

GA TECH ESSAY - CHRIS KELLY

The experiences that I have had in Boy Scouts have been the most challenging and rewarding experiences in my life. I am a sixth year scout with one of the largest Boy Scout troops in Atlanta. Our troop is unique in that the adults provide administrative support but the scouts are in charge. During my first two years in this troop I observed many different leadership (and non-leadership) styles and decided that I could be one of the best leaders on the troop by being a positive role model to younger scouts as well as my peers.

My third year I was selected to be a patrol leader for the rookie scouts. This is probably the most difficult position because it is the program for brand new scouts and its success or failure determines how many people will stay with the troop. As the patrol leader I was responsible for being the first role model of the new scouts, and for developing their individual skills while building team spirit. This was a very successful year because my rookie patrol had one of the largest return rates in recent years, as well as being the first rookie patrol to be the honor patrol.

Other positions followed including Patrol Leader of older scouts, Instructor, Quartermaster, and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. As Patrol Leader, I led a very good patrol and we were able to win honor patrol for every semester that I was there. I helped to curb some of the negative treatments that I had seen as a problem in my rookie scout days and I trained the people that would become Patrol Leaders of future honor patrols.

This fall, the troop selected me to be the Senior Patrol Leader. I feel that I was selected to run the troop because I demonstrated not just the basic scouting skills, but also the positive attitude and the approach that makes scouting an improved experience for a larger number of boys. I chose a group of 10 scouts to act as the Leadership Core of the troop (scribe, quartermaster, etc.) and we have completed two campouts with about 80 people on each, effectively dealing with any problems that came up. It is very challenging and a lot of work to be in charge of a group that size, especially when I had not yet completed the requirements for Eagle Scout and was actively trying to finish that before October. However, it is well worth it to see the smile on 12-year-olds faces when they finish their first 3-mile backpacking trip in to a campsite and eat a good meal, to see their interest in a scary story at a campfire, or to see them receive their next rank or another hard-earned award.