

SCOUTS-L

**RECRUITING
LEADERS**

From mfbowman@CapAccess.org Sun Dec 8 11:26:13 1996
Date: Sun, 8 Dec 1996 11:26:12 -0500 (EST)
From: "Michael F. Bowman" <mfbowman@CapAccess.org>
To: DSEED <DSEED@GVHS.GOV.BC.CA>
Subject: Re: recruiting and thanking volunteers

Dennis,

RECRUITING:

From a prior posting of mine:

Too often when everyone is busy we resort to newsletters, letters of welcome to a Troop, and requests for help in meetings hoping that everyone will catch on to what is needed and jump right in. If the unit is lucky and some of the parents are experienced in Scouting or oriented towards participation anyway all goes well and nobody figures out that the communication effort wasn't all that successful.

However, there are many units where this is not enough. Parents are both working, some Scouts only have a single parent, there has been a divorce, the family has just moved and is new to the area, there is a health problem, the parents are newly arrived from another country, the parents are shy and uncertain, or you find other challenges. In these cases parental involvement starts to sound like a dream and really will challenge a leader to the max.

What seems to work best is a one-to-one face-to-face session with the new parent(s) over a cup of coffee. Face-to-face it is harder to say no and easier for you to answer specific concerns and find unique ways for each parent to help according to their time and talents.

From among those who are participating; e.g. the Scoutmaster and active committee members, divide up the parents you wish to target and:

- * Make an appointment to stop by at their home or a local place that serves soft drinks and coffee. Ask for about an hour of time and make sure you keep things moving.
- * Spend about five minutes really selling the Troop. Show what the Troop has done. Explain how the Scouts really grow. Talk about advancement for a minute or so. Talk about the really great activities

that the Patrol Leader's Council is planning.

- * Ask how the parent's son is doing. How do they feel about Scouting?
- * Do they have questions? Things they'd like to know?
- * What are their hobbies? What special skills do they have? (Do your personnel resources inventory on the spot without paper in sight, while getting to know the parent.)
- * Talk to them about parental commitment and how important it is to make sure their son has a good Scouting experience - hit home. Yes they will have a hundred reasons why they are busy. But remind them that by pooling talents with all the other parents it is a lot easier to make sure all the boys have a lot more great opportunities than if only the parent was trying to do it all alone. You do want the best for your son? You want to see him grow and stay out of trouble?
- * As you begin to learn about the Scout and the parent, ask leading questions about how they could help in a particular activity - something where they can get their feet wet and enjoy a successful experience. The key here is starting them small.
- * Start them out by just asking them to drive one way on a trip, helping set up an activity nearby, or helping counsel a merit badge once or twice with another counselor, but not in a lead position until they have confidence. You probably know of at least a dozen small things that could use a helping hand. Pick one that fits the parent, where they can't hardly go wrong.
- * Immediately recognize their success and help!! Present drivers with a small matchbox type car with a Scouting decal on the top or something simple to say thanks or some simple homemade recognition appropriate to the task. Give a set of red and green cloth pins to somebody who has helped dry out tents, a varnished mounted pancake to somebody that helped with the pancake breakfast, etc. You get the idea.
- * Now that you have the hook set, reel 'em in a little closer with another more difficult assignment and again recognize what they do.
- * All along the way communicate the commitment by explaining, selling the program, and asking for personal help.

Some of these people will move on before you get them very involved and you can't do much about it. But there will be some that will get the fever and jump right in.

I always find that there are at least three parents out of a dozen that would love to help, if only asked. They don't volunteer for cultural reasons (hispanic), because of shyness, because they are not sure they can do it, etc. But once asked they bloom and become the best leaders. So ask!

From yet another posting:

Increasing parent involvement is always a challenge, you're not alone. One successful strategy is to make a gigantic poster listing all of the Pack positions, activity chairs, and other jobs that will need to be filled throughout the year with a blank next to each. Fill in the ones where you have a volunteer ahead of time. Take the poster to your Join Scouting Night meeting and tell the new parents that each is expected to take on at least one of these jobs, explaining that Cub Scouting is a family organization and must have family; e.g., parent participation. Similarly put the poster in the front of the room for your Pack Meeting and give the same encouragements. This will net a few and help with a little peer fear/pressure. Nobody likes being seen as a non-contributor. Let them know that, if you don't see their names, you'll help them find something. Then the Pack's leadership can divide the missing names and follow-up with one-to-one invitations.

