

Ian Cheesman

Each week it has been my pleasure to introduce a Venturing mentor. Securing information about this week's featured mentor has been a challenge, but it was worth the wait. I stand in awe of Ian Cheesman. I am actually nervous in his presence, not because he is so quick witted that ordinary mortals require time to process his double, nay triple meanings, but because at 24, he has accomplished a lifetime of good. I am going to exercise wisdom and allow others to speak for me. Their words are heartfelt and eloquent; I am not certain I could do the justice to Ian that they have done.



From his nomination for the National Venturing Leadership Award:

Ian Cheesman was (he is now 24) a Venturer with a dream. His dream was to find a way for all Venturers to learn about each other's cultures and religions in a non-threatening way, and to encourage peace and understanding in his generation. His dream became reality in the Venturing TRUST Award. Ian was the inspiration, the driving force, the principal author, the designer, and the teacher of us all who kept this project moving forward to become reality. He overcame naysayers who said it couldn't be done. He persuaded religious leaders to help and to provide materials. He struggled with finding just the right words in both the requirements and the explanations, words that would encourage Venturers but also show the truth of our contemporary world. The result of his three-year effort - an exciting, youth-driven addition to the Venturing advancement family.

Ian authored the new Venturing TRUST Award, over a three year time period reflecting his persistence, dedication, drive, and determination, all desirable traits in completing any significant literary work. Ian had to overcome challenge upon challenge in working with a variety of denominations and religious groups, displaying sensitivity and care in gathering and composing accurate information as well as navigating carefully through a difficult and arduous process. The final product has lasting power and will provide tremendous insight to the many thousands of youth who will receive the TRUST Award in the future... If I were applying a grade to Ian's nomination it would certainly be 'off the scale'. He is a young man of unbridled integrity, love of fellow man and not afraid to take on difficult tasks such as the magnitude of the TRUST Award... His work also is an excellent complement to the 12th point of the Scout law, 'A Scout is Reverent.'

Lary Coppock, CFRE

National Director, Scouting and Civic Youth-Serving Ministries
General Commission on United Methodist Men

What he (Ian) has accomplished is truly amazing! For a young person to have such vision and be able to articulate it so well is both unusual and exciting. To see young people being encouraged to seriously engage in dialogue about religion and culture and tolerance is a giant step forward in America today. The timeliness of this project cannot be overstated.

Dr. Tarunjit S. Butalia

Chair of National Interfaith Committee
World Sikh Council - America Region

Ian Cheesman was an Explorer Scout when Venturing was established in 1998. He is currently the Associate Advisor for Crew 312 and a Committee Member for Ship 438. He serves on the Venturing Committee of Simon Kenton Council and on their Conservation Committee.

Ian was the founding president of the Simon Kenton Council Venturing Officers Association and served a two-year term. He was on the 2001 National Jamboree Venturing Staff and Powder Horn Staff. He has been an Area Trainer and a Powder Horn Consultant for Conservation & Ecology. For four years, he has served on camp staff for his council.

In addition to the rank of Eagle Scout with 11 Palms, Ian has received three Venturing Bronze Awards, the Venturing Gold and Silver Awards, the Ranger, National Hornaday Bronze Medal, Sea Badge, God & Country Series, and Exploring Gold Award. He received the Simon Kenton Council VLA District Service Award.

As one might expect, with his work on the TRUST award, Ian is active in his faith, having served on a variety of committees and boards. He was an officer in Alpha Phi Omega, the national service fraternity for three years and has served the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio and Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio. Ian has been employed by Girl Scouts of the USA teaching nature, ecology and conservation.

This summer, Ian will receive the Congressional Award Gold Medal from the United States Congress in Washington, D.C. It is an enormous honor! I know, because I sit on the Congressional Award Council of Idaho Board of Directors, as the Gold Medal Alumni Liaison. Ian will be one of fewer than 300 youth in America who have completed the program and given over 400 hours of service in fulfillment of goals taking years to complete, in addition to hundreds of hours in personal growth and physical fitness. And yet, nowhere on Ian's biography is this mentioned. This is classic Ian. For Ian, it is about the end product (the vision completed) and the process (with integrity and opportunity for growth), not the recognition and reward. For more information about the Congressional Award and to see

Ian's brother, Nathan, receiving it, refer to the [National President Messages, February '06](#).



As we introduce our new cabinet officers, it is fitting that our featured mentor is Ian Cheesman. He inspires youth to resist being limited; to think outside the box; and to dream and pursue dreams with relentless determination. Ian avoids the spotlight, and the photo to the left took great cajoling to acquire. I am proud to be purchasing the first two TRUST books from my mentor, Ian Cheesman at Philmont in August, 2005. Thank you, Ian.