

“Things that have worked for my troop when it comes to growing the troop”

**CBD Roundtable – September 12, 2013
Steven W. Kreitz, Scoutmaster Troop 9455**

1. First and foremost, talk about recruiting, regularly, consistently and passionately.
 - There is no such thing as “the best time of year to recruit” boys into the troop; EVERY month is a good time to bring a boy into Scouting!
 - Recruiting is a year around activity.
 - Let the boy leadership in the troop talk to the troop about the importance of recruiting; help them practice the message during PLC meetings.
 - Talk to the parents about recruiting regularly in parent meetings. This can be done by multiple people – The recruitment adult chairperson, the Scoutmaster and the SPL.
 - Share “real life” stories with the troop about the successes in recruiting. This is especially successful when a Scout recruits a friend (see below).
 - Make sure ALL adult leaders, Scout leaders and Committee Members work off the “same page” with a consistent and welcoming message to possible new Boy Scouts. Everyone needs to understand the importance of a stable troop, in terms of membership.

2. Personally, I feel the BEST, longest-lasting, new Boy Scout has been recruited by a good friend of a Boy Scout!
 - A new boy into a Boy Scout troop is a SCARY thing for the boy! Remember this at all times!
 - A Boy Scout who recruits a friend is a Boy Scout who will be a happy, involved Scout. [story of BRK]
 - The new Boy Scout will have a “buddy” immediately. Tenting, hanging around, meetings, etc.
 - Help the new boy succeed! Resist the temptation to place the new Scout into a different Patrol from his buddy, for example!
 - Make a **BIG DEAL** about awarding the Recruitment patch! Use the next COH, have the recruited and the recruiter stand up in front of the troop and parents and tell their story. Have the recruiter introduce the recruit!
 - Is there a “good time” to have Scouts bring friends to your meetings, perhaps even campouts?? NO! Recruitment is a “year around” process.
 - Is there a “good age” for Scouts to recruit friends? NO! But of course, experience for me personally has shown that the optimal age of

success for a recruit in my troop is in late middle school [give some reasons].

- Talk about bringing friends to the next meeting/campout, even TSR, regularly at meetings. If the friend is coming to a campout, don't forget to get an application and adult signatures...
 - Use the NSC "special deals" pertaining to recruiting awards.
3. Use available resources; don't try to re-create the wheel. Remember what attracts boys to Boy Scouting in the first place.
 - Use existing resources:
<http://www.northernstarbsa.org/JoinScouting/Recruit.aspx>
 - Maintain the consistent message to the possible new Scout and his parents.
 - Meet with the new family individually as soon as possible. Have the family come to your house, offer treats and coffee, have Committee Chair there, as well.
 - Develop a good, easy to read "why join troop xyz" pamphlet!
 - Have a few new Scout applications handy at all times. Also have the booklet "Why Join Boy Scouting" brochure at all times.
 4. Use Den Chiefs in your partner troop.
 - Obviously, this is important, though sometimes difficult with busy Boy Scouts.
 - Hand-pick and individually ask Scouts who you personally think would make good Den Chiefs (not just those that need a leadership position!). Make sure you include his parents!
 5. Give up what doesn't work in recruiting!
 - Open Houses, for example. For my troop personally, these have not worked in the past 5 years!
 - Assuming that Cub Scouts will come knocking on your door.
 - Trying to recruit Boy Scouts from other troops in your area.
 - Assuming that your troop will just continue "as is" in terms of membership.
 - Allowing your other adult leaders, Committee members and membership coordinator to have multiple recruitment plans, messages and goals in the troop.
 - Making recruitment "work"!

I hope you found some of this conversation useful. Good luck to you in growing your membership, and please pass on your successes in future Roundtables!

Steve Kreitz, SM
stevek@bsa455.org
651-456-0840 (w)