

# The Athens Messenger

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## Athens has its first Scouts BSA Troop for girls

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Athens County officially received approval from Scouts BSA Simon Kenton Council to charter its first BSA Troop for girls on Feb. 2. The newly chartered troop was granted the numerical BSA Troop designation 7071 and will become part of the larger unit 71 of Athens County.

The Kiwanis Club of Athens will serve as the troop chartering organization, while the First United Methodist Church in Uptown Athens as a strong supporting partner. Scoutmaster Clayton Healy and Assistant Scoutmaster Suzanne Ferraro are leading the way with a committee of other adult volunteers. The inaugural group of girls includes both Healy and Ferraro's daughters, as well as three others. In 2019, girls were welcomed into the Scouts BSA programs, previously an all-boys group, then called Boy Scouts of America. The addition of girls to the organization led to the name change Scouts BSA.

Cub Scout Packs have welcomed girls into their groups for several years but until February 2023, only local boys would transition to the older Scout BSA troops, as the girls didn't have a place. That all changed with the formation of Troop 7071, a troop just for girls.

When asked why she joined Scouts BSA, Kayleigh Ferraro said she wants to try to make a path for other girls.

"I wanted to show people around me I can create something amazing," she said. When asked about her favorite part of scouts, Hailey Bowles said, "The merit badges make more sense and I have made more friends."

Adult leaders were asked about what opportunities this troop brings for girls in Athens. Susie Ferraro said, "Scouting is a way to help all our daughters grow into the leaders of tomorrow. Through the skills they learn in BSA scouting they are learning to lead and they learn to look beyond themselves to see infinite possibilities and opportunities. They learn that they can do anything if they are

willing to work that they can achieve any goal by developing their confidence and leadership skills.”

Clayton Healy said, “That as somebody who was a scout himself, he is excited that all of his children now have the same positive opportunity that he had as a youth.” Troop 7071 is actively seeking and recruiting new members. All girls aged 11-17 or girls who are 10 and have completed fifth grade may join the group. Any girl who joins before the end of the year will be considered a founder and be able to wear a founder’s patch on her uniform. For information about this newly formed group, check out their website at [bsatroop7071.org](http://bsatroop7071.org).