

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY EDWARDSVILLE

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SEGUE: Boy Scouts' Involvement within the Community and SIUE

On this week's episode of Segue, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's weekly radio program exploring the lives and work of the people on campus and beyond, Chancellor Randy Pembroke interviews Kevin Buhr, the district director of the Boy Scouts of America's Greater St. Louis Area Council.

This episode of Segue airs at 9 a.m. on Sunday, Nov. 10. Listeners can tune in to WSIE 88.7 FM The Sound or siue.edu/wsie.

Buhr leads the Cahokia Mounds District, including Madison and Bond Counties. Previously, he served as district executive for the St. Clair District. As a commissioned professional with the Boy Scouts, Buhr's role is to provide support, leadership and program opportunities to all scouts and their families.

Prior to working with the Scouts, Buhr coached collegiate women's volleyball over 8 years at SIUE, the University of Kansas and Millsaps College. He earned a bachelor's in education from Missouri State University and a master's in exercise science from the University of Kansas.

"Thank you for your leadership for the Boy Scouts," says Pembroke. "That's a wonderful thing. As you were growing up, was scouting a part of your life?"

"Growing up, I wasn't a scout, but I was a scout type of kid," answers Buhr. "I was outside often and adventurous, but I didn't get involved and missed out on opportunities to engage with other youth in such a character-building program."

"It sounds like you did a lot of things that the scouts do, but you didn't have the benefit of doing it within a structure and with other kids that were doing the same things," says Pembroke.

"Absolutely," replies Buhr. "There is an opportunity to get engaged with the rest of the country by having this instant connection with anybody who walks into a room and says they were a scout. I missed out on that connection, but now that I'm involved, it's been great."

"Was your transition from coaching to being involved with the scouts challenging?" inquires Pembroke.

“It was definitely tough,” says Buhr. “I had wanted to be a coach and influence kids in athletics since I was in middle school. My identity was Coach Buhr, and sometimes I still get called that, but I knew I wanted to spend more time with my young family.

“The collegiate pace and demands weren’t exactly where I wanted to be at this point in my life. Having some flexibility with the scouts and creating a schedule that works best for my family and serves the community works better for me.”

“When most people think of the Scouts, they think of building campfires and learning to shoot arrows,” notes Pembroke. “Can you tell us a little bit about the Scout camps and what activities occur there?”

“The variety of activities depends upon what camp you’re attending, but the majority of them are outdoor activities,” Buhr responds. “We have hiking, canoeing, paddle boating, horseback riding, sailing, fly fishing, challenge courses and more. We use these outdoor programs to focus on teaching leadership, character development and appreciation for one’s surroundings.”

Although outdoor activities are a big part of Scout development, the program offers modern-day STEM activities to provide hands-on experience in different levels of technology. Over the years, the Scouts have teamed with SIUE to provide these opportunities to youth of all ages.

“Our partnership with SIUE is awesome,” claims Buhr. “There are several faculty members that are heavily involved in all parts of scouting, including Dr. (Eric) Voss, who helps run STEM classes for Scouts on campus.”

In addition to the STEM activities offered, the School of Pharmacy has been working with the Scouts to create a drug prevention education program. Students and faculty are working on creating web-based training for both youth and adults that can be shared with the Scouts and throughout the community.

“The goal is to spread the program out locally within the region, but then provide the training across the nation,” explains Buhr.

An upcoming fundraiser for the Scouts is the annual Scouting for Food program. On Saturday, Nov. 9, thousands of Scouts will deliver countless bags throughout the region. A week later, they will return to collect the bags, hopefully full of canned goods donated for those in need. To learn more, contact Buhr at 618-207-6432 or kevin.buhr@scouting.org.

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