



Commissioner Newsletter

Your Single, Best Resource.

April 27, 2026 Edition

“The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers.” - Ralph Nader

Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT) Refresher

Information about the new SYT refresher option can be found in a recent Aaron on Scouting blog post [here](#).

The SYT refresher course must be completed every year. You can take the refresher if you have already completed the full SYT course and your certification has not expired. There is also a short grace period. If your training expired less than seven days ago, you are still eligible to take the refresher.

If your SYT has been expired for seven days or more, you must retake the full course. Anyone who has never completed the full SYT must also take the full course before attempting the refresher. Taking the 20 minute refresher alone without first completing the full course will not count toward certification.

The refresher includes an exam, and you must pass it on your first attempt to receive credit for the Y01 training code, which confirms you are current in Safeguarding Youth.

If you do not pass the refresher exam, you cannot retake it. Instead, you will need to complete the full SYT course again, and you will be automatically enrolled to do so.

2026 Fall Recruitment Marketing and Membership Preview

Did you watch the 2026 Fall Marketing and Membership webinar? If you missed it or would like to watch it again, the recording is available [here](#). Now is the time for units to begin planning how they will reach new families during the critical fall recruitment season.

Registration System Improvement

New families enrolling multiple scouts can now complete their registration and payment in a single online transaction. This update is designed to simplify the onboarding process for our busy Scouting families. The option to do so during the renewal process will be available soon.

Updates to Scoutbook Plus

A date range filter has been added to the calendar list view, allowing users to quickly narrow events by specific time periods. Events can now also be downloaded directly from the list view as a CSV file for easier sharing and tracking. In addition, the ICS calendar feed has been expanded to include events up to two years in the future, helping leaders and families plan further ahead. These improvements are designed to make scheduling more flexible, improve visibility, and simplify long-term planning.

The Merit Badge Counselor functionality has been migrated to Scoutbook Plus, and new functionality has been added to assign and register Merit Badge Counselors in a single step. [Here](#) is a link to the help guide, which describes the new functionality for leaders and merit badge counselors.

2026 Messengers of Peace Scout Build in the Dominican Republic

The 2026 Messengers of Peace Scout Build in the Dominican Republic offers a meaningful international service opportunity for young adults through a partnership between Habitat for Humanity's Global Villages Program, Scouting America, and the Asociación de Scouts Dominicanos. Taking place in San Cristobal from July 11 to 18, 2026, the program brings together Scouts from the United States and the Dominican Republic to work side by side on housing projects, including installing cement flooring, painting, and home rehabilitation. Participants will also take part in cultural experiences such as shared meals, visiting the National Scout Office, and attending local activities like a baseball game.

Open to registered Scouting America members ages 18 to 26, the program is designed for those interested in hands-on service and global engagement. The estimated cost is \$2,100 per participant, covering program fees, airfare, lodging, meals, local transportation, and project materials, with participants responsible for their own travel arrangements to and from their U.S. departure airport. Learn more [here](#).

Reminder: IMPACT 365 - Scouts Trash the Trash Day, May 2

Scouts Trash the Trash Day is a global Messengers of Peace service project that brings Scouts together to clean up their communities while making a positive impact on the environment. Held on the first Saturday in May, each Scout is encouraged to bring a friend or family member and collect at least one kilo, about 2.2 pounds, of trash. Learn more [here](#).

Reminder: Scouts Read Sacred Text, May 7

The Scouts Read Sacred Texts event takes place the week of the National Day of Prayer on May 7, 2026. The event encourages youth in Scouting America to spend time reading their sacred texts as part of living the Scout Oath and reflecting on their Duty to God. Participation can take place individually, with family members, or as part of a unit activity, while respecting each Scout's faith tradition. Learn more [here](#).

Reminder: Commissioner Week at Philmont Training Center, June 7 – 13

Join commissioners at the Philmont Training Center the week of June 7 – 13. Expand your skills, explore new ideas, and connect with like-minded leaders while experiencing the magic of Philmont. Learn more [here](#). Already registered, reach out and invite your Scouting friends.

And, don't forget to bring your families. Read [here](#) about all the fun options for kids and spouses.

Get Your Daily Dose of Scouting Online

Access news as it breaks by following the Commissioners of Scout America's [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram account](#) and help spread the word about Scouting by liking and sharing posts.

We're Your Go To for Answers

The National Commissioner Service Team (NCST) exists to serve commissioners. Learn who are the members of the 2025-26 team are and what they do [here](#).

Ask A Commissioner

Q. Help. Scouting is taking over my life. I'm spending 20 hours a week, minimum, leading my unit. This isn't sustainable. If I don't get some help, I'm going to have to quit and I'll feel guilty because my unit will die and the Scouts will suffer. How can I get parents to help me?

A. Getting more parents involved usually comes down to making things feel simple, meaningful, manageable, AND fun. Most parents are not unwilling to help. They are often unsure what is expected, worried about the time commitment, or hesitant because they lack experience. The goal is to remove those concerns and make participation feel approachable.

One of the most effective shifts is changing how you ask. Broad requests like "we need volunteers" tend to get ignored because no one feels personally responsible, or they think someone else better qualified or more experienced will answer the call for help. Instead, approach parents individually with a specific role that matches something they are already good at. For example, asking someone who is organized to help coordinate a single event feels far more natural and harder to decline than a vague group request.

It also helps to break responsibilities into smaller pieces. Many parents assume volunteering means taking on a large, ongoing role, which can feel overwhelming. When tasks are divided into clearly defined, bite-sized tasks, more people are willing to step in. Something as simple as managing one outing, tracking advancement for a month, cooking extra crispy bacon, or helping with transportation can make a big difference without feeling like a burden.

Clear time boundaries are just as important. Parents are much more likely to say yes when they know exactly how long they are committing. Open-ended roles can feel intimidating and a trap, but short-term commitments such as helping for a single campout or a few weeks make the decision easier and lower the perceived risk.

Creating an easy entry point is another key factor. Many parents hesitate because they feel unqualified. Offering simple, low-pressure ways to get involved and pairing new volunteers with experienced leaders helps build confidence. Once someone has a positive first experience, they are far more likely to stay involved.

It is also important to clearly connect volunteering to their child's experience. Parents are more motivated when they understand that their involvement directly improves the program. More help means better activities, smoother events, and more opportunities for their child to grow and succeed.

Over time, building a culture where participation is expected can make a big difference. When families see that everyone contributes in some way, even in small ways, it becomes the norm rather than the exception. Setting that expectation early with new families helps establish this mindset without pressure.

I know I mention this a lot, but recognition plays a powerful role in keeping people engaged. A simple thank you, especially when done publicly, reinforces that their effort matters. When parents feel appreciated, they are much more likely to volunteer again and encourage others to do the same.

Finally, using structured sign-ups instead of open-ended requests makes it easier for parents to commit. When they can choose from a list of specific tasks or time slots, the decision becomes straightforward (there are many online tools that make this simple). Pairing this with a friendly, social environment where parents feel connected to each other can naturally increase participation and make volunteering feel like part of a shared experience rather than an obligation.

Thank you for serving. Reach out to your commissioner if you need support in asking others to help you provide a quality, life-changing program to the youth in your community. What you do as a unit leader matters, and commissioners are ready to help.

You have questions? Commissioners have answers!

Reach out by email: commissionerserviceteam@scouting.org



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