

The 2010 BSA National Meeting has just concluded in Dallas. I am very excited about the focus and direction of Scouting as we move forward into our 2nd century of Scouting. For this e-Totem I especially wanted to share my experience while attending the "Duty to God Breakfast" as well as the "Americanism Breakfast". Both were very inspirational. The diversity in the Duty to God breakfast program was outstanding. The welcome was from David Beck, Young Men General President in the LDS Church. The invocation was from Shohaib Virani, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop 758, Chartered by Shia Imami Asmaili, Circle 10 Council, Dallas. Entertainment was from the LDS Choir, Dallas – Fort Worth, TX. There was a Religious Emblems Presentation and the Keynote Address was offered by The Rev. Dr. William H. Willimon, Bishop, United Methodist Church. Rev. Willimon shared a particular experience when he served as a Scoutmaster. The youth were fixing dinner. They had a can of pork & beans and it needed to be heated. You can probably guess where this is going. They failed to open the can first! Needless to say they had a mess on their hands. Observing the chaos, one Scout approached Rev. Willimon and asked him..."how much do they pay you to do this?". He responded with..."they can't pay me enough to do this! And no one in their right mind would volunteer for this either". He continued to say..."Son, you're put here"! The message...It's more than just volunteering and we do what we do because we know the value and the anticipated outcome. The "Americanism Breakfast" was incredible. This breakfast is sponsored by the National Eagle Scout Association. The program was emceed by President Teddy Roosevelt. Well, not really, but the gentleman who played that part was as real as though the former president was really with us. Teddy Roosevelt was most instrumental in the very early days of the Boy Scouts and our history. There was patriotic music, presentations of scholarships to Eagle Scout recipients, special guest speaker, Steve Holcomb, Eagle Scout & Gold Medal winner, Bobsledding, XXI Winter Games in Vancouver, BC. Wow! Being a Scout helped lay the foundation for the accomplishments he's experienced as an Olympic champion. What a great story to tell. By far the most inspirational message was from Ralph de la Vega, President & CEO, AT&T Mobility and Consumer Markets. Mr. de la Vega is from Cuba. Shortly following the Cuban Revolution in 1959, his family experienced a very different Cuba. Their freedoms were no longer enjoyed. Property was seized, movement was restricted, and citizens were very afraid of what might happen next. The family decided that going to the United States would be best. They went to the Havana airport in eager anticipation of a new life in America. He said he heard 5 words that would forever change his life. "Only the boy can go". He was only 10 yrs. Old. The authorities would allow him to leave, but the rest of the family would have to stay in Cuba. I would encourage you to read more about him and get the rest of the story. He authored a book titled Obstacles Welcome. As you can conclude from the place he has in corporate America the ending is a very good one. We heard a lot about "outcomes" and in virtually everything I attended we discussed "outcomes". In Scouting we are clearly interested in "outcomes". The BSA is more relevant than ever! There is so much focus on instant celebrity that Scouting is challenged to attract youth to Scouting and most importantly to keep them engaged in Scouting. That's why quality, relevant and dynamic program is vital to success. Thank you for all you do for Scouting! Keep up the great work you do for the youth of our community.