

# *A Year in the Life of a Cub Scout...Boy Scout...Venturer*



## **Strengthening Youth, Families, and Neighborhoods**

**A National Program Outcomes Study Conducted by  
Louis Harris & Associates**

**BOY SCOUTS**



**OF AMERICA**





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Humphrey Taylor  
Chairman

August 20, 1998

Dear Reader:

It is with pleasure that we offer you a look at the latest research conducted by Louis Harris & Associates on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). A few years ago, the BSA invited us to assist them in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the beliefs and attitudes held by men and boys in America. That study, entitled *The Values of Men and Boys in America* also revealed that men with strong Scouting backgrounds maintain higher ethical standards, attain higher educational levels -- and show less anti-social behavior -- than do those with no Scouting background.

The findings of *The Values of Men and Boys in America* study led to the question "What is it about BSA programs that leads to such positive outcomes?" The Boy Scouts asked us to accept the challenge of scientifically answering this question, and after two years of research, this document contains our response.

A few important overall findings from the study include:

*Cub Scouting meets or exceeds the expectations* of parents on a variety of factors, including teaching ethical and moral values and parent/son togetherness.

Boy Scouts agree that being a Scout *has increased their self-confidence* and taught them skills that they could not get elsewhere.

Venturers attribute *higher self-esteem and "readiness for the future"* to their experiences in the program.

We believe that as you read the enclosed findings you will gain a keen insight into the practices, environments, and relationships that make BSA programs effective. As a result, you will better understand each program's positive outcomes and effectiveness in the lives of youth.

Sincerely,

Humphrey Taylor





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Boys in first through fifth grades (or ages 7, 8, 9, or 10) may join a Cub Scout pack and be assigned to a den, which is usually made up of boys in a neighborhood who form a natural play group. Tiger Cub dens usually meet twice a month, and Cub Scout and Webelos Scout den meetings are usually held once a week. Cub Scouting emphasizes involvement between boys and their parents, adult leaders, and friends.

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Boy Scouting is available to boys who have completed the fifth grade or who are 11 through 17 years old. The program achieves the BSA’s objectives of developing character, citizenship, and personal fitness qualities among youth by focusing on a vigorous program of outdoor activities.

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Venturing is a program for young men and women ages 14 (who have completed the eighth grade) through 20. The program emphasizes team leadership, life-skills development, outdoor and high-adventure activity, and other areas of interest to the crew members.

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# Introduction

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) exists for the benefit of youth and families. The movement strives to provide the structure and resources needed for the youth of America to learn values, to prepare to make ethical choices, and to achieve their full potential as individuals.

Instilling values and developing a young person's character involves shaping that youth's personal beliefs, attitudes, and opinions. To this end, the programs of the BSA are designed to incorporate experiential learning techniques that strengthen young people's attitudes and actions toward God, family, country, and other people. Moreover, the intent of the BSA's programs is to have a lasting effect on the youth who participate in Scouting—a positive effect that will remain with them for a lifetime.

How well does the BSA achieve its goals? *The Values of Men and Boys in America*, a research study conducted by Louis Harris & Associates on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America in May 1995, found that men and boys who participated in Scouting as youth credit their Scouting experience with many positive effects on their lives and on society in general. The study revealed that men and boys with strong Scouting experience often demonstrate higher ethical and moral standards than non-Scouts.

Because Scouting fosters the development of the whole person—mentally, physically, and morally—the multifaceted nature of the experience makes measuring the specific outcomes of BSA programs an extremely challenging task. However, the importance of measuring and reporting on outcomes continues to grow. The youth, parents, and communities that must decide which organizations to join or support need solid data that validate program effectiveness.

In response to this need, the Boy Scouts of America commissioned Louis Harris & Associates to undertake an important new study aimed at identifying and uncovering the outcomes of three traditional BSA programs: Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing. As a follow-up to the earlier *Values of Men and Boys in America* study, the research summarizes a year in the life of a Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturer and uncovers some of the key reasons behind the positive outcomes of Scouting.

## Elements of Healthy Youth Development

The programs of the BSA contribute to the healthy development of today's young people by providing them with the environment, resources, and relationships they need to grow and learn. This research looks at the “how” of healthy development by addressing a key question that a growing number of organizations concerned with youth development have tried to answer: “What are the specific components or elements of youth development that contribute to healthy, positive outcomes?”

Two organizations in particular, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development and the Search Institute, have focused attention on desirable traits that youth programs should address. The Carnegie Council, after a decade-long research effort, offers the following 10 conditions\* as “fundamental human requirements that must be met if children are to grow up into healthy, constructive adults”:

- Develop sustained, caring relationships with adults.
- Receive guidance in facing serious challenges.
- Become a valued member of a constructive peer group.
- Feel a sense of worth as a person.
- Become socially competent.
- Know how to use support systems.
- Achieve a reliable basis for making informed choices.
- Participate in the constructive (age-related) expression of curiosity and exploration.
- Believe in a promising future with real opportunities.
- Find ways of being useful to others.

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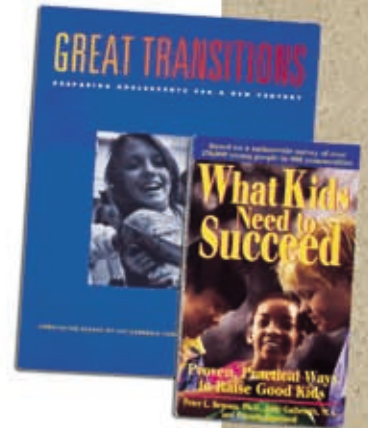
\* Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development; *Great Transitions, Preparing Adolescents for a New Century*, page 49



Similarly, child development researchers at the Search Institute in Minneapolis, Minnesota, have developed the following framework of “developmental assets”\* that give young people a strong foundation for life:

- Support—Receive support from family, teachers, and other adults.
- Empowerment—Feel useful and safe.
- Boundaries and expectations—Move in an environment with rules, structure, and high expectations.
- Constructive use of time—Spend time creatively on hobbies, with friends, and in religious functions.
- Commitment to learning—Engage in learning and spend time daily on schoolwork and other reading.
- Positive values—Learn honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility, as well as to care for others, and act on this knowledge.
- Social competencies—Develop respect for others and become comfortable with people of different cultures.
- Positive identity—Develop a sense of purpose and self-worth.

From the important youth-development variables identified by these two comprehensive sources, several common elements emerge. Integrating these common elements yields six critical elements of healthy youth development.



