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## Character-Forming Outdoor Adventure Group Will Remain ‘a Place Where Boys Can be Boys’

***Trail Life USA pledges to keep its ‘affirming’ boys focus as Boy Scouts of America announces it will start welcoming girls***



BELTON, S.C.—The leader of a national outdoor adventure program aiming to help develop men of character has reassured member-families and supporters that it will remain “a place where boys can be boys.”

Trail Life USA CEO Mark Hancock made the pledge in the wake of the announcement by the Boy Scouts of America that it will begin admitting girls next year.

Trail Life USA’s Christian-based leadership and development program will continue to serve boys and young men exclusively, Hancock said.

“As gender blurring only increases, it is more important than ever that someone provides a safe environment where boys can be boys, and where their natural talents and tendencies can be affirmed, encouraged and developed by men who can offer a positive role model,” he stated.

Since it was founded in 2013, Trail Life USA has been embraced enthusiastically by families seeking a faith-based nurture and activity program based on traditional values. Today there are almost 30,000 members in almost 750 troops across 48 states.

Ignoring the essential differences between boys and girls does both sexes a disservice, Hancock said. “Increasingly, however, it seems that boys are being singled out and told that their natural traits and characteristics are somehow wrong or need to be corrected,” Hancock said. “We believe that, properly encouraged and nurtured by good role models, what makes a boy a boy is good, for the individual and for society.”

Blurring gender distinctions has made life “very confusing” for boys, Hancock said, noting that boys are far more likely than girls to be in special education or to have been diagnosed with ADHD.

“Many parents are concerned that their children are raised according to time-honored truths and needs,” said Hancock. “I can assure that we have no intention of following the lead of the Boy Scouts of America. We will continue to offer a place where the wildness and the natural tendencies of boys can be encouraged and shaped, for their good and for the good of society.”

Typically chartered by local churches, Trail Life USA troops offer a K-12 program centered on outdoor experiences that build young men’s skills and help them grow on a personal level and as role models and leaders for their peers.

Hancock advised parents looking for a similar opportunity for their daughters to consider Trail Life USA’s sister organization, American Heritage Girls (<https://www.americanheritagegirls.org>). With more than 43,000 members in 50 states, the movement offers “the same sort of gender-appropriate, values-based environment for growth as we do,” he said.

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*Trail Life USA (<https://www.trailifeusa.com>) is a Christian outdoor adventure, character and leadership program for boys and young men, K-12. Chartered through churches in 48 states, the program centers on outdoor experiences and biblical values that build a young man's skills and allow him to grow on a personal level and as a role model and leader for his peers.*