

## New co-ed Scouts club focuses on high adventure

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Boy Scouts is no longer just for boys. With the start of a new club here, both genders now can participate in activities once deemed exclusively for Boy Scouts. Venture Crew 131, which began recruiting here earlier this year, is a group for people ages 14 to 20 that are interested in participating in outdoor-type activities.



Gina McGauley, president of Crew 131 and sophomore, said she has been in Venture Crew for a couple of years now. For her, being in Venture Crew is a family tradition. “Both of my brothers were involved in it before me,” she said.

Venture Crew, also known interchangeably as Venture Scouts, began in 1998 as a spin off of Explorer Scouts. Dave Bardos, assistant crew adviser and social studies department chair, said that Venture Scouting, though new to this school, is relatively established in the community.

“Venture Scouting’s been with us for a good number of years. I don’t know the exact date, but at least 20 years. Crew just started last year here at Carmel High School,” Bardos said. Similarly, he said Explorer Scouts is also co-ed, but focuses more on establishing relationships with various community organizations in medicine, public service and other careers.

The crew here, in contrast, actually focuses on determining activities for young adults. Bardos said, “Venture Scouting was designed specifically to improve the retention of older boys (and girls), to focus on more high adventure activities, things (that) would be a little less kiddie-type of activities. This would be for hiking, caving, skiing (and) SCUBA diving.”

In addition, he said various crews state an activity to specialize in. “There are lots of different types of developed crews,” Bardos said.

According to McGauley, Crew 131 has participated in a myriad of activities thus far. “We’ve gone white-water rafting before as a big trip,” she said. “We go hiking, we go camp in a cabin

for a weekend of the year in the winter, we've done shooting, rock climbing, camping in general (and) ice skating."

Previously, before Venture Scouts began here as an official club, the Crew 131 existed in the community, but its members were still from this school. However, the crew began running into some problems. McGauley said, "Last year, most of our members graduated, and so we started one at Carmel to try and recruit more members."

The feedback has been nothing but positive, however. "People who have joined it think it's really fun and they like the activities we go on," McGauley said.

"Venture Scouting, much like Boy Scouting, is a student or boy/girl, in this situation, run organization," Bardos said. "It's what you're interested (in), and then it's up to the adult leadership of the crew to hopefully make sure it happens." Due to group consensus, on March 22, the crew will learn basic skills for SCUBA diving.

In fact, one of the features of Venture Crew is an annual "big trip" to somewhere exciting. In the past, the crew has gone to the Grand Canyon and Aruba. Last year, the crew went down south to rebuild houses after Hurricane Katrina.

"It's been exciting to try new and different things," McGauley said. "One thing is, last summer, we went down to Mississippi to rebuild houses in Mississippi, and that was a great experience helping people."