## Six Critical Elements of Healthy Youth Development

1. Strong personal values and character
2. A positive sense of self-worth and usefulness
3. Caring and nurturing relationships with parents, other adults, and peers
4. A desire to learn
5. Productive/creative use of time
6. Social adeptness

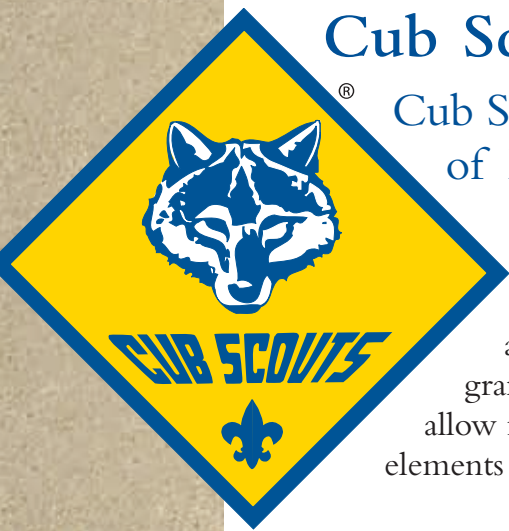
The results of research conducted by Louis Harris & Associates for the Boy Scouts of America demonstrate that each of these important elements is addressed through the Cub Scout program structure of monthly pack meetings, weekly den meetings, and other time spent with a parent or guardian; through the Boy Scout program structure of troop meetings, patrol meetings, advancement work, and time devoted to Scouting activities outside of meetings; and through the Venturing program structure of crew meetings, group interactions, and related outdoor activities.

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\* Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.; Judy Galbraith, M.A.; and Pamela Espeland; *What Kids Need to Succeed*; Search Institute and Free Spirit Publishing, 1995

Although living in the most prosperous and technologically advanced society in history, America's youth have paradoxically demonstrated a growing inability to meet the challenges of personal responsibility, respect for others, personal integrity, self-discipline, and self-esteem. Our young people are struggling with a crisis of character. It is the goal of the Boy Scouts of America to meet that crisis with the structure and resources our youth need to learn values, make ethical choices, and achieve their full potential.





# Cub Scouting

## Cub Scouting's Contributions to Critical Elements of Healthy Youth Development

One element of the research program was designed to monitor and learn from a year in a Cub Scout's life. Parents were surveyed about their expectations in the fall as Cub Scouting began, and about their actual experience the following summer after almost a year in the program. Monthly surveys were collected on Cub Scout activities. The data allow for an analysis of program outcomes as they relate to the six critical elements of healthy youth development.

### Expectations Versus Experiences: A Parental Perspective

The results of the Cub Scout panel study reveal that the great majority of parents of Cub Scouts have high and comprehensive expectations of Cub Scouting, and that their expectations are amply met.

Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with Cub Scouting because they see the outcomes of the program positively influencing the lives of their sons. In particular, they acknowledge that a year of Cub Scouting is a great learning experience for their sons.

<b>Expectations vs. Experiences</b> (percentage of parents who rate as important and agree Cub Scouting delivered)		
	Expected	Experienced in Cub Scouting
Have fun	98%	97%
Develop new skills	98%	96%
Learn to respect the feelings of others	97%	95%
Be in a friendly/safe environment	96%	98%
Learn social skills	96%	95%
Learn moral/ethical values	96%	95%
Be with positive role models	95%	96%
Become involved in community service	94%	90%
Develop more parent/son togetherness	93%	97%
Develop a sense of belonging	91%	96%
Gain a "friendly discipline"	89%	94%
Better than watching TV	85%	98%

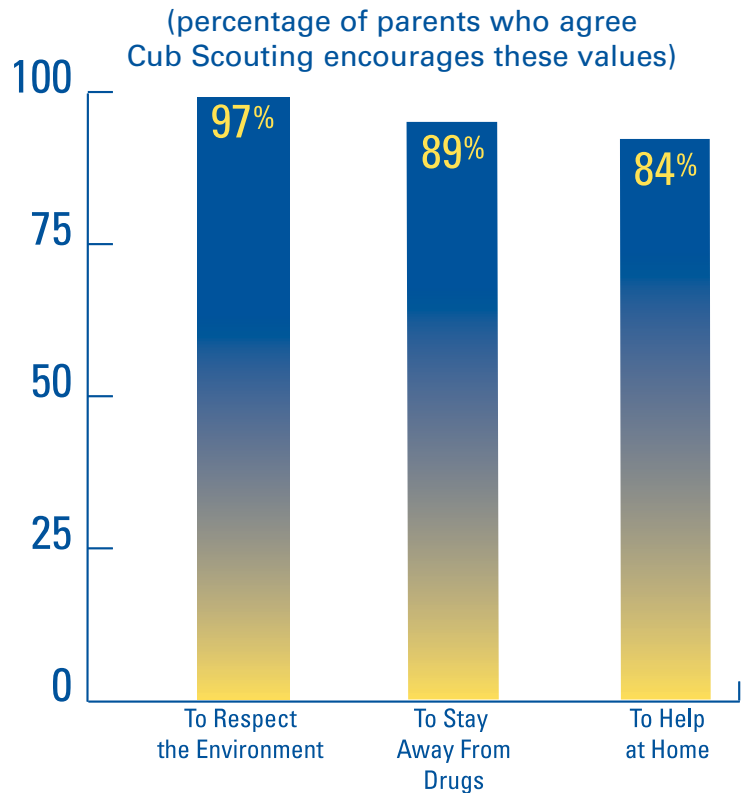
## 1. Strong Personal Values and Character

Almost all parents and guardians (96 percent) identified “learning moral/ethical values” as an “important” reason for involving their boys in Cub Scouting. Specific character-related values that parents see communicated through Cub Scouting include respecting the environment (97 percent), staying away from drugs (89 percent), and helping at home (84 percent).

One definition of character is “the willingness to do what is right, regardless of circumstances.” This presumes a knowledge of what is the right thing to do. Cub Scouting teaches boys the right thing to do, in part by encouraging boys to reflect on lessons learned through Cub Scouting activities. This is a relatively common event among boys at weekly den meetings (44 percent) and for almost one-quarter at monthly pack meetings (22 percent).

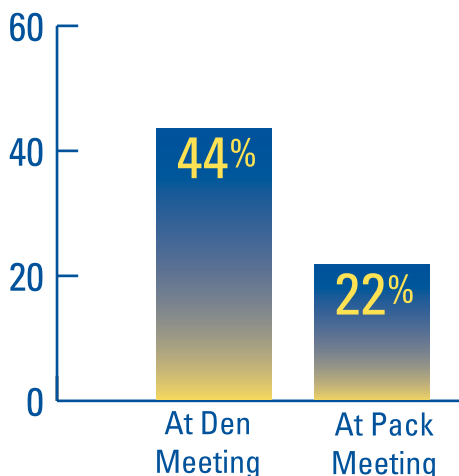
Patriotism or pride in being an American is a value that Cub Scouting seeks to instill. The Pledge of Allegiance is a common component of meetings, with 62 percent of Cub Scouts saying the pledge at typical pack meetings.

