

VENTURING MAGAZINE

Youth Leaders in Caving

March 2015

Allen Maddox, Dragon Breath Grotto Venturing Crew 9 Advisor, recently had to brag about one of his Venturers. Published in www.youcave.org was:

Alex Diamond is a recipient of the Venturing Silver Award from the co-ed division of Boy Scouts Venturing Crew 23 - the 15th recipient of the award in 17 years! Diamond has been in the Venturing program since 2010. Before then, she was a founding member of Crew 56 where she served as vice president for two terms and became crew president. In 2011, Diamond became a certified "Leave No Trace" trainer, and she has served on the staff of Horseshoe Scout Reservation's Camp Ware for the past three years, where she most recently taught outdoor skills to Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts.



Besides this, 18 year old Diamond has been caving with the NSS youth program, for about 4 years. Not only is she a strong caver, but she has planned, organized and carried out her own caving trips and plans on doing more. She has taught different skills at the National Youth Leaders Training course.

"She is also in high demand as an instructor and organizer for Scouting projects throughout Chester County Council. Because she is such a strong caver, certified in Wilderness First and CPR, she is my choice to sweep any of my trips. I have no hesitation of putting my life in her hands." says Allen Maddox, NSS Youth Liaison Committee Chairperson.

Way to go Alex. Thank you for being an Extraordinary Woman caver. Thank you also NSS Youth Liaison Committee for supporting young women to become leaders in caving!

As the Chair the National Speleological Society - Youth Group Liaison Committee, Allen has the opportunity to meet other youth leaders involved in caving and Venturing. Another young lady published in www.youcave.org was:

Gretchen Hartman, 18 years, has been caving with the NSS youth program for almost 4 years now and is a member of the Philadelphia Grotto. "She is not only a strong caver, but a leader and a teacher of leaders." says Allen Maddox, NSS Youth Liaison. Hartman has staffed and instructed at the National Youth Leaders Training course and is currently organizing a contingent of Scouts from Area 6 (PA, NJ, DE, MD, NY) to the Winter Adventure Weekend in Kentucky.



Besides being an impressive caver, Hartman recently earned the Venturing Silver Award from Venturing Crew 363 after chartering Ephrata's Our Mother of Perpetual Help Church and serving as president of Crew 363 for two years. As president, she has been hailed for increasing membership of her crew. Her scouting experience has included being the first female youth in the Pennsylvania Dutch Council to attend National Youth Leadership Training. She also has served on the staff at Bashore Scout Reservation as an open-water lifeguard, teaching Boy Scouts the skills for canoeing, kayaking, and rowing merit badges.