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## **ROCHESTER'S TAY HOUSE CELEBRATES 90 YEARS**

### **Boy Scout Troop 19 one of oldest and most unique in U.S.**

*Historic Cobbs Hill Cabin hosts open house September 12th*

Rochester, NY – First chartered in 1919 at Brighton Presbyterian Church, Boy Scout Troop 19 – also known as Tay House – will celebrate its 90th anniversary on Saturday, September 12, 2009. A free, public open house will take place in and around the troop's historic Tay House Cabin in Cobbs Hill Park (85 Hillside Ave., 14610) from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The cabin, built in 1931 largely due to the efforts of J. Taylor Howard or "Uncle Tay," is a hidden Rochester treasure located directly behind School #1.

Open house highlights will include opening and closing ceremonies, indoor historic displays, outdoor scouting demonstrations, hands-on activities, refreshments and information. Later that day, scouts, Scoutmasters, parents and alum will celebrate with a picnic dinner at Ellison Park.

With Boy Scouts of America celebrating 100 years in February 2010, Tay House is one of the oldest troops in the country, and may be the oldest in the Otetiana Council which serves the Greater Rochester area. Its long history has resulted in some unique philosophies, including an emphasis on creating a nurturing environment in which young men can develop leadership skills through experience.

"Our scouts actually run the troop," explains Tay House Scoutmaster Kelly Wasson. "They receive mentoring from experienced adult leaders, but are given real responsibility. Do they make mistakes sometimes? Yes, but we know that's just a necessary part of the learning process."

Another unusual Tay House philosophy does not allow Scoutmasters to have sons in the troop. Instead, parents are encouraged to participate in the Troop Committee, which acts as a Board of Directors to support the troop.

"Although many troops have dads as Scoutmasters, we believe that the dynamic is totally different and more in keeping with our 'boy-led' philosophy when that's not the case," says Troop Committee Chair Jeff Leist.

Troop 19, now sponsored by Asbury First Methodist Church, offers all of the usual scouting activities, including weekly meetings (at the cabin) and eight campouts per year. It also host "super trips" every four or five years, such as 2008's trip to South Dakota and Colorado, which included July fourth fireworks over Mt. Rushmore, biking down Pikes Peak and rafting on the Arkansas River.

Leist and Wasson also point with pride to the almost 320 Eagle ranks – including their own – awarded over the years. They and many other former Tay House scouts have stayed very involved in order to provide other young men with the nurturing, life-altering experiences that they received from Troop 19.

"Tay House scouting is what molded me into a successful human being," states Scoutmaster Wasson. "And I think that boys today – especially with so many single-parent families and such fast-paced lives – are just as much or more in need of learning to take responsibility, gaining confidence, making life-long friends, being mentored and becoming mentors for others."

"We hope that our upcoming open house will not only be a celebration for Tay House, " adds Leist, "but will provide an opportunity for young people and their parents to see all that we have to offer."

Media, please note: high-resolution photographs of Troop 19 involved in various activities are available, and interviews may be arranged.