## Personal Values and Character: Values Developed Through Cub Scouting



## Personal Values and Character: Reflect on Lessons Learned

(percentage of Cub Scouts at a typical meeting)





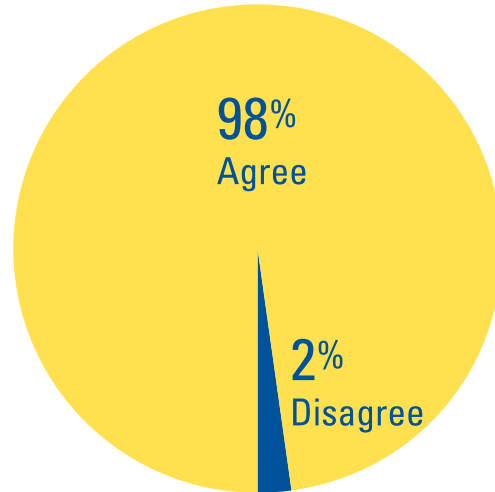
## 2. A Positive Sense of Self-Worth and Usefulness

Cub Scouting empowers boys by assuring them that they are valued, giving them useful roles in their communities, and encouraging them to serve others. Cub Scouting is able to meet this need by first establishing a foundation of safety and security that contributes to self-esteem. Basically, all parents agree that Cub Scouting provides a “safe, friendly environment for their sons.”

“Involvement in community service” and “a sense of belonging for my son” are important to parents (94 and 91 percent, respectively) when considering whether their boys will join Cub Scouting. At least nine of 10 parents agree that the program provides their sons with a sense of belonging (96 percent) and encourages them to become involved in community service (90 percent). Seven percent of Cub Scouts participate in a community service project in an average month, which is equivalent to more than 1.8 million service project experiences per year, nationwide. Parents see service projects such as food drives (Scouting for Food) and environmental cleanups in lakes and parks as contributing greatly to their sons’ experiences.

### Self-Worth and Usefulness: Safe, Friendly Environment

(percentage of parents who agree/disagree  
Cub Scouting provides safe environment)



*“Scouting helps build self-esteem. It teaches the boys about community.”*

—Mother of a Cub Scout





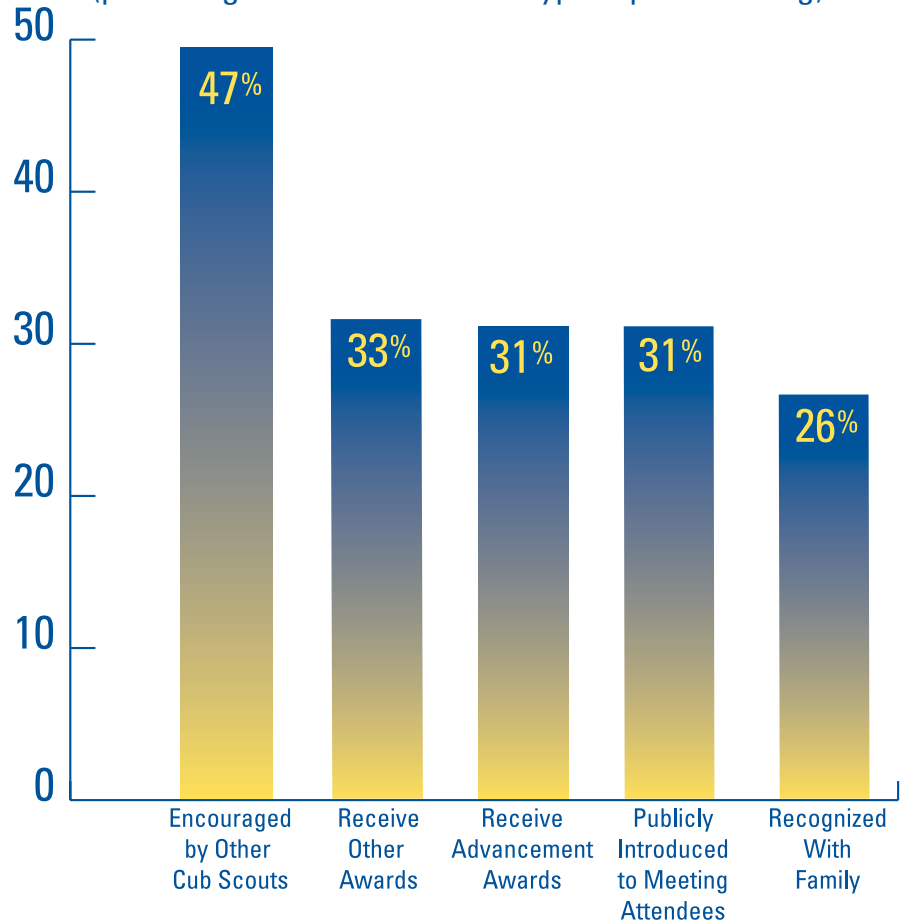
Cub Scouts begin learning leadership skills at an early age. Many fulfill vital roles at den meetings by leading activities and sharing their ideas for activities. More than half of all Cub Scouts (55 percent) have their ideas used in planning activities for the den. On average, Cub Scouts take a leadership role in 37 percent of pack meeting activities.

Being recognized as a valued member of a group is important to the development of a sense of self-worth. At a typical pack meeting, nearly half of Cub Scouts (47 percent) receive verbal encouragement from other Cub Scouts. One-quarter (26 percent) stand up and are recognized with their families.

Feelings of self-worth are closely tied to achievement. Cub Scouts are encouraged to set and achieve goals. At a typical den meeting, more than half of the boys (54 percent) complete the final steps toward a specific achievement that moves them closer to the larger goal of advancing in rank. About a third of Cub Scouts receive advancement awards and nonadvancement awards at a typical pack meeting.

## Self-Worth and Usefulness: Forms of Encouragement Received

(percentage of Cub Scouts at a typical pack meeting)



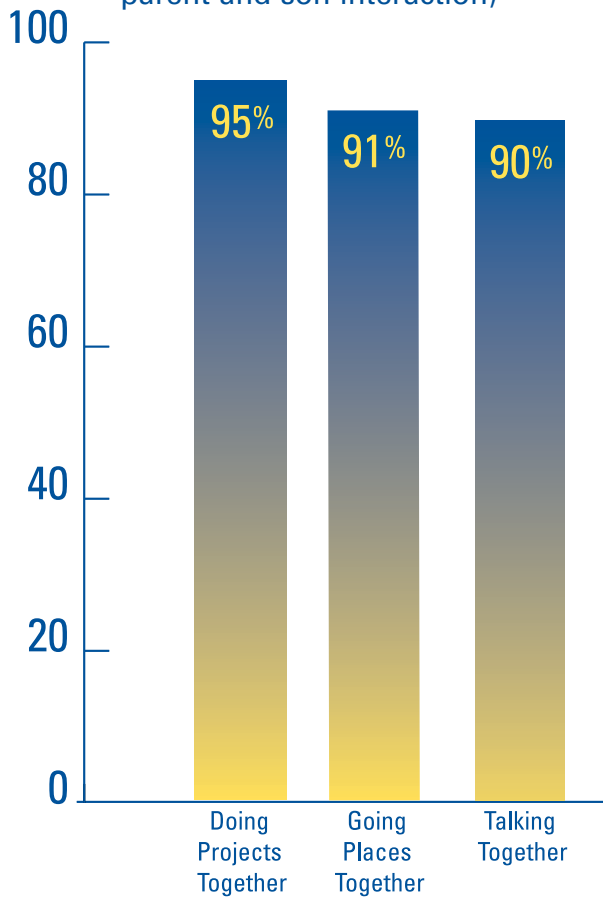
*"Cub Scouting builds self-esteem—each week a different kid can be a star."*

—Father of a Cub Scout



## Caring Relationships: Encouraging Interaction Between Parents and Sons

(percentage of parents who agree Cub Scouting encourages types of parent and son interaction)



## 3. Caring, Nurturing Relationships With Parents, Other Adults, and Peers

Cub Scouting offers a caring environment in which boys can develop relationships with parents and other adults, and a structure that encourages family support and open lines of communication. Parents and guardians cite positive role models and family togetherness as important reasons for joining the program. When asked to rate Cub Scouting in these areas, 96 and 97 percent, respectively, agree that the program delivers these elements.

