

**Distinguished Citizens Dinner
Pine Tree Council / Boy Scouts
Holiday Inn by the Bay/Portland
Shawn Gorman Remarks/May 16, 2024**

Thank you, Horace, and good evening, everyone.

- It is an honor to be here tonight and to receive this **Distinguished Citizens Award** on behalf of my family and everyone at L.L.Bean.
- L.L.Bean has been a proud supporter of the **Boy Scouts since 1979**, and it's an even longer connection for me and my family.
- My dad, Jim Gorman was an Eagle Scout, and he and my mom, Maureen, have been life-long supporters of Scouting.
- Dad was super proud to be an Eagle Scout, and even prouder to pass on his love of Scouting.
- He was also a Scout Master, so naturally my siblings and I grew up in the Scouts, not here in the Pine Tree State, but just over the border in Southern New Hampshire.
- Some of my fondest childhood memories are attached to that time.
- I loved going to **Scout Jamborees and Camp Outs**, where we'd all gather around a big bonfire and sleep in tents under the stars.
- I also can't help but smile when I think back to all those merit badges.
- As the youngest of three boys in the Scouts, I remember watching my brothers earn badges for knot-tying and performing community service knowing that I'd soon be earning those, too.
- Of course, it may have become a little competitive in our household and put a bit of pressure on our mom – who seemed to be constantly sewing new badges on our uniforms.
- Fast-forward to today, and I continue to be grateful for all that Scouting taught me, and how it continues to prepare kids for a life of Impact and Purpose – something that we are also committed to at L.L.Bean.
- As many of you know, my great-grandfather, L.L., founded L.L.Bean back in 1912, and he ran the company for over 50 years until his passing.
- During his tenure he created “L.L.’s Golden Rule” – a pledge of service, operating with integrity and always treating people like human beings.
- Additionally, our Purpose Statement — which is **to inspire and enable people to experience the restorative power of being outside** — honors another one of L.L.’s time-tested beliefs... which is that spending **time in the outdoors is good for us.**

- He summed it up this way: *“To my mind, hunting and fishing is the big lure that takes us into the great open spaces and teaches us to forget the mean and petty things in life.”*
- Today, science backs up what L.L. instinctively knew.
- That time spent in nature makes us healthier, happier, and better equipped to deal with the challenges that life throws our way.
- But sadly, kids are spending less time outside than their parents did a generation ago.
- This trend isn’t just an unfortunate “sign of the times”, it’s leading to a very real and troubling disorder known as “Nature Deficit”.
- Nature Deficit is linked to behavioral issues and is making our kids more anxious and less resilient.
- It’s also contributing to the growing mental health crisis that’s impacting our nation.
- As an outdoor brand, we play a key role in reversing this trend; by helping people to understand that spending time outside is more than recreation, it’s vital to our collective wellbeing.
- For example, if you visit L.L.Bean’s Instagram page this month, you’ll notice something unusual.
- We’ve gone dark on organic social for the entire month of May to support Mental Health Awareness Month.
- And we’ve done it for three years in a row.
- I’ll admit when the idea was first posed to me, I was skeptical, and frankly, a little concerned.
- Brands like L.L.Bean rely on their social media channels to boost our marketing efforts, so going dark for a day – let alone an entire month – was certainly a risk.
- But as we soon learned, it was a risk worth taking.
- Within hours of launching our “Going off the Grid” messaging, L.L.Bean was flooded with support, and thousands of pledges to follow our lead and **join us outside to recharge.**
- Clearly, the world is ready to listen to the healing powers of time in the outdoors, something that L.L.Bean and the Pine Tree Council have been focused on for well over a century.

- Helping people make the connection between time outside and their physical and mental wellbeing is also a guiding force in our approach to Charitable Giving.
 - Since 2018, L.L.Bean has focused our giving on programs and partners that **expand outside access while protecting and preserving the natural environment for everyone.**
 - We call it the **L.L.Bean Outdoor Fund.**
 - Last year alone, these efforts helped inspire and enable nearly 17 million people to get outside, including many right here in Maine.
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- We've made great progress but there's more work to do.
 - Now more than ever, kids and families need to understand that time in the outdoors **isn't a nice to have, it's a must have.**
 - Fortunately, organizations like the Pine Tree Council have been connecting young people to the outdoors for almost as long as L.L.Bean has been making Bean Boots. *(FYI – Pine Tree Council was formed in 1919...)*
 - We are proud of the Pine Tree Council's efforts to get kids outside through our support of Camp Hinds in Raymond.
 - Last year alone, that enabled more than 600 kids to have a summer camp experience – many for the first time.
 - Which is just amazing – and a great example of the power of our partnership and shared commitment to ensuring kids develop a life-long love of nature, not just today, but for generations to come.
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- Once again, on behalf of my family, and the more than 5,000 employees of L.L.Bean worldwide, I am honored to accept this award.
 - I also want to thank everyone at the Pine Tree Council for hosting this special event, and to all of you for coming tonight to support Scouting and to celebrate the successful partnership between the Scouts and L.L.Bean.
 - Together, and with your help, we will continue to ensure kids develop the skills and values they need to lead healthy and productive lives.
 - Thank you.

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