



**PIMA COUNTY NATURAL RESOURCES,
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UNSTOPPABLE TEEN TO LEAD PRICKLY PARK WORKDAY

Pima County, Ariz. – Jeffrey Osman is on his way to the top.

A junior at Amphi High School and a Boy Scout, he's Student Council vice president and is earning his Eagle Scout rank.

In pursuit of this top honor, Jeffrey, 17, has organized a workday at Pima County's new Prickly Park, 3500 W. River Road. On Saturday, Sept. 24, he will lead volunteers, including Boy Scouts from his Troop 203 and others, to clear and grade for the installation of a pathway, remove invasive species and plant rescued cacti.

Jeffrey, who joined the Boys Scouts about five years ago, was born with Holt-Oram syndrome; an inherited genetic condition characterized by hand and arm abnormalities and heart problems.

"The question I always ask to those who ask me how I do things is 'How do you do it?'" Jeffrey said. "I can do whatever I want. I have arms and hands; they are just shorter. So I have to find different ways to do things, but there's nothing I can't do that you could."

"I just know that I have it good compared to others. Luckily my arms are the only thing that's affected."

His condition hasn't deterred him from any of the physical activities he's had to do while in the Boy Scouts.

"He's never put it up as a road block or used it as an excuse not to do things," said Tim Cook, an adult leader of Troop 203. "In just about everything that we do, he goes straight at it and does better than most of the able bodies."

Jeffrey has completed the merit badges and held the leadership positions required to become an Eagle Scout, and he has done it all in what is considered a short amount of time, Cook said.

"Somehow I've figured out a way to do everything we need to do," he said. For the first-aid badge, the scouts had the opportunity to get CPR-certified. Since Jeffrey couldn't use his arms, he administered CPR by using the heel of his foot – and got certified.

“We’ve made a conscious effort not to make exceptions for him, and the other members of the group have been good not to limit him,” Cook said. The only activity Jeffrey hasn’t been able to complete has been rappelling, but Cook attributes that to safety concerns and not lack of will.

Jeffrey will be taking on a supervisory role on Saturday.

“What I’ve always been told is that they want to see how well you can handle yourself and be the leader,” he said about attaining Eagle Scout.

Members of the Tucson Cactus and Succulent Society, which partners with Pima County on the Prickly Park, will be at Saturday’s event to answer questions and show the volunteers how to properly plant the cactus, but Jeffrey will be in charge.

“He’s expected to keep the crews organized and keep them going,” said Jessie Byrd, a landscape designer with the society.

Jeffrey hopes adding Eagle Scout to his resume will make him a standout candidate when it comes to landing a job. After achieving the top honor, he plans to stick around to help the other boys in the troop become Eagle Scouts.

“I want to give back and help them..., be there to support the troop,” he said.

Jeffrey encourages others with physical challenges to never give up and never feel ashamed.

“So what if they have to make adjustments?” he said. “They should never compare themselves to the others. That’s how you lose self-esteem. If they tell themselves they can’t, then they really won’t be able to.

“They should feel good because they are different.”