

## Concerned Parents and Members of Troop 19—Boy Scouts of America

November 7, 2012

Board of Directors  
Mount Diablo Silverado Council  
Boy Scouts of America  
800 Ellinwood Way  
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Dear MDSC Board Members:

Your recent decision denying Eagle Scout certification to Ryan Andresen because he was honest with his troop and scout leader about being gay is a great disappointment to us and our sons. Scouting has always represented the highest ideals of both camaraderie and social responsibility. We have enthusiastically supported our children's advancement through the Boy Scouts, and we have been actively engaged ourselves. Our support is reinforced by the many positive role models we find in our troop, in the Council, and in BSA. Our support is now much less enthusiastic.

We find your decision ethically wrong. And if you consider your decision necessary to follow BSA rules, we find it morally weak. Rules can be, and sometimes must be, changed. We teach our sons, as Americans, as citizens of the world and as Boy Scouts, that they should challenge things they see as wrong, not to capitulate. Courage and empathy are hallmarks of Scouts, but the Council's position in this case was neither. Sixty years ago the scouts might have shown prejudice toward Ryan if he were black or Jewish or Asian. Over time we learned that such prejudice is wrong and we stopped it. The BSA policy of restricting gay boys is wrong today. You must stop it. Recognize Ryan Andresen as the Eagle Scout he has proven to be.

In any organization there is good and bad. We are strongly bound to the Scouts, but this recent incident with Ryan Andresen shakes our faith in BSA. We think BSA can be, and must be, a better organization. You, the leaders of BSA, must have the courage to be more inclusive. Scouting is respected throughout the world because it accepts all nationalities, religions, races, and cultures. Scouting is respected for its inclusiveness. We expect BSA to promote and practice inclusiveness.

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One argument of the Scout leadership for discriminating against homosexuals is that parents do not support integration with gays. We reject that argument, and more importantly, we call upon you, as leaders, to appeal to and expect the best within us, not the worst. We believe the greater community of scouting has the ability to accept all families just as they historically accepted minorities.

You, the national scouting leaders, are role models for our sons and we expect you to demonstrate generosity, courage, and the ability to adapt. We encourage, indeed expect, you to pursue the BSA internal process to change outdated rules, even within our own organization, especially when those rules are antithetical to the ideals we wish to inspire in our children. For us, for our sons, and for the many scouts to follow, we implore you to be progressive leaders, to support justice even if not convenient, to be the type of leaders all scouts can emulate.

Sincerely,

Parents and Members of Troop 19, Berkeley CA. MDSC BSA