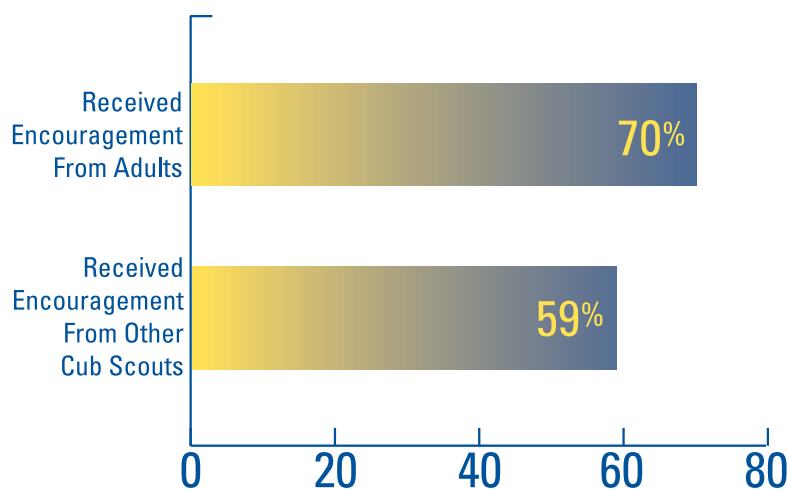
Parents agree that Cub Scouting encourages them to engage in one-on-one interaction and communication with their sons. Examples include “doing projects together” (95 percent), “going places together” (91 percent), and “talking together” (90 percent).

Boys often begin projects at den meetings and complete them at home with the help of a parent. Such projects become the catalyst for parents and boys—frequently joined by siblings and friends—to interact with each other on an informal, relaxed basis.

Parental involvement at pack meetings is high, with two-thirds (64 percent) of all Cub Scouts having a parent attend each pack meeting. A majority of parents (93 percent) note that their Cub Scouts talk with them about what they do after meetings and special trips.

## Caring Relationships: Encouragement From Adults and Other Cub Scouts

(percentage based on a typical den meeting)





Cub Scouting gives boys a chance to form supportive relationships with people other than their parents. In more than three-quarters (79 percent) of pack meetings, boys engage in an activity led by an adult other than their parent, an interaction that helps develop healthy, supportive relationships between boys and their mentors. During an average den meeting, 70 percent of Cub Scouts receive verbal encouragement from an adult other than a parent and 59 percent receive encouragement from other Cub Scouts.

#### 4. A Desire to Learn

For 98 percent of parents, “learning new skills” is an important reason for involving their boys in Cub Scouting. After a year in the program, 96 percent indicate that their sons “developed new skills” and 93 percent agree that Cub Scouting helped their boys “develop new interests.” Similarly, 95 percent of parents agree that the Cub Scouting experience gave their sons “a desire to learn new and different things.”

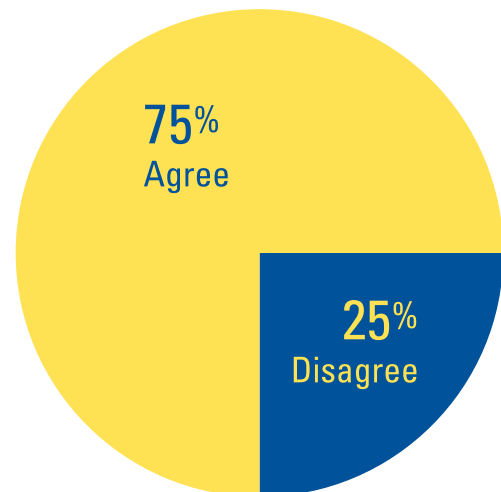
Cub Scouting builds the reading skills that are the foundation for higher learning. Most parents (75 percent) say the program encourages them to “read together” with their sons.

One in five Cub Scouts (20 percent) participates in educational or school-related activities each week because of their involvement in Cub Scouting.



#### Desire to Learn: Reading Together

(percentage of parents who agree Cub Scouting encourages reading with sons)

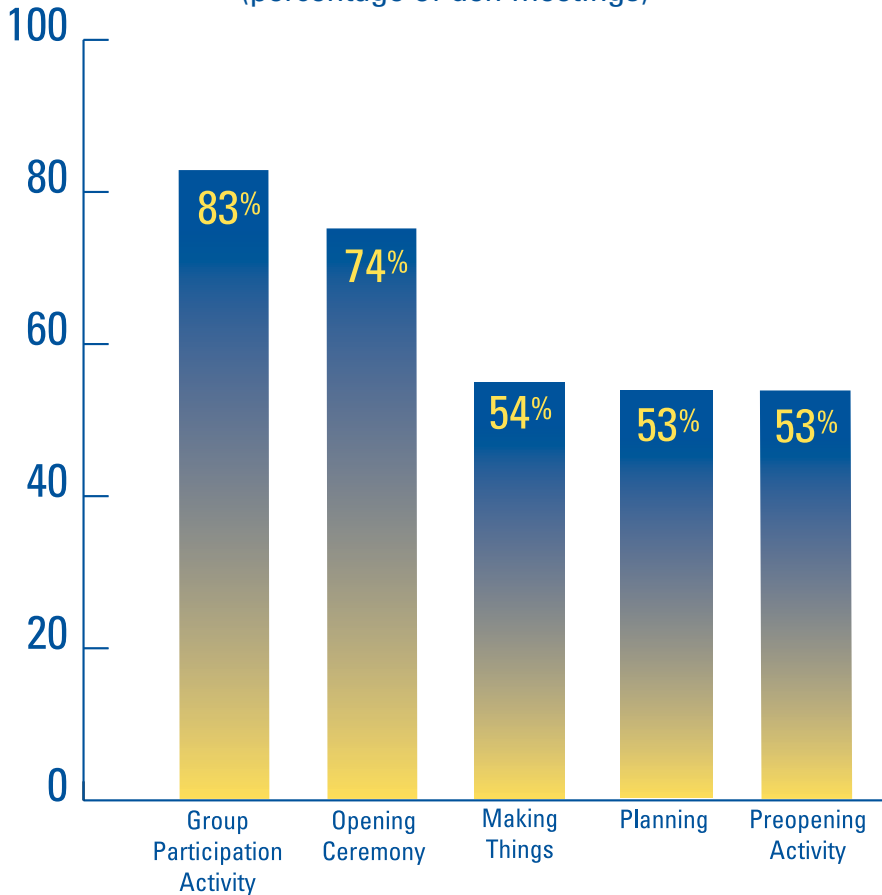


*“Scouting gave my son and I a lot of time to talk and share stories about my childhood.”*

—Father of a Cub Scout

## Productive/Creative Use of Time: Creative Activities During Den Meetings

(percentage of den meetings)



## 5. Productive/Creative Use of Time

Cub Scouting allows boys to constructively use their time in myriad child-centered learning activities. The program provides opportunities for involvement in art, music, theater, and religious activities. Nearly all parents (98 percent) agree that Cub Scouting is “better than watching TV.”

