

Dr. Michael Barrett

"A faithful friend is the medicine of life."

--Bible: Ecclesiasticus

Over the past six weeks, we have honored six excellent Venturing mentors, all with one characteristic in common (other than dedication to Venturing). They all were parents of mature children. These mentors became re(involved) in Scouting as parents, and have continued contributing to the organization. Dr. Michael Barrett, this week's honored mentor, breaks that pattern. Dr. Mike's commitment to Venturing predates the birth of his son, Alex. It is difficult for many new parents to find time to support Scouting, as they juggle careers, parenthood, and other obligations. Yet Dr. Mike prioritizes Venturing and brings his wife, Jen and future Eagle Scout and Venturer Alex to trainings around the United States.



The first time I met Dr. Mike was at Philmont, after I returned from a 21-day elite leadership Rayado Trek. I joined my parents at their Kodiak/Kodiak X course at the Philmont Training Center, walking into the class to see the teacher wearing a purple trucker's hat with a long braid extending from underneath it down his back. The hair looked real. My initial thought was "Wow. They have really bizarre people teaching Scouting nowadays." I couldn't have been more right and wrong at the same time. Dr. Mike is bizarre, but in the best possible way. His unique teaching style and optimistic outlook on life combined with his just plain fun demeanor makes you forget that he's an adult -- until he offers some wise insight. He has the ability to say the most absurd thing with a totally sober demeanor, baffling those in earshot until they begin laughing. A true servant mentor, one of my enduring memories of Dr. Mike was during the 2005 Jamboree, as he helped construct the Venturing Mine. He was seldom seen without some tool, helping us accomplish our goal.

Dr. Michael Barrett is an Eagle Scout, recipient of the Arrow of Light, and Member of the Order of the Arrow Brotherhood. He participated in the first Powderhorn at Philmont and joined the Venturing National Committee in 2000. Mike attended Jamborees in a variety of capacities: as a youth in 1973; as a physician in 1997; as Assistant Chairman of the Venturing Exhibit in 2001 and again in 2005. Since 2002, he has served as the National Chairman of the Kodiak/Kodiak X Task Force, Co-Directing and instructing the Kodiak/Kodiak X Course Directors Class at Philmont in 2004 and Sea Base in 2005 and directing the class at Sea Base in 2006. Within the Stonewall Jackson Area Council, he has served on the Executive Board from 1995 to present and is the Council Venturing Program Chairman. He received the Council Venturing Leadership Merit Award in 2003.

Dr. Barrett's medical resume is eclectic. Currently an internist practicing at a hospital in Virginia, he is also an Aviation Medical Examiner with the Federal Aviation Administration since 2002. Dr. Mike was a cruise ship physician for two years. If one were to ask Dr. Michael Barrett what is the best thing that has ever happened to him, without hesitation he would reply, "The best thing to happen to me was Alex!!!" For those of you who have not had the pleasure of meeting young master Barrett, he is an exact clone miniature of his father!

Whether he's wielding a glass of ice cold water aimed directly at an unsuspecting & innocent Venturer (me), or carefully teaching Kodiak at Sea Base, Dr. Mike provides youth with great opportunities and more importantly great friendship. Venturing without Dr. Mike would not be half as much fun!!!