

leadership lives on through Alexy, now 38 with a son of his own in the program. Alexy is also the Royal Rangers Outpost coordinator for his own church.

Shane Barrett of Trinity Fellowship Church in Sharpsburg, Ga., is another father who has fostered relationships with his three sons: Joshua, 20; Dylan, 18; and Jonathan, 16.

“It was easier for me to have all three sons at different ages involved in Royal Rangers because time is limited with three boys,” says Shane. “One of my best memories is when my youngest son, Jonathan, received the Holy Spirit with evidence of speaking in tongues during an altar call at a pow wow.”

Shane’s sons — including Dylan, who recently received a nomination to the United States Military Academy at West Point — note the significance of their father’s involvement in Royal Rangers in drawing the family closer together.

Harry Hawthorne and his son, Nate, of Grace Assembly of God in Bel Air, Md., have been involved in Royal Rangers together since 1999.

“I was a new Christian at the time with a new son,” Harry recalls in describing the first few months as a volunteer at his church’s outpost. “I had never been very interested in children before we had Nate, and I didn’t see myself as a skilled father, much less a commander for a group of boys.”

When Harry was 9, his father died unexpectedly. As he grew into manhood he searched for a godly man he could look up to



Harry Hawthorne has grown in his faith thanks to his involvement in Royal Rangers with his son, Nate.

and strive to be like, he says, but he never found one. Soon after Nate’s birth, Harry accepted Jesus as his Savior. He determined to be an example, leader and friend to all the boys under his command in the Rangers program — especially his own son.

“The Royal Rangers program naturally brings fathers and sons together,” Harry says. “From the campouts and hiking trips to the book work, you work as a team on earning merits — the father as the instructor, and the son as the student.”

As Nate has grown, Harry has watched his son reach the point of being able to do a lot of the work on his own. Nate, now 13, is coming alongside his dad and learning how to teach and lead others.

Nate’s best experiences in Royal Rangers aren’t centered on his friendships or adventures with his peers but experiences with his dad.

“One of my favorite memories was hiking 15 miles of the Appalachian Trail as a requirement for my hiking merit,” Nate recalls. “Being involved in Royal Rangers with my dad is awesome because we get to work together, spend time together and do really awesome stuff together.”

Hicks says fathers who are actively involved in their sons’ lives will form bonds of companionship that serve as a foundation for the rest of their lives. Indeed, the ministry to boys has a lifelong impact, according to fathers who have seen their sons mature

into young men.

“As my son grew older and wasn’t in Royal Rangers anymore, I still saw in him the results of being in the program,” Luis Batista says. “I see his behavior around others and how he implemented the Royal Rangers tenets and codes.”

“Royal Rangers has, without a doubt, allowed me to see the challenges and leadership opportunities my sons have been put through,” Jose Maldonado says. “This gives me more confidence in their abilities to resist temptation and peer pressure and to make better choices.” **e**

JORDAN SCHRANDT lives in Blue Springs, Mo., with her husband, Doug, and their five children. She adopted Doug’s five children upon her marriage after their birth mother died.

Email your comments to pe@ag.org.