

THE CITIZENS' VOICE

Eagle Scout bench project in Plymouth Twp. honors veterans

By Denise Allabaugh Staff Writer
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Assistant Scoutmaster Mike Shay stands with Boy Scout Troop 418 after placing letters in front of the Plymouth Twp. municipal building.
Amanda Hrycyna/Staff Photographer

PLYMOUTH TWP. — Seventeen-year-old Greg Bolesta wanted to honor veterans and benefit the community for his Eagle Scout project so he joined other Boy Scouts from Troop 418 of Nanticoke on Saturday to achieve his goals.

Bolesta, a Plymouth Twp. resident and a junior at Greater Nanticoke Area High School, and other Boy Scouts beautified an area on the Plymouth Twp. municipal grounds where a cannon and plaque were placed in 2006 to honor those who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. They placed a memorial bench near the cannon and flower pots filled with red geraniums next to the bench.

"People can come here, take a moment of silence and say a prayer," Bolesta said. "A lot of people visit here for a while so we thought we should put a bench here. I thought it would be nice if older folks and other people could have a seat."

Bolesta raised funds for the project and Beth Romanowski, founder of The Bench Project based in Shavertown, provided the bench that features "The Tree of Life."

"They chose this one because it has The Tree of Life because he's doing something that's all about connection, not just connection to ourselves but connection to the past," Romanowski said.

Romanowski said The Bench Project started at her family farm, Twin Oaks Farm in Shavertown, where there is a three-mile walking path with 31 benches. The project continues to grow with benches in 31 states, she said.

"Our mission at The Bench Project is to inspire and nurture the human spirit by creating connection through shared experience one bench at a time," she said.

A journal and a pen will be placed on the bench in Plymouth Twp. in a weatherproof bag as well as a bench tag with a virtual journal, Romanowski said.

The Tree of Life on the bench symbolizes legacy and she said Bolesta's project is significant because he and other Scouts are the future.

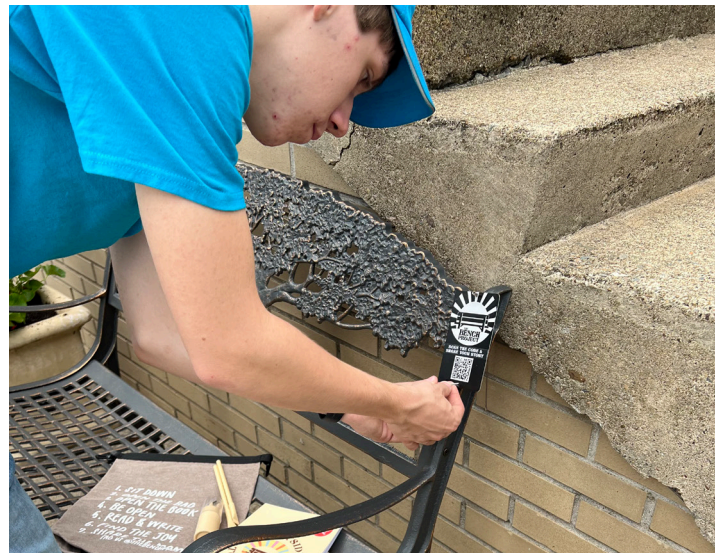
"They are saying, 'We need to do this for the people who served our community and now, we're serving the community,'" Romanowski said. "Anyone who sits there can not just sit but they can reflect and share their stories. Maybe they have a memory about being in the military or being a military wife. It's a way to connect people through a simple bench."

Boy Scout Troop 418 Scoutmaster Matt Matyas said Bolesta wanted his Eagle Scout project to benefit the Plymouth Twp. community. He said they were told that people like to visit the area around the cannon on the municipal building grounds to spend time reflecting.

"This was an opportunity to create a better environment for that with the bench and a nice and more peaceful area to relax while they reflect," Matyas said. "This is a dedication to the veterans in the community so loved ones can come and reflect on those they lost."

Former longtime Plymouth Twp. Supervisor Gale Conrad, who now works as a consultant, thinks Bolesta's bench project is "absolutely great."

"We're very happy and honored to have been asked," Conrad said. "It's great for the township. It's great for the military. But it's so nice for Greg. He and his family have been working on this for three years."



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