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Why Boy Scouts Need Resident Camp

The Boy Scout program is based on many outdoor skills, and by learning and using these skills, Boy Scouts prepare for responsible adult lives.

Troop meetings, hikes, and overnight campouts give boys the opportunity for advancement, leadership experience, and the ability to live with others—under the wise counsel of a Scoutmaster who sets an example for the boys he leads.

Resident camp—usually six or seven days in length—is the climax of the troop's year-round program.

In the setting of this Boy Scout training center, boys live Scouting's ideals, participate as members of a patrol, make strides in their personal growth, and have opportunities for advancement and other meaningful programs.

With a trained staff, resident camp can help the troop, the patrol, and the individual Boy Scout. The resident camp experience strengthens the troop by providing a goal toward which the troop can prepare throughout the year.

Resident camp is an integral part of a troop's total program. Therefore, the district camping committee has a major responsibility to help troops plan for resident camp.

The District Camping Committee's Role

The district camping committee promotes year-round troop camping that culminates in a successful resident camp experience. To help carry out this responsibility, the committee should first determine which troops "always go camping," "sometimes go camping," or "never go camping."

Special attention must be paid to the groups that "sometimes" or "never" camp so that the chartered organization, the troop committee, the Scoutmaster and assistants, the parents, and the Boy Scouts are made aware of the values of attending a resident camp.

The effectiveness of a resident camp is measured by the percentage of Boy Scouts and of troops that attend. Four factors can contribute to that effectiveness:

- Quality of the resident camp program
- Parental visibility and confidence

- Unit leader education
- Boy visibility and excitement

Quality of the Resident Camp Program. This factor speaks for itself. If the camp program meets—and exceeds—their expectations, boys and leaders will return for more.

Parental Visibility and Confidence. Parents—those who pay their son's camp fee or encourage their son to attend resident camp—need to be exposed to what camp is and what it has to offer. They want to be assured that the camp meets high standards for their son's health and safety, and they must be confident of the leaders' qualifications and ability. The district camping committee can help accomplish this goal by:

- Training volunteers to tell the camp story at troop meetings and on parents' nights
- Developing and mailing to parents a colorful and intelligent brochure about the camp
- Informing parents that the camp is a nationally accredited BSA camp
- Using news media to advertise the resident camp

Unit Leader Education. We need to tell the story of how camp strengthens the troop and makes the Scoutmaster's job easier. This can be done through:

- Roundtables
- Scoutmaster meetings—"What camp does for your troop"
- A strong district camp promotion team that visits troop meetings
- Camp staff or Order of the Arrow visits to troop meetings
- A series on resident camp in the council news bulletin—January to June
- Camp-oriented clerical staff at the council service center

Boy Visibility and Excitement. Various methods may be used, but these are especially effective:

- Camp slides presented by an Order of the Arrow team at a troop meeting
- Camporees with camp staff and Order of the Arrow visibility at the evening campfire
- Resident camp rallies in the district—outdoors in a playground or at a park—with resident camp staff participation
- A booth about resident camp at the Scouting show with materials available for registering troops and Scouts for camp

Depending on the council plan, members of the district camping committee may be asked to take part in "Preparing Troop Leadership for Resident Camp" training aimed at the troop leaders who will attend resident camp with their troop. This training includes the philosophy of camping, a tour of the camp, special program opportunities, advancement opportunities, and troop program planning.

How the District Camping Committee Organizes

The success of the district camping committee in promoting resident camp depends on selecting people who will contact troops with information about resident camp. They will work with others in the district to be sure that every troop has the opportunity to sign up for camp.

Prepare a Work Schedule

Use the following schedule to plan the work of the district camping committee related to resident camp promotion. Write in the deadline dates that are appropriate for your district.

Deadline
Date

- _____ Develop and display an attractive master chart showing campsites and camping periods. Have it available in resident camp for troops to sign up for next year.
- _____ Know and distribute camping facts to show troops' year-round camping record.
- _____ Distribute a resident camp kit to every troop, including a council camping guide and details of a camp savings plan.
- _____ Classify the troops according to their camping history—"always go camping," "sometimes go camping," or "never go camping."
- _____ Remind troops to submit reservation fee to hold a campsite and camp period.
- _____ Recruit a district camping promotion team—one person for every four or five units who will visit and follow through.
- _____ Train the district promotion team, assign them troops to contact, and provide them with resident camp promotion tools.
- _____ Contact troop committees to get a commitment sheet, check Our Camping Log (No. 33690), arrange for a parents' night on camping, and promote the specialty camps and provisions camping as necessary.
- _____ Schedule and conduct parents' night camp promotion meetings.
- _____ Secure two-deep unit leadership for camp.
- _____ Troop camp leadership training.
- _____ Troop camp program planned.
- _____ Full fees due (usually two weeks before the camp period).

Hold a Sales Training Meeting

In order for the district camping committee to do its job, an essential step is training the district promotion team. Whether this sales training meeting is done by the council or in the district, the following subjects should be covered:

Know your prospect. Know the institution and its troop committee. Get acquainted with the Scoutmaster. Ask him to review last year's outdoor program. Sell him on the values of camping.

Know the tools for camp promotion. Leadership training. Camping guide. Videos or other audiovisual aids. Order of the Arrow promotion plan and team organization.

Recognize why troops are classified. "Always," "sometimes," or "never."

Plan contacts to fit the troop. These are based on how the troops have been classified.

- Always go camping. Keep in touch and confirm reservations. Learn how they do it. Seek their help with other troops.
- Sometimes go camping. Meet with the troop committee and review plans for a year-round outdoor program. Help the troop committee schedule hikes and weekend camps. (Two or three meetings may be needed.)