During an average month, 83 percent of Cub Scout den meetings include a group participation activity. Three-quarters (74 percent) of den meetings begin with an opening ceremony. More than half of all dens “make something” (54 percent), plan for the monthly pack meeting (53 percent), and include a pre-opening activity (53 percent).

Receiving recognition for hard work and achievement is a key part of the Cub Scouting experience. As noted previously, one-third of Cub Scouts receive recognition for learning life skills through advancement awards (31 percent) and nonadvancement awards (33 percent) at each pack meeting. These accomplishments may include planning functions, preparing equipment, participating in a team or group, cooking, emergency communications, and basic first aid. Such accomplishments prepare boys to meet greater challenges in the future.

Cub Scouts also participate in many Scouting-related activities outside of meetings. Organized group activities are the most frequently reported Scouting activities (60 percent) outside of den or pack meetings. On average, a Cub Scout spends 3.9 hours per week on activities such as field trips, special events, activity badge work, and camping.



Most Cub Scouts (60 percent) are in uniform at den and pack meetings. Wearing a Scout uniform gives boys a sense of group unity and belonging while also helping to remove socioeconomic barriers that might be expressed through attire.



## 6. Social Adeptness

Cub Scouting helps boys develop social skills and competencies by providing opportunities for them to plan and lead activities, work in groups, and interact with boys of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. During an average month, Cub Scouts learn teamwork by planning and collaborating at den and pack meetings. On average, more than half (53 percent) of pack meeting activities involve boys working and playing in groups that include youth of different races.

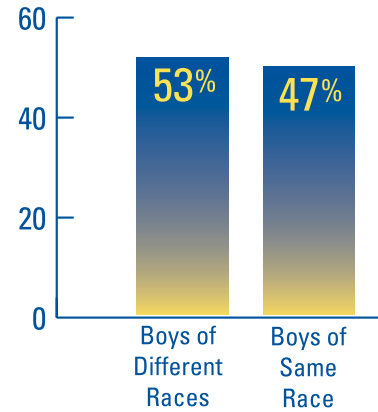
At the end of a Cub Scout year, most parents report that the program helped their sons learn social skills such as how to get along with others (96 percent), to respect the feelings of others (95 percent), how to treat others (95 percent), and better personal habits (77 percent).

More than nine of 10 parents (92 percent) say that group participation activities at pack meetings in which social skills and competencies are developed contribute most to the overall positive experiences of Cub Scouts.

Boys take part in small-group discussions as they collaborate in planning and decision making for pack meetings. At least half of Cub Scouts have their ideas used in the planning of pack meetings (58 percent); for “make something” activities (54 percent), songs, or games (50 percent); or for group participation activities (50 percent).

### Social Adeptness: Diversity at Pack Meetings

(percentage of pack meeting activities)

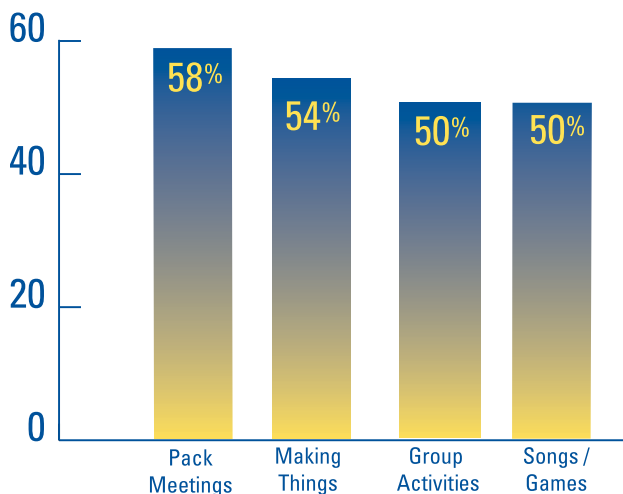


*“They are learning things that they will use when they grow up.”*

—Father of a Cub Scout

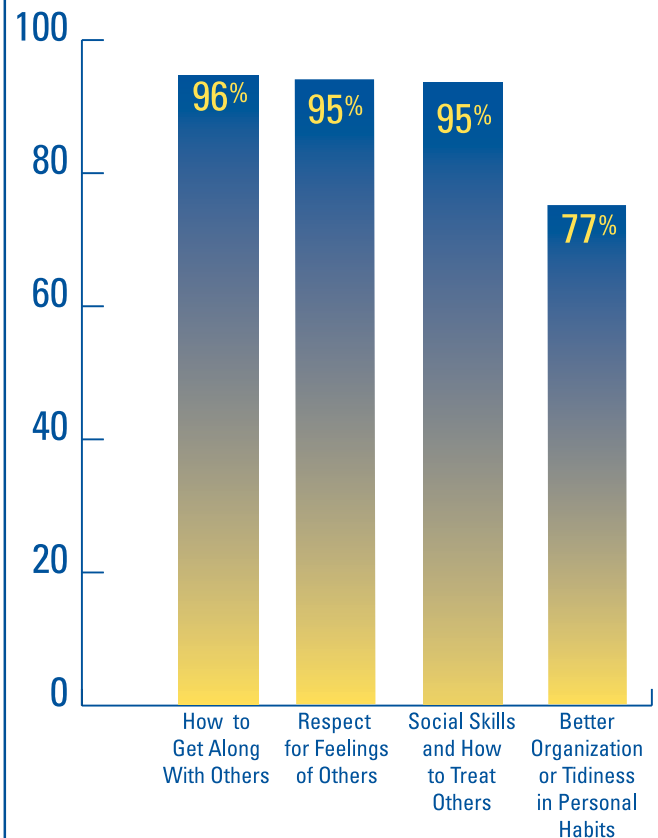
### Social Adeptness: Collaboration of Boys in Planning

(percentage based on a typical pack meeting)



### Social Adeptness: Skills and Competencies Learned

(percentage of parents who agree Cub Scouting encourages these skills)



# Boy Scouting



## Boy Scouting's Contributions to Critical Elements of Healthy Youth Development

This segment of the study was designed to monitor and learn from a year in a Boy Scout's life. By using an initial survey among parents and monthly surveys among Boy Scouts, the data allow for an analysis of program outcomes as they relate to the six critical elements of healthy youth development.





