

Columbia Valley Community Health
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A Local Student's "Project at the Camp" is About More Than Goal Posts

What does a trip to Brazil, an Eagle Scout project and goal posts at a migrant farmworkers camp have in common? A young man's vision to help others. Here's the story of how one local student made a difference in the lives of others, by giving a little of himself. The recent Wenatchee High School graduate spent his first day of summer vacation talking to me about this senior project, which was sponsored in part by Columbia Valley Community Health.

Thanks to the running start program at Wenatchee Valley College, Brian Dice graduated high school a few credits shy of being a junior in college. Though he won't leave for Eastern Washington University till the fall, he cannot drop his scholastic mindset just yet. In less than a week, he'll fly to Seattle to attend the [University of Washington Summer Medical and Dental Education Program](#), a competitive opportunity for college students who are interested in medicine and dentistry.

"This program is geared towards under-represented cultures and diverse ethnic groups," said Brian. "I think my project at the camp, my background in Brazil, and my medical interests helped me get accepted."

The "project at the camp" to which Brian refers is the culmination of nine months of project management involved in creating a new recreational space at the migrant seasonal farmworker camp in Monitor, WA. You could say it started two years ago when Brian was planning a trip to visit his grandmother in Brazil.

"I worked at Stemilt for two cherry seasons and at an orchard in Monitor for two summers to pay for my own visa and help finance my trip."

It was through these summer jobs that Brian was first connected to migrant farmworkers. While in Brazil, he observed firsthand the poverty and lack of access to medical care prevalent in that country.

"Our apartment building overlooked the streets. Looking at all the people in need is what sparked my interest in the medical field and looking into groups like Doctors Without Borders."

His senior year, Brian enrolled in the nursing assistant course offered through the high school that enabled him to apply for a mentorship position at the hospital. In addition to completing this mentorship in cardiology, he shadowed a medical provider at Columbia Valley Community Health on his own time. He also enrolled in an EMT-Basics course with Ballard Ambulance.

"Serving people is like catching a bug. It's addictive to make positive differences in people's lives. That's why I like EMT work so much. It feels really good to be there and comfort people in their most acute time of need."

Making people feel good was the reason he was so passionate about the goal post project at the Monitor migrant camp.

"During those summer jobs, I saw how hard the migrant workers are constantly working and believed they deserved a place to have fun."

Brian's mom is a coordinator for migrant farmworkers at Work Source in Wenatchee. Through one of her contacts, she was notified of the need for updated recreational facilities at a particular camp.

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"I was looking for an Eagle Scout project and my mom told me about the Monitor camp. We started brainstorming and talking to officials at the camp and eventually came up with the idea to replace the soccer goal posts, spread new bark on playground and put in two new horseshoe pits."

Brian says he was really only "a small part of this project". By small he means he was the project manager who drafted the proposal, organized the workforce, coordinated the volunteers, procured the donations for funding and materials, secured the materials from local suppliers, and drew up the dimensions for the horse-shoe pits and goal posts. He wrote up the proposal for his Scout office to approve, received project approval from the camp and then from the City of Monitor.

Brian and his father drew up dimensions for the horse shoe pits which friends and boy scouts helped to construct. Brian secured three cubic yards of bark donated and delivered by Bob's Apple Barrel for the new area.

"A group of us went to the camp and tore down the old wooden goal posts, which were just dilapidated wooden arches. Everyone got rakes and started working, some on the horseshoe pits, others spreading bark. There were about 15 – 20 people involved at the camp that day."

For the goal posts, Brian and his dad looked up dimensions online and took the plans to Josh Potter of Cascade Powder Coating.

"Josh deserves a lot of, if not the most of, the credit for this project," Brian says. "Columbia Valley Community Health donated over \$1,000 to pay for the steel, but Josh did the fabricating, welding and powder coating of the goal posts all on his own time and they turned out great."

Once Brian and Josh Potter finished the goal posts, Brian recruited family friend and local orchardist Blaine Smith to help transport them from Cascade Powder Coating to the camp's new recreational site. On Saturday, May 31, the newly fabricated goal posts arrived at the Migrant Camp in Monitor. While Josh unloaded the posts with his forklift, Brian and his dad helped steer the goal posts to the field.

"My dad and I had to guide the posts around this chain link divider, squeezing past the brush, all the while precariously balancing this big piece of metal on the tip-top of the fork lift. They are really heavy and awkward."

The bark is spread, the pits are constructed and the new metal goal posts are in place. On June 22, Brian will begin six weeks of intensive medical instruction, attend banquets and dinners, and network with important health care officials from all over the state. Then he's off to Eastern to start a new chapter of his life, in which the common thread of helping people and serving others will continue to run. Brian plans to pursue his undergrad in behavioral psychology with an end career goal of becoming an "EMT-B, U.S. Air Force Pararescue, then a physician's assistant in cardiology or emergency care".

I asked Brian to describe the most important thing he'll take from this experience.

"The importance of recognizing a need within the community and realizing it's not impossible to make a very big difference in people's lives, especially those who work so hard. I learned that I should just take the lead and make it happen, because if nobody does it, all we're left with are wooden goalposts that don't work. Just make it happen."

Brian struck me as a very well-rounded, responsible, and driven individual. I asked him what advice he would give to his peers who may not know where to channel their energy.

"There's a lot to be learned from serving others. From the feelings of self-worth it gives you, to the direction it can give you, being the positive difference that people need makes you feel really good."

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