- Never go camping. Get help from the unit commissioner.

Why Troops Go Camping

Troops that regularly have a resident camp experience are usually the ones that have a good year-round program, maintain continuing interest among youth members, and have the support of adults, parents, and the chartered organization.

Troops see many values from resident camp:

Troop program. Camp becomes an extension of the year-round outdoor program and provides 24 hours a day for a week to participate in the Scouting program.

Scoutmaster influence. There are more opportunities for the troop leaders to know the Boy Scouts, to work with them, and to provide a high-quality mentorship to their lives.

Camp staff. The troop is served by a highly qualified group of adults and young men who offer various skills related to Scouting and for other camp activities.

Advancement. Boy Scouts have advancement opportunities at camp that are not as easy to find at home, and the camp surroundings provide them an inspiration to advance.

Challenges. At resident camp, boys find that they can stretch to new challenges because of the variety of programs made available.

Patrol method. Day and night, the smaller, boy-led group in the troop learns how to work together and to become a special democratic entity.

Afterward. The troop returns home with a new enthusiasm that carries on in the regular troop program during the following months. Skills learned at camp continue to be practiced at troop meetings, on hikes, and on overnight campouts.

How to Promote Resident Camp in the Troop

The district camping committee must consider a number of individuals when developing its promotion plan for each troop. Among them are:

The Scoutmaster. The troop leader must be aware that resident camp strengthens year-round program. The change of scenery results in program stimulation, recognition, satisfaction, yearlong values, and a special fellowship. The Scoutmaster must believe in the importance of the troop going to camp, should be willing to go with his troop, and should be an enthusiastic promoter within his troop.

The troop committee. As the group responsible to see that the troop has at least 10 days and nights of camping each year, the troop committee provides the necessary support so that the Scoutmaster may be concerned basically with the program at camp.

The chartered organization. The organization that has a charter from the Boy Scouts of America to use the Boy Scout program also has the responsibility to see that its troop has the opportunity to go to camp. Through the head of the chartered organization, support is given to provide leaders for resident camp.

The chartered organization will benefit from its troop's participation in camp because of the yearlong values; the pride in its troop; the strengthening of ties, community relations, and its own image; keeping boys under the influence of the organization; and building an adult environment.

Parents. With proper communication, parents will realize the resident camp is an excellent value for the cost. They will understand its educational values, will see their son's opportunity for advancement and accomplishment, and will realize that the Boy Scout "learns to learn" and gains self-reliance.

The boy. Most of all, the boy who goes to resident camp with his troop will find fun, excitement, adventure, physical fitness, advancement, and all of the other methods and outcomes of the Boy Scout program. He will see the Boy Scout Handbook come to life.

The commissioner. In his regular visits to a troop, the commissioner sees camp as a training tool and knows that the resident camp helps to ensure the troop's continued successful operation.

The Order of the Arrow. Because this brotherhood of honor campers is camp-oriented, its members are usually willing to accept a prime responsibility for helping to promote troop attendance at a resident camp by having teams visit troop parents' nights or troop meetings.

The district camping committee. For the district, the results of troops going to resident camp include better tenure, increased membership, rechartering of troops, community support for financing Scouting, new adult leaders, a high-quality program, and a tool for the district public relations plan.

The district camping committee establishes its methods to promote resident camp in troops. (See Camping Guide, No. 33081, pages 8-9.)

Fall

- Establish troop and boy goals for camp.
- Conduct promotion skills training for district members.
- Assist troops with open house and other recruiting programs.
- Recognize troop camp leadership at roundtables, district meetings, and in bulletins.
- District camping committee adopts schedule for troop visitations.
- Order of the Arrow works with committee on promotion plans.
- District camping committee recruited to full strength—one adult for every five troops.

Winter

- Continue promotion with camping committee and Order of the Arrow working at troop committee meetings and other meetings of leaders and parents.
- Roundtables and district committee meetings feature outdoor activities and resident camping.

Spring

- Conduct precamp training for troop leaders.
- Promote resident camp participation at camporees.
- Commissioners arrange personal visits to troops not signed up for camp.
- Review status of reservations for resident camp and take action to follow up on troops not signed up.

Summer

- Recognize troop leaders who are doing a good job.
- Hold a district meeting at resident camp with the district camping committee as hosts.
- Hold a unit commissioners' meeting at resident camp or encourage unit commissioners to visit troops at camp. Resident camp is an ideal setting for unit visits.
- Encourage attending units to sign up for next summer.

How to Promote Resident Camp at District Activities

The district camping committee should be aware of the district activities that lend themselves to promoting resident camp.

Displays, booths, and audiovisual presentations may be used. Examples of appropriate district activities are:

Camporees. When troops gather for this overnight competitive event, Boy Scouts will be showing their camping and outdoor skills.

Training sessions. Displays may be used at troop leader training sessions—especially those related to the outdoor program.

Dinners. If the district holds an annual district meeting, recognition dinner, or Eagle Scout dinner, there may be opportunities to include resident camp as a display at the meeting or as part of the program. This could include recognition of troops attending camp or the presentation of National Camping Awards. Scouting shows. These spectacular displays of Scouting in action are excellent for telling the resident camp story.

The parents' meeting, usually held in January or February, may be a cooperative effort between the district camping committee and an Order of the Arrow promotion team, depending on the council plan.

The troop also should be encouraged to contact the Webelos den leader in nearby Cub Scout packs during December or January to find out which boys will be joining the troop in the spring. At the same time, an invitation can be extended for these Webelos Scouts to go to camp with the troop. Webelos Scouts and their parents can be included in the parents' night programs.

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