

February 2010 Boy Scout Roundtable Breakout Session

Developing / maintaining a culture of youth leadership

Facilitator: Jim Schuster

1. Elections / service terms

- When to hold them?
 - Some Units have elections every 6 months. Some have elections yearly.
 - Boys start understanding the role at 6 months.
 - Is the goal getting top performance from the boys or is the goal getting them to learn about leadership? If the latter, then a six month term may be optimal.

- Protocols (running mates? Succession planning?)
 - Some Units have one SPL & one ASPL. Others have multiple ASPL's.
 - One unit elects the SPL & ASPL as a team, so the Scouts know the full leadership team they're electing.
 - Among participants in the February meeting, nobody elects the ASPL and has him "graduate" into the SPL role.
 - One unit requires the SPL – and his parents -- to sign a service contract.

- Requirements for Election
 - One unit simply requires that the SPL candidate be a First Class Scout.
 - Another unit requires the SPL candidate be either 14 and/or a Life Scout.
 - One unit requires that SPL candidates complete an application form that is reviewed by both the current SPL and the Scoutmaster.
 - Some units require a boy complete Grey Wolf (JLTC) before serving as SPL. Other units do not have that same requirement.
 - Participants in the February meeting debated the value of having an Eagle Scout serve as SPL.
 - One participant argued that having an Eagle as SPL was a "waste" of the opportunity.
 - Most others viewed this as simply another learning opportunity for the Scout – regardless of his rank.

2. Responsibilities of Youth Leaders (Load the pipeline and build on success)

- In General, duties include:
 - Planning events and meetings
 - Leading events and meetings
 - Applying discipline
 - Coaching & teaching
 - Lead by example

- Jim Letourneau (SM – T494) provided input about processes used in his Unit
 - Leadership Position Application Form
 - “Patrol Leader Duties” document
 - Leadership tracking form

(These will be posted in the Many Waters website along with these meeting notes.)

3. Preparing Youth to be leaders

- JLTC
 - Troop with a history of sending boys to JLTC (Grey Wolf) are very supportive of the program – strongly recommend all Troops leverage this fabulous training opportunity.
 - One Troop pays for the training – sends 2 or 3 Scouts per year.
 - Participants in the February meeting shared different perspectives about when to send a boy to Grey Wolf. No consensus about the “ideal” age.
 - Some units prefer to send boys just after 8th or 9th grade. Maybe a mature Scout just out of 7th grade.
 - Waiting too long will limit the window of time when the Scout will be able to demonstrate his leadership in the Troop.
 - In general, boys attending Grey Wolf usually are the ones who can/will eventually run for SPL or ASPL.
 - All agreed that there are other ways for Grey Wolf graduates to demonstrate leadership before they get elected to serve as SPL or ASPL.
 - These boys are excellent role models for all others in the Troop.
- Troop Junior Leader Training
 - Some Troops recapped their experience in hosting Troop-level Junior Leader Training.
 - This provides valuable training on a more limited scale.
 - This type of training can be scheduled and provided more frequently.
- Peer-to-Peer Mentoring
 - Can be informal, or official (as in “Troop Guide” or “Instructor”)
- Use of other youth leadership positions: Scribe, quartermaster, etc.
 - In the February Roundtable, we didn’t spend much time on this topic, but agreed that these roles can provide great leadership opportunities.
 - One unit uses the Scribe to manage the signup list for campouts.
 - Use Scribe to keep attendance records.

- One unit has the Patrol Quartermaster meet with the Troop Quartermaster two days before any campout to ensure that all necessary supplies are packed for the trip.
 - Suggestion: Require that the less-conspicuous leadership positions prepare a plan and report progress to someone. (ASPL or PLC)
 - One unit gives each youth leader a budget for his portion of the annual program plan.
- Unusual or “other” Leadership Opportunities (Discussed after the meeting)
 - Troop Service Initiative: One Troop has a service initiative in which each Patrol Leader is challenged to lead his Patrol to carry out a Patrol-level service project during his 6-month term of office.
 - Peer review of meal plans: Troop Guides or other older Scouts preview and approve meal plans for upcoming campouts.

4. Reinforcing Youth as Leaders

- One Troop has a “Staff of Power” that is passed down from SPL to SPL. Each successive SPL woodburns his name into the staff. Visible sign of authority.
- One Troop has a “SPL Manual” that is passed from SPL to his successor.
- One Troop recognizes and celebrates successful youth leaders in their monthly newsletter.