# 1. Strong Personal Values and Character

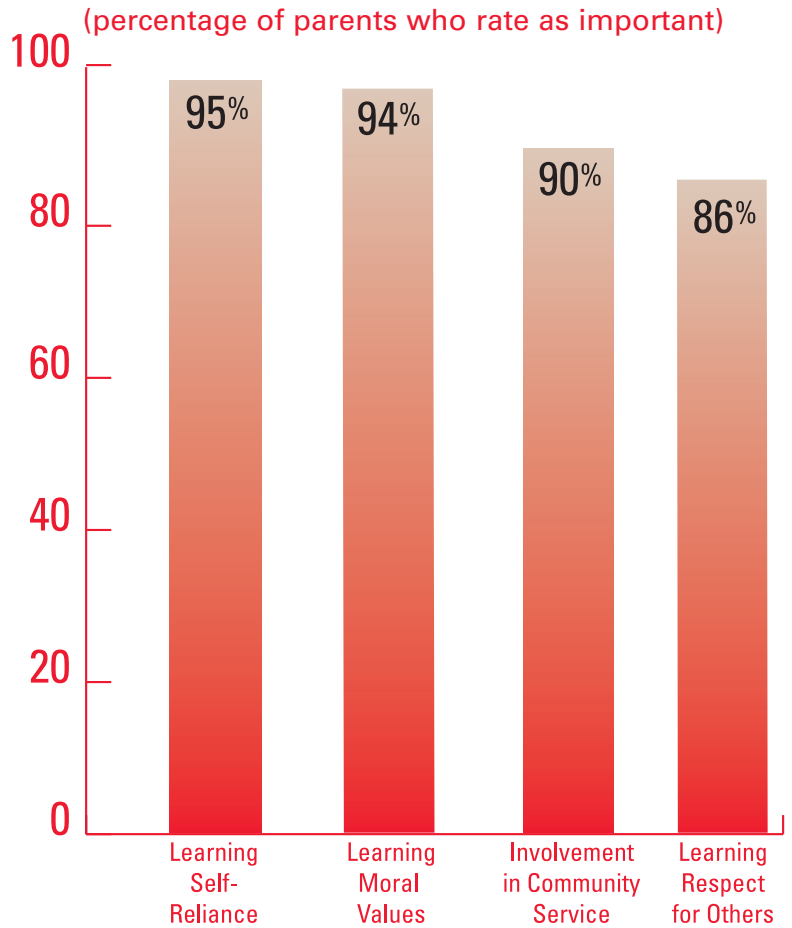
Building strong personal values and character in young people is central to the Boy Scout mission. Boy Scouts pledge to uphold the Scout Oath and Scout Law, which explicitly state the core values to which members aspire. Program activities teach, support, and encourage these values.

The chances for boys to learn personal values and develop character are reasons parents want their sons in Scouting. In fact, almost all parents (94 percent) assert that “learning moral and ethical values” is an important reason to have their sons in Scouting. Only “learning self-reliance and independence” is noted as important by a larger proportion of parents (95 percent). Related reasons parents want their sons in the program include “involve-

*“I want him to grow up as a man with the Boy Scout values.”*

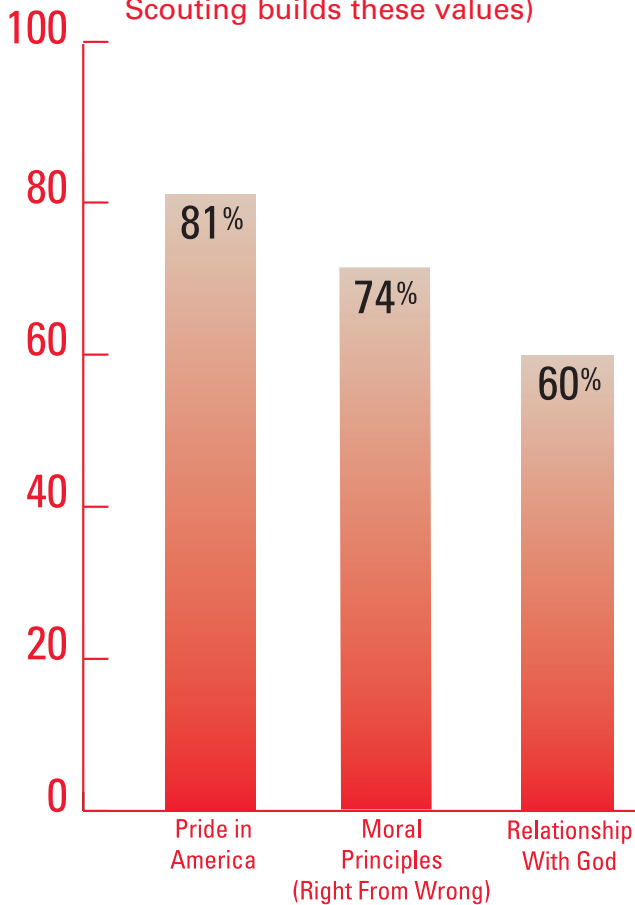
—Father of a Boy Scout

## Personal Values and Character: Reasons to Join Boy Scouting



## Personal Values and Character: Patriotism, Integrity, Faith

(percentage of Boy Scouts who agree  
Scouting builds these values)



*"I want my son to be around good kids and adults while growing up. The statement 'you are your environment' is absolutely true."*

—Father of a Boy Scout

ment in community service" (90 percent) and "learning respect for others" (86 percent).

Boy Scouts themselves strongly suggest that the organization's core values of faith in God, personal integrity, and patriotism are conveyed in the program. A majority agree that "Scouting encourages me to take pride in America" (81 percent), "being a Scout helps me to tell the difference between right and wrong" (74 percent), and "being in Scouting causes me to strengthen my relationship with God" (60 percent).

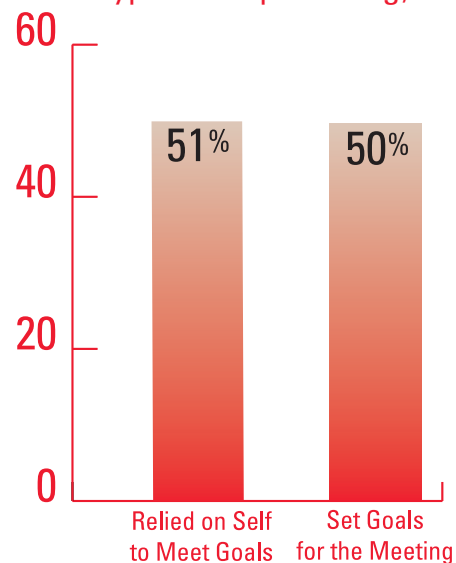
Many Scouts practice their religious and patriotic duties while on outings. On a typical troop or patrol outing (camping, hiking, or other outing), about one-third of Scouts take part in religious ceremonies (33 percent) or participate in flag presentations (32 percent).

## 2. A Positive Sense of Self-Worth and Usefulness

Adolescence is a time when high self-confidence can be critical for successfully navigating the challenges of young adulthood. Boy Scouts and parents agree that

## Self-Worth and Usefulness: Goal Setting

(percentage of Scouts at  
a typical troop meeting)





Scouting contributes to the self-confidence of boys in the program. Eight of 10 Boy Scouts (78 percent) agree with the statement, “being a Boy Scout makes me feel more confident in myself.” Similarly, 95 percent of parents say that “a chance to learn self-reliance and independence” is an important reason for having their sons involved with Scouting.

