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» 16 Life Skills
Kids Need Before
Leaving Home

p82 By Megan Willome

CLASS *of* 2011

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**Eagle Scouts:
Being Prepared
— and Beyond**

p88 By Gretchen Eichenberg



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yeah.' He heard firsthand from Harvard, from Stanford, from all these people who were saying, 'Yes, we would really love to see that Eagle Scout. We'd love to see you finish that. Yes, we want someone who is studying hard and not playing video games.' Hearing it out of the mouths of these recruiters was so much more powerful than Mom saying, 'You need to do this.'

I think just having that mentality of 'We're going to college. We're all going to work really hard to find out what we're strong in and what we like. Look to what your future is going to look like and have these goals so that we're working toward something.' That's hard to see when you're 11 or 12 years old. The whole time he's been [at Vanguard] it's been, 'We're a college preparatory school. We're not just here just to wing it through the teenage years. This is part of your life, and it's meaningful.'

WACOAN: You mentioned Eagle Scouts. Is Drew a Boy Scout?

Mastin: Yes, both boys are. The last two weeks they were in Colorado, backpacking. It's a sacrifice for us to send our kids to private school. You know, a lot of the families that are doctors and lawyers and big business people, it's easy for them. We make sacrifices to send our kids, and we hope every year that we're able to do it, but there are other things that we feel are important, not just in the classroom. Boy Scouts is one of those things. We think it's super important to learn the character and loyalty and all the things that Boy Scouts stands for. So we hope, well, we haven't given them an option. They will become Eagle Scouts. My husband's an Eagle Scout, so that's something that's important to our family. That will happen. It's stuff that kids just don't learn these days, and it's so important.

At the college fair, the [Harvard recruiter] told us, 'Everyone who wants to come to Harvard has good grades. Everybody who comes to Harvard has volunteer hours. But if there is a difference between one being an Eagle [Scout] and one who's not, guess who gets the spot? It's the Eagle because we know what they went through to get that. We know that they have to have character. We know that they have endurance to get through that. We know what kind of person that is.'

Things like that are really important. Church, spiritual development and education are the

biggest things we can give our kids that are going to affect their future. As a parent I feel like that's my job. If there's an opportunity for education somewhere, I'm willing to drive my kids wherever they need to go to get it.

WACOAN: What is one of the biggest differences you noticed coming from public school to private school?

Mastin: The TAKS test is one of the biggest changes we noticed from public school to private school. Although they say they don't teach to the TAKS test, they have a practice TAKS day. What that, basically, means [to me] is that there's no learning going on. [The teachers say,] 'We're going to approximate a TAKS day, so no one goes to music. No one goes to art. We're going to sit in the classroom, and I'm going to give you the practice TAKS.' That seems like a little thing, but that's a whole day of education gone to waste. I think that private schools just use their time very well. Each day is just packed. But we feel that way about Hillcrest. We feel it's almost run like a little private school. It's small — that may not be the case for much longer — but we're hoping to get two more years there.

WACOAN: Will Lindsay go to St. Paul's Day School after she graduates from Hillcrest PDS?

Mastin: I have no idea. Again, it's a year-by-year thing, and we know as parents it's our responsibility to start really looking toward college, and how are we going to pay for that and that kind of thing. If we're paying for sixth grade, does that get in the way of sending off our kids to college? It's just one of those things that we have to think about more than the typical private-school [family], that it's just a given. When the time comes, we'll make that decision for Lindsay, too.

WACOAN: Do you think the fact that Vanguard doesn't rank will affect your children as they apply for college?

Mastin: I asked that at the college fair we went to last year. I think it was the Harvard [recruiter] — we spent the most time with him. [I asked,] 'What do you do if your school doesn't rank?' and he said, 'Well, what school is it?' I said 'Vanguard,' and he said, 'No problem. We know the school. We know the characteristics of the kids who come out of there, and we know that they're prepared.' A lot of times they go on the record of kids that they have from that school in