

Phil & Geda Condit

Distinguished Eagle Scout stays involved because he believes in Scouting.

Reflecting on a nearly four-decade business career that included leading one of the globe's biggest and most influential corporations, Phil Condit can see where it all started. "I learned about leadership in Boy Scouts. I was a patrol leader and a senior patrol leader," says Condit, who led Boeing Co. as chairman and CEO from 1997 to 2003.

Perhaps it seems far-fetched that guiding a handful of Scouts could prepare someone for the top job at a company that, when he left, employed close to 160,000 people and sat atop fields including manufacturing commercial jetliners, satellites, human space flight, military aircraft, helicopters and missile defenses.

Indeed, Condit's additional training includes degrees from the University of California at Berkeley, Princeton University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, as well as a doctorate in engineering from Tokyo University of

Science. But Condit says it was Scouting's special approach to developing young leaders that sent him down the right track.

"The way Scouts do it, you let the boys do the leading," he says. "It isn't really adult-led, it's boy-led. The adults are advisors." Condit explains that Scouting let him make mistakes in a safe environment and gain deeper understanding of his capabilities and the requirements of leadership. "That had a profound effect on me," he says.

Beginning as a Cub Scout, Condit progressed all the way to Eagle. Each step added to his self-knowledge and confidence. "You learn that you can accomplish something," he says. "And there are rewards that go with it. Those little experiences are really worthwhile."

As an adult, Condit continued in Scouting. He has received the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award, served as president of the Chief Seattle Council and now serves on the BSA's national executive board. Unlike many adult volunteers, Condit didn't get involved in Scouting with a

son. As a father of two daughters, he volunteered because he believes in Scouting's mission, method and results, and wants to help move the organization forward.

"We need leaders, and we need mechanisms to help build leaders," he says. "We have no other really good mechanism to teach kids that." By providing the opportunities to experience leadership, Condit says, the organization addresses one of our society's most important needs, and it does so in a way that is uniquely effective.

Two of Condit's adult activities in Scouting have made a particularly strong impression on him. One is an annual adult campout that he has participated in for 16 years, going to Philmont and other outdoor destinations. "We just went to the start of the Iditarod sled dog race in Alaska," he says. As much as the experience, Condit values the purpose of the program, which is to raise money to support inner-city Scouting programs. "We're trying to give kids who otherwise would not get an outdoors experience or leadership experience



the opportunity to be part of Scouting," he says.

The second highlight of his adult involvement is his support of the Summit Bechtel Reserve. Not surprisingly, Condit has been instrumental in conceiving and developing the Summit Bechtel Reserve's Thomas S. Monson Leadership Excellence Center, which he envisions as helping Scouting to get even better at developing leaders. To anyone who would like to see Scouting address that need or any other, Condit says there are ways to help. "There are so many

opportunities [to support Scouting], including directly with time and energy," he says. "We always need volunteers, and one of the great things about Scouting is that it really depends on volunteers."

If anything, Condit says, Scouting is more vital today than when he joined as a youth. When Scouting was one of only a few organized activities around, he says, it was easier and more natural for boys to get into the program.

Today, the plethora of sports leagues and similar activities can divert boys

Phil Condit, former CEO and chairman of Boeing, takes a moment at the 2014 National Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tenn., to chat about Scouting with members of BSA's youth, including (from left) Eagle Scout Joshua McDonald; Webelos Scout Luke Williams; Eagle Scout Brian Webb; Venturer and Silver Award recipient Amelia Berle; and Sea Scout Boatswain Billy McElligott.

from Scouting and cause them to miss a potentially life-changing experience, one that could eventually lead to a top leadership position. "We need to make sure that we get kids engaged," says the former holder of such a job, "because it can make a big difference."

WHY WE GIVE

WHEN PHIL CONDIT sits down to consider supporting a cause, his wife, Geda Maso Condit, is right beside him. "We always make all of our charitable decisions together," Phil Condit says. "They're not individual."

The couple is clearly on the same page about supporting Scouting. To both,

To help youth in a way no other organization can.

helping develop leaders is one of the best ways to help today's youth. And they see Scouting as the best way to do that.

Geda Maso Condit says she concurs not just because her husband enjoys Scouting, but also because it works. "If you look at the outcome of the programs, you see it 30, 40

or 50 years later in what kinds of leaders it turns out," she says. "To me, the results speak for themselves."

 **LEARN MORE** about the BSA National Foundation at bsafoundation.org.

To Geda and Phil Condit (top left), developing future leaders is one of the most important goals of their lifetime. And Scouting sits at the top of their list of ways to achieve this goal, especially with their support of the Thomas S. Monson Leadership Excellence Center, an important contribution to the Summit Bechtel Reserve.

PHOTO: EARTH (2); ROGER MORGAN/BSA FILE