At troop meetings, Scouts build self-esteem by setting goals and successfully achieving them. At a typical troop meeting, half (50 percent) of Boy Scouts set goals for themselves for the meeting. The same proportion (51 percent) rely on themselves to accomplish their goals.

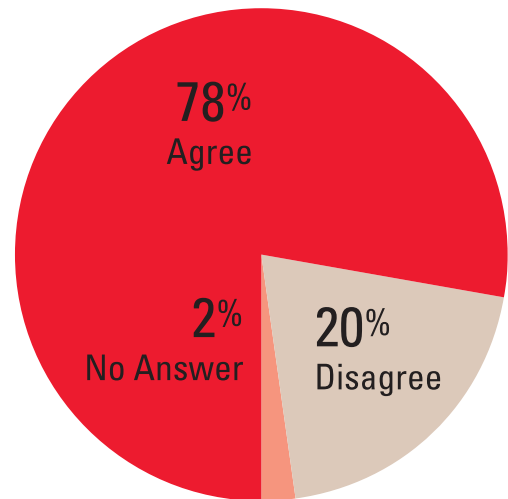
Although boys in Scouting are encouraged to stretch and challenge themselves, the willingness and confidence to take such strides depend on a basic sense of safety and security. If boys do not feel they can be trusting with one another, then their development will be inhibited. Almost all parents (94 percent) agree that having their sons in a friendly, safe environment is an important reason to have their sons in Scouting.



*“A very positive experience, it has helped him to mature and become a leader.”*  
—Mother of a Boy Scout

### Self-Worth and Usefulness: Gaining Confidence

(percentage of Boy Scouts who agree Scouting builds self-confidence)



### 3. Caring, Nurturing Relationships With Parents, Other Adults, and Peers

Family involvement, mentoring relationships, and teamwork are the methods through which Boy Scouting encourages the development of caring and nurturing relationships among boys, their peers, and adults. Boys become connected within the group and gain a sense of shared interest between themselves and others.

Parents indicate that the relationship benefits of the Boy Scout program are key reasons they support their sons' involvement in Scouting in addition to the importance of a friendly, safe environment (94 percent). Seeing positive role models in Scoutmasters and having a chance to meet new friends are each cited by 88 percent of parents as reasons for their sons to join Scouting.

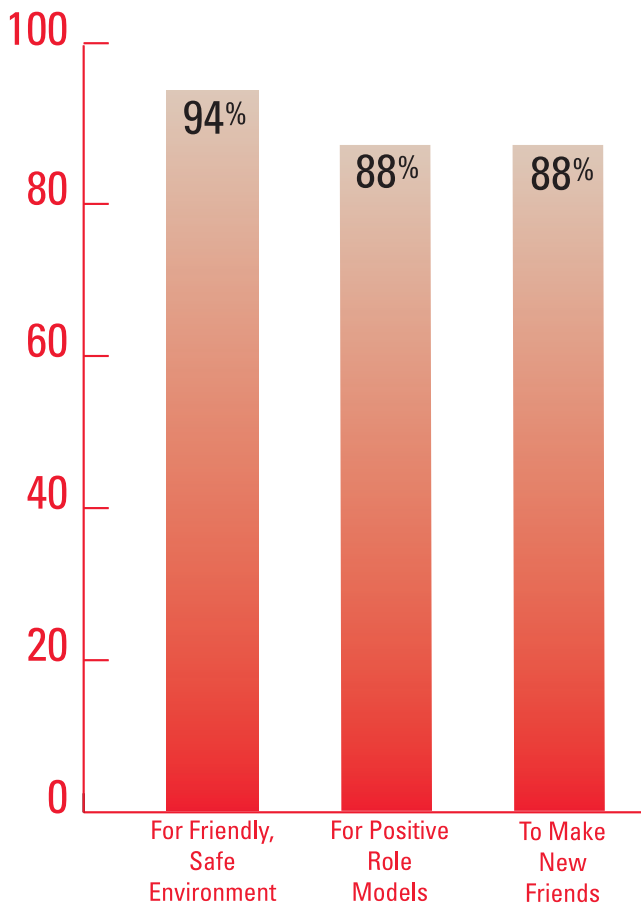
Boy Scouting fosters interaction and communication between parents and boys by creating shared interests and activities. A clear majority work together on Scouting projects (85 percent) and talk together about meeting experiences (83 percent). In addition, for nine of 10 parents (91 percent), Scouting encourages togetherness in the simple act of riding together to troop meetings.

The involvement of adults in a young person's life serves to instill priorities. As boys mature into teens, they begin to make more independent decisions. They base those decisions on what has been modeled for them. Scout leaders offer boys a model of adults who truly care about them and who are willing to demonstrate their commitment by serving as volunteer leaders.

For its role in healthy youth development, the importance of positive verbal reinforcement should not be underestimated. Boys who are encouraged and complimented for giving their best effort gain a sense of value and belonging. Boy Scouts receive positive feedback from adults and peers at troop meetings. At a typical troop meeting, six of 10

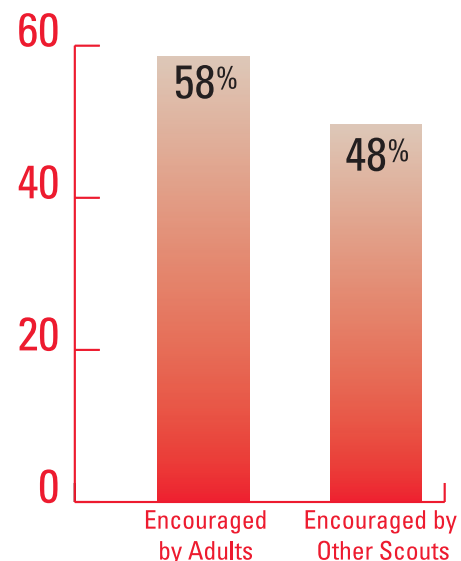
#### Caring Relationships: Reasons to Join Boy Scouting

(percentage of parents who rate as important)



#### Caring Relationships: Encouragement Received

(percentage of Boy Scouts based on a typical troop meeting)





