

Highlights:

The Challenger Program is comparable to a Walkabout

Like a Walkabout, our Scouts learn-by-doing and develop hands-on experience



Walkabout is the term we use to describe the process of earning the Challenger Award. It has Australian aboriginal origins.

The Walkabout is a journey of spiritual significance in which a young person leaves their tribe and survives in the wilderness alone for six months. They are physically, mentally, and emotionally tested, and when they return, the young person is recognized as an adult member of the tribe. The Walkabout is community centered: the community educates the youth, the youth is tested by the Walkabout, and when the youth returns, they are able to give back to community.



The modern world has nothing like it. We have graduation ceremonies, moving away from home, moving to college, being eligible to vote, and other landmarks, but nothing as significant as the Walkabout. That is because of the level of commitment an instructor or counselor and student must have toward each other. If the young person's education is flawed in any way, they may not survive the Walkabout. If the young person does not return to take their place in the tribe, a valuable member of the community would be lost, as would the future good that person could have accomplished. The young person also owes it to the community to return and educate another.

Education for the aborigine is hands-on; it must be. To be unable to hunt or find food would be a disaster on a walkabout. Reading about finding food in a book just is not informative enough. There is little in the modern world that compares with that kind of education. With the advent of the internet, though we would not argue its obvious advantages, we have gotten further from actual experience, further from the aboriginal concept of learning-by-doing.

Our Scout Programs implement learning-by-doing strategies to fill the hole of actual experience in the life of modern youth. From building and racing their own soap box derby cars to camping to the Activity Buffet portion of every meeting, our Scouts get the opportunity to build skills for life via actual experience.

The Challenger Award, likened to a Walkabout, is the culmination of many years of experience learning-by-doing. It is symbolic that our Scouts faced challenges, continue to face them in the present, and are ready to face them in the future.