

Stars, Stripes & Service



YOUNG OBSERVER

Virgil Girls Receive Highest Honor Of American Heritage Girls

Clare Kralka and Reese Klug of Virgil received the highest recognition of American Heritage Girls, the Stars and Stripes Award, at a ceremony Aug. 11.

Kralka and Klug, along with their families, are parishioners of SS. Peter and Paul Parish, here. The two are also cousins.



(Photos provided/Tracie Klug)
Reese Klug (left) and Clare Kralka at the Stars and Stripes Award ceremony

Both are members of American Heritage Girls Troop #0224. Kralka has been a member of AHG since 2012 and Klug began in 2013.

Along their journey, Kralka and Klug entered the Patriot Program Level for ages 14-18 and completed the highest award for that level: the Abigail Adams Level Award, required to be considered for Stars and Stripes Award candidacy.

The Stars and Stripes Award service project is substantial. Girls must plan, develop, and supervise others in a project that benefits a non-profit or civic organization in their community. This project requires, at minimum, 100 hours of service. That includes 10 hours of leadership of three or more youth, building organizational and communication skills.

Kralka created a nursing bench and station for mothers at SS. Peter and Paul Parish. As part of that project, she led a group of girls in sewing changing pad covers.

Klug put together two backpacks filled with educational materials, three walking sticks and two Adirondack chairs for Fox Valley Forest Preserve Red Oak Nature Center in North Aurora. She worked with her AHG group to test some of the backpack components, and she built the chairs with guidance from her father.

In "spiritual walk" essays they wrote about their projects (see two boxed excerpts, right), Kralka and Klug chronicled moments of perseverance, gratitude, and support from their families and friends.

"When the project became difficult," Kralka wrote, "I would think about my favorite Scripture passage from Joshua 1:9: 'Be courageous.'"

Klug pointed to Romans 5:3-5, which helped her persevere: "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."

Kralka says she feels called to to pursue an artistic degree in graphic design, and is also interested in social justice issues and study abroad. "My goal in the end would be to find a career that would combine my passion for art with my love of the Catholic faith and God," she says.

Klug plans to major in animal science at University of Wisconsin-Platteville.

—Information provided by Tracie Klug, compiled by The Observer staff.



Clare Kralka shows a changing pad, one of several that she and other girls sewed as part of her service project: creating a nursing bench and station for mothers at SS. Peter and Paul Parish, Virgil.

"I am especially thankful for the support of my mom, who has guided me with her wisdom. I am so proud of the project that I was able to complete for my church, and I hope that it will help many families in the years to come."

—Clare Kralka

"This project has taught me way more than perseverance. It has taught me that I will always have my faith, family and this community behind me every step of my life."

—Reese Klug



For her Stars and Stripes Award service project, Reese Klug created two backpacks filled with educational materials, three walking sticks and two Adirondack chairs for Fox Valley Forest Preserve Red Oak Nature Center, North Aurora.



(Photo provided/Amy Ott)
Boylan Central players in green and Marian Central Catholic High School players in red and white huddle for a prayer at midfield after the final whistle of the Aug. 23 preseason scrimmage game.

Boylan, Marian CCHS Share Faith and Football at Preseason Scrimmage

ROCKFORD—Diocesan schools — Rockford's Boylan Central Catholic High School and Woodstock's Marian Central Catholic High School — came together Aug. 23rd for a new tradition: a preseason football scrimmage celebrating faith, community and shared values.

The scrimmage drew a big turnout of fans and students from both schools. In the ranks of enthusiastic fans were good friends Father Charles "Chuck" Warren and Father Robert "Bobby" Blood, who serve as spiritual directors at Marian and Boylan, respectively. The priests were ordained in the same year (2019) and both graduated from Boylan, Father Warren in 2010 and Father Blood in 2011.

The game concluded without a score, but the highlight of the evening transcended the field. After the final whistle, players from both teams gathered at midfield to join in prayer, demonstrating their unity as one family under God.

—Provided by Amy Ott, Boylan Central Catholic High School president.



Father Charles Warren (left) and Father Robert Blood