Adventure runs in John Harkey Jr.'s blood, which is why he supports the John D. Harkey Jr. X-Zone, a program at the Summit Bechtel Reserve. His family — including his partner, Peni Barfield (left), and daughter, Meredith — supports him during his active pursuits like Harkey’s victory at the 2014 AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf tournament (above).
refreshments for 40,000 Scouts at the 2010 National Scout Jamboree. Today, he’s putting his stamp on the John D. Harkey Jr. X-Zone, which serves as a high-energy introduction to the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve’s most adventurous activities, including skating, zip-lining and BMX.

All that is right in Harkey’s wheelhouse.

“From skydiving to bungee jumping to hang gliding to climbing the face of El Capitan, skateboarding, motocross, surfing and scuba diving, I’ve been fortunate to be healthy and extremely active,” Harkey says. “It’s a very broad, active level of interest. That’s how we came up with the John D. Harkey Jr. X-Zone at the Summit Bechtel Reserve.”

Harkey’s lifelong adventure started in Brownwood, where summer camp at nearby Camp Billy Gibbons was one of his most memorable Scouting experiences. Other notable Scouting experiences included a multiple-day survival outing and learning to cast animal tracks in plaster. He also appreciated the exposure and impact of the leadership opportunities and the introduction to Scouting’s value system.

“I had an extraordinarily positive experience as a young Scout,” Harkey says. “It’s one of the few things you pursue in life as a teen that you continue to reference long into your adulthood.”

Further explaining the Scouting adventure as an adult, he completed Wood Badge training at Philmont, where he recalls learning about BSA founder Lord Baden-Powell and the program’s early history that he hadn’t fully appreciated as a young Scout.

In his varied career as an investor, dealmaker, attorney, entrepreneur and high-level corporate executive, Harkey says he’s repeatedly found himself working alongside other Eagle Scouts. And he’s consistently found that they, too, have been strongly and enduringly influenced by their Scouting experience.

“There are — and see where he is today — and one particular thing Barfield appreciates about Scouting is the opportunity it gives for exceptionally accomplished people like Harkey to have outsized influence as examples for future generations.

“Boys and young men can see men like John who have started exactly where they are — and see where he is today — and be able to say, ‘He was a Scout, too,’” she says. “It’s just remarkable.”