A great selling point, when you begin to hear excuses is to tell them that what the Cub Scout program offers is what each parent would like to give his/her child, if there was enough time and that the advantage is that we can pool resources to see that each boy gets those things. This means that you the parent have to carry your share, which is a lot less than if you were trying to do all of these things yourself. Remind them that its not fair to ask other parents to shoulder their own share and this excuse maker's as well. You may lose one or two that don't want the commitment, but would they have stayed anyway?

Another point is that there are a lot of folks that are hesitant to volunteer, especially in hispanic communities. Some will be honored to be asked and to see your trust in them and will respond positively with encouragement. One of the best Webelos leaders I ever had sat quietly and

never said a word at meetings for over a year because nobody every asked.

I saw enthusiasm in his eyes and asked. A week later he came to a meeting

in full uniform with every patch in the right place, brimming with ideas. He took Webelos to camp each year and never missed an activity. His den grew and had to be split twice.

While there is no best solution, consider making it a point to find the positive attributes of each parent as you get to know them and then use that as a reason you think they would be good at _____. Remember that they can't say yes, if you don't ask.

And from another of my postings:

Try this relatively simple closing ceremony:

Props: One 18" log cut in half with five evenly spaced holes drilled about an inch deep

Two blue candles (battery Xmas candles painted can be substituted)

Two yellow/gold candles

One Red candle (any other different color than blue and gold will do as well)

Candles are placed in holes in the log blue-yellow-red-yellow-blue

Give the Scout Sign until the group is silent. Have 5 denners off-stage walk silently forward with a lit taper and light the five candles starting with blue, yellow and then red. They extinguish their candles and stand on either side of you behind the now glowing log - all in silence.

Say the following:

These five candles burning brightly represent the light that adult leaders - Akelas - give to our Cub Scouts to help them grow in citizenship, character, and fitness. This is fitting because without these leaders these Scouts would be left to fend for themselves in darkness.

Without Council and District leaders (use wetted fingers to extinguish a

blue candle) there would be less light, but still enough.

Without the Pack Committee (extinguish other blue candle) there would be even less light, but still enough.

Without the Cubmaster and other Pack leaders (extinguish a yellow) there would be much less light.

Without the Den Leaders and Den Chiefs (extinguish other yellow) there would be much, much less light.

Finally, we see only a small light left and the most important light of all. This is the light of parents who help these Scouts. And without the help of parents (extinguish red candle) who will cast a guiding light for these Scouts to lead them from darkness?

Have a staged parent in the back of the room come forward lighting a candle or using a battery lantern. Parent asks each person in turn to put hand on shoulder of person in front of them and follow him/her out of the meeting room.

Now if this doesn't get the attention of parents, I'm not sure they can be moved. Must be stones.

Date: Sat, 22 Mar 1997 05:37:10 -0500
From: PJM <pjm@WORLDRAAMP.NET>
Subject: Re: Recruiting Volunteers...

At 07:42 PM 3/21/97 -0800, you wrote:

>This sounds really cool. I was thinking what exciting thing I could do
>when the old cubmaster leaves this month... Hmmm three days and a
wake
>up. Everything is possible if you're a scout.

Hey Melissa,

Yes that is true... most anything is possible. Another award we use that also looks impressive does take some time to do. I use it for those special awards. It consists of a leather square 11.5" X 11.5. I work on it as if

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// \ \
//  For  \ \
// 3 Years \ \
// CubMaster \ \  A VERY rough sketch.
..
\ \      John      //
\ \ Michaels //
  \ \      //
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**Pete... pjm@worldramp.net
AKA "Goodyear Pete", Hey you!, Mr. Cubmaster,
and the "Professor of Cooking"
Cub Master of Mighty Pack 230, Apopka, Fl
Semoran Springs Roundtable Staff, Webelos & Internet SIGs
"Awesome is as awesome does..."**

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