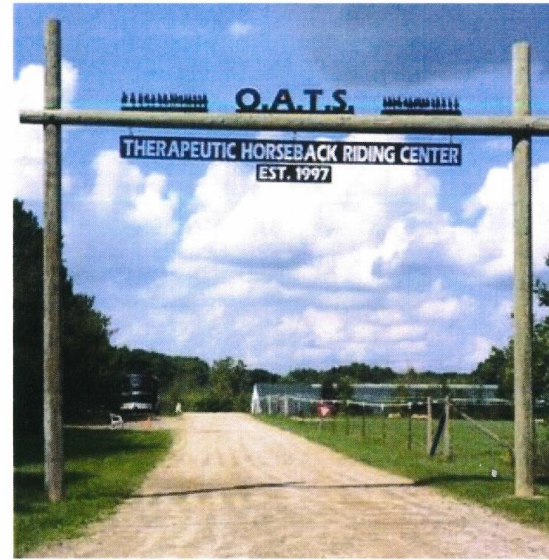
Paul.Hardy@Scouting.org

Changing lives through the healing power of horses.

This is the mission of the OATS Equestrian Center. Founded in 1997 as Offering Alternative Therapy with Smiles, OATS is a 501 (c) 3 non-profit located in Ortonville, Michigan. As a volunteer-based organization, we are focused on promoting the health, well-being and happiness of individuals through equine-assisted services. Through the support of its instructors, dedicated volunteers and the community, OATS has grown to one of the largest programs of its type in Michigan. OATS is proud to be a PATH International Premier Accredited Center. PATH International is the credentialing organization for accrediting centers and certifying instructors and equine specialists for equine-assisted services.

O.A.T.S

Offering Alternative Therapy With Smiles



Located on 40 beautiful acres., we offer several year-round programs designed to assist those with a variety of abilities and needs. Our program continues to evolve as we assess the needs of our participants and the needs of our community. Whether you are looking for specific horse related activities, volunteer opportunities or community outings, OATS is the place to be.