

# New Eagle Scouts eager to try out their wings

## Various works earned Scouts top honor

By **RISA BERRIN**  
Herald Writer

The Eagles are soaring in south Miami-Dade.

Edward Taylor, 17, Michael Roche, 18, Phillip Chai, 18, and Jon Hunt, 14, recently joined the ranks of Eagle Scouts, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America.

In order to become Eagle Scouts, the boys had to create, organize and execute a service project.

Despite rumors he heard about the difficulty of completing a final service project, Edward Taylor, a junior at Christopher Columbus High School, was determined to do it anyway.

Edward, who lives in West Kendall, started a project at the Wee Care Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Homestead, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the rehabilitation and release of wild animals.



**Phillip**      **Jon**      **Michael**      **Edward**

### MIAMI-DADE

"I heard the projects were impossible, but I didn't find it that hard," he said.

Edward decided to combine his love for animals with his interest in serving others.

He planted a butterfly garden that will be used to educate people about native plants and animals.

"The project will also be used for maintaining a small wildlife area," Edward said.

The Eagle Board of Review evaluates a scout's record and character in addition to his service project.

After passing the review board, there is a special cere-

mony where each boy is inducted into the rank.

The focus of Michael Roche's project was also the environment. Michael, who lives near West Miami, just finished his freshman year at the University of Florida.

During his senior year at Coral Gables High School, he helped with the renovation of the planters at the entrance of The Barnacle State Historic Site in Coconut Grove.

Michael's father says he is very proud of his son's accomplishments and glad he got involved in Boy Scouts.

"It is the kind of organization that emphasizes discipline, integrity, and positive values," Roche said.

*'I want to try to help younger Scouts. I also want to continue to be involved in service projects and camping.'*

**EDWARD TAYLOR,**  
new Eagle Scout

Phillip Chai, 18, also of West Kendall, helped the environment as well.

After years of involvement with Habitat for Humanity, Phillip wanted to donate his skills to his own school, The Learning Experience School in Coral Gables.

"One day his job was to lay the sod at a Habitat for Humanity site," his mother, Angela Chai said. "It gave him the idea for his own Eagle Scout project."

Local businesses donated plants and materials to the project after Phillip wrote asking for their help. With the boys in his troop, Phillip landscaped the front of the school building.

"I feel really good and excited, like I want to do it all over again," he said.

Jon Hunt, who just finished eighth grade at Gulliver Academy, decided to create a project at the New Riviera Health

Resort because his great-grandmother and two great-aunts were residents at the home for the elderly.

Jon built a garden that is raised a few feet off the ground so elderly residents in wheelchairs can touch the plants. He also encouraged the residents to help him when he planted the garden.

"The garden gives them something to do in the outdoors rather than staying inside and watching TV," he said.

The new Eagle Scouts say their involvement with the organization is not ending, even though they have achieved the organization's highest rank.

Edward plans to assume the role of a teacher and mentor now.

"I want to try to help younger Scouts. I also want to continue to be involved in service projects and camping," he said.