

An Eagle (Scout) in the Woods

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Bryant Carroll at the completed gathering space at A Studio in the Woods. (Photo provided by Kelly Venable Carroll)

What happens when artistry and environmental preservation are joined with the oath “help other people at all times”? A community service project organized by an Eagle Scout for a top-notch program at Tulane.

[A Studio in the Woods](#), a program of the [ByWater Institute](#), is located on 8 acres of bottomland hardwood forest on the Mississippi River in Bulbancha/New Orleans. The studio works to preserve the endangered forest and provide a space for science-inspired art through an artist residency program. It also serves as a retreat space for

innovative artists and scholars who are facing the challenging issues of our time.

The sustainably sourced buildings were constructed during the 1970s and 1980s and designed to live within the existing forest. Over time the trees grew, and one large live oak began to lean over the main house and needed to be removed. This left an awkward space between three buildings that the staff dreamed of transforming into a gathering space. Hearing of the studio's needs, Bryant Carroll, son of Kelly Venable Carroll, assistant vice president of customer relations for Campus Services, approached the studio with a proposal. He asked if he could build a gathering space for his Eagle Scout service project.

"Doing a service project for A Studio in the Woods was the perfect opportunity for me, as a budding environmentalist and artist," said Bryant Carroll.

Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in scouting, and it is no easy feat. The Eagle Scout must demonstrate Scout Spirit, embodying the ideals of service and leadership and must plan, organize, lead and manage a service project that will benefit another organization or people.

Over the course of two weekends, working four to five hours a day, Carroll and his Scout team, partnering with David Baker, the studio's environmental curator, landscaped the area, creating a beautiful and inviting gathering space. The project materials consisted of primarily repurposed materials such as fire bricks, construction scaffolding boards, logs cut from a fallen tree on site and even historic flagstones from M.S. Rau, an antique store in the French Quarter.

"Scouting has taught me how to be a steward of our land, and it has also shown me the importance of applying knowledge you acquire in a meaningful way," said Carroll.

As well as being a Scout, Carroll is a senior at Lusher Charter School in the Certificate of Artistry program for visual arts. He plans on attending Tulane next fall, majoring in environmental science and art.

To learn more about A Studio in the Woods, [click here](#).





Site at A Studio in the Woods prior to landscaping project.

The completed gathering space with the Scout Crew. Fourth from left front row, Bryant Carroll, second from right front row, Joe Carmichael, A Studio in the Woods founder, second from left, back row, David Baker, A Studio in the Woods environmental curator.