

## New Jersey Jewish News Online Princeton | Mercer | Bucks Feature

### Scout's honor

Local teen earns top prize for hike



Princeton University President Shirley Tilghman presents the Princeton Prize in Race Relations to Adam Racer Schuit. Flanking them are Princeton alumni David Tukey, left, chair of the Princeton Prize Committee for the Central New Jersey region, and Henry Von Kohorn, founder of the prize.

by Marilyn Silverstein  
NJJN Bureau Chief/PMB  
11.13.07

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#### Take the hike

THE SECOND ANNUAL Ten Commandments Hike of Central New Jersey is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 23. The event will begin with opening ceremonies at 9 a.m. at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in West Windsor and end at 1:15 p.m. at Congregation Beth Chaim in Princeton Junction.

For information about registering for the 4.1-mile hike, contact Paul Harmelin.

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Adam Racer Schuit is just 17 years old, but he has the resume of a Renaissance man.

Schuit, a senior at West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North, is an Eagle Scout, a member of the National Honor Society, captain of his high school varsity swim team, and pitcher for his high school varsity baseball team.

He is also a volunteer soccer referee for New Jersey's Special Olympics and an accomplished pianist.

Schuit has now added another line to his list of accomplishments — co-winner of the Princeton Prize in Race Relations for the Central New Jersey region — in recognition of his initiating a "Ten Commandments Hike" that builds links among area houses of worship.

Established in 2003 by the Alumni Association of Princeton University, the Princeton Prize recognizes high school students for their efforts to improve race relations in their

communities. The prize is awarded in 19 areas across the country, including three regions of New Jersey. In all, the 2007 Princeton Prize recognized 92 high school students for their work in race relations this year, with 24 students winning first-place cash prizes.

"It's a really important prize to win in this day and age, when religion is dividing different societies throughout the world," Schuit said during a recent telephone interview from his West Windsor home, where he lives with his parents, Michael and Ronda Schuit, and his 15-year-old sister, Emily. "It's important to understand the different religions so we can all live peacefully in this world."

Religious understanding is a natural for Schuit, who grew up at Congregation Beth Chaim in Princeton Junction. His Eagle Scout project revolved around the synagogue — designing and leading a cadre of 57 volunteers in constructing an ark to house the Torah scroll the congregation uses during youth services and special events.



Adam Racer Schuit

Schuit said he first learned about the concept of a Ten Commandments Hike while attending a regional meeting of the Jewish Committee on Scouting in the spring of 2006. That's when he decided to inaugurate a hike in his own community.

On the day after Thanksgiving last year, some 125 Boy Scouts turned out for the inaugural 4.1-mile hike, which was sponsored by the Central New Jersey Council of the Jewish Committee on Scouting.

Over a period of four hours, the Scouts walked to five houses of worship in the West Windsor/Princeton Junction community — the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, the Dutch Neck Presbyterian Church, St. David the King Catholic Church, the Windsor Chapel, and Beth Chaim.

"At each stop, we had the clergy member talk about two of the commandments," Schuit said. While they were at the Presbyterian Church, a representative of the Islamic Society of Central New Jersey spoke with the Scouts about Islam's Five Pillars of Wisdom.

Eagle Scouts Michael Perl of West Windsor and Ben Rubin of Metuchen joined Schuit in organizing and leading the hike, which they dubbed A Bridge to Understanding.

Dozens of Scouts will retrace those steps during the second annual Ten Commandments Hike this month (see box). Schuit and Rubin will again be in the vanguard, together with Eagle Scout Andrew Ceramã© and Life Scout Jason Foster. West Windsor Mayor Shing-

Fu Hsueh said that he hopes to make the Ten Commandments Hike an annual community event, said Schuit.

The experience of initiating and leading the hike, Schuit said, "shows me that I've been able to get along with people of different religious faiths."

It also taught him about how much houses of worship help people, he added. When he was honored with the Princeton Prize this year, he decided to donate his \$500 prize to the five houses of worship along the hike path.

"It's the right thing to do — to give back," Schuit said. "These houses of worship are really meaningful in a lot of people's lives."

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