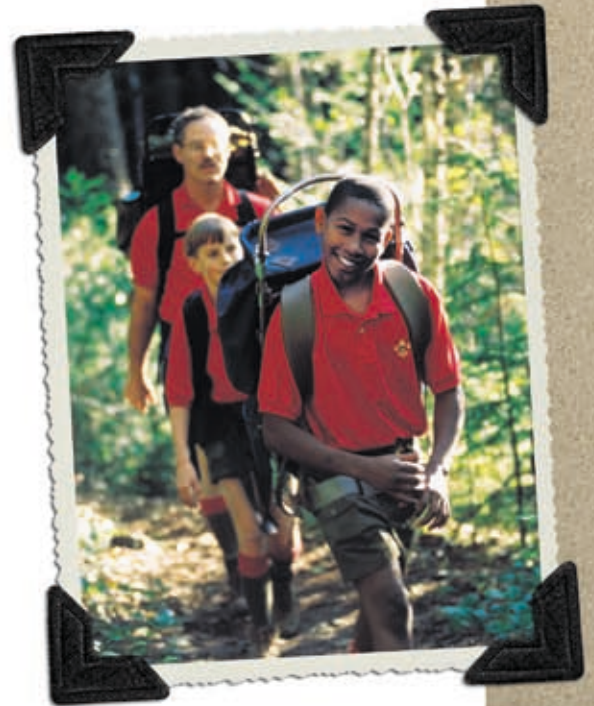
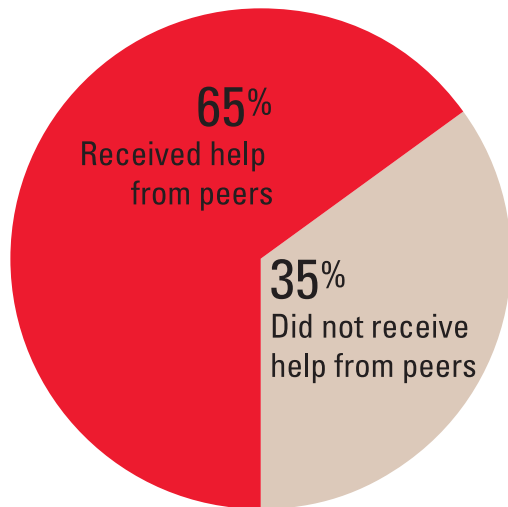
Scouts (58 percent) are encouraged to do their best by a leader or other adult, and half (48 percent) receive such encouragement from other Scouts.

Outside of regular troop meetings, Boy Scouts build relationships on troop and patrol outings, which include hikes, camping expeditions, and special projects. On these occasions, Scouts participate in a variety of activities, from planning and packing for an outing to setting up tents, cooking meals, and cleaning up camp areas. Overall, two-thirds of Boy Scouts (65 percent) work together on these activities. Also, on average, four of 10 Scouts (41 percent) work with adults on these activities and outings.

The finding that boys on outings commonly work together with peers and adults indicates that Scouting serves as a conduit for cooperation and fosters interdependent relationships. As a result, boys experience a sense of accountability to one another while also learning the synergistic value of a team approach—the total effect becomes greater than the sum of the individual efforts. In such environments, each individual’s unique assets are identified and valued.

### Caring Relationships: Peer Help and Support

(percentage of Boy Scouts  
during outings/activities)



*“There are things learned in Scouting which a boy cannot readily pick up elsewhere.”*

—Father of a Boy Scout

## 4. A Desire to Learn

Boy Scouts and parents are drawn to Scouting because of the opportunities it affords for learning and exploring new things. Scouts credit the program with teaching them important life skills. Almost nine of 10 (88 percent) agree that “Scouting has taught me skills I would not have learned anywhere else.” Furthermore, the boys recognize the value of what they learn in Scouting. A majority agree that the things they learn in Scouting will help them get good jobs (85 percent) and get into college (83 percent). Also, Boy Scouts associate the program with benefiting them in school. Six of 10 (60 percent) agree with the statement “The things I learn in Scouting help me study better at school.”

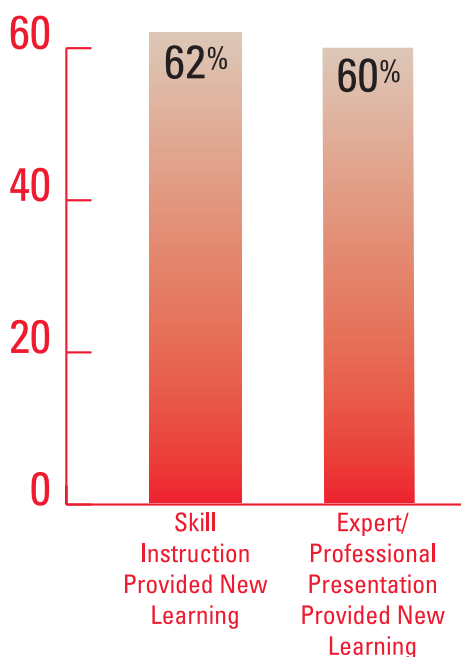
A key benefit to members of Boy Scouting is learning new things. At a typical troop meeting, more than one-half of boys (53 percent) learn something new from their participation. New learning experiences most commonly occur during skills instruction (62 percent) and special presentations by experts or professionals (60 percent).

The true measure of learning is evidenced by a willingness and ability to teach others. Since learning never ends, the process of instructing others serves as its own teacher. At a typical Boy Scout meeting, four of 10 Scouts teach a skill to another Scout (41 percent) or learn a new skill from another Scout (39 percent).



### Desire to Learn: Learning New Things

(percentage of Boy Scouts who learn something new from skill instruction/presentations at typical troop meeting)



*“I am proud that he is a Scout. It is the only activity that promotes community service projects and thinking of others before yourself.”*

—Mother of a Boy Scout

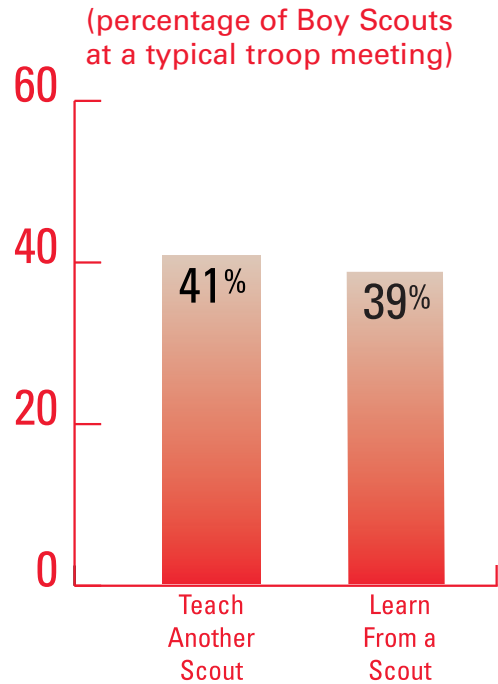


Because of the numerous learning opportunities it provides, many people have described the outdoors as “the classroom for Boy Scouts.” Learning often comes through experiencing new places. Scout outings such as camping and hiking also provide opportunities for learning new skills and visiting new places. During a typical Scout outing, almost three of 10 Scouts (27 percent) go somewhere they have never been before. About one of five learns to do something he has never tried before (20 percent) or teaches another Scout a new skill (19 percent).

*“He is learning lots of different skills that he has never used before, and he is interested in what he learns.”*

—Mother of a Boy Scout

## Desire to Learn: Peer-to-Peer Mentoring



## 5. Productive/Creative Use of Time

Scouts and parents alike praise the array of enriching activities that Scouting provides through troop meetings, special outings, and activities at home. These activities draw youth to the program, capture their attention and enthusiasm, teach them new skills, challenge them, and prepare them for the future.

Boys overwhelmingly cite the Scouting program activities as the key contributors to their decisions to become Boy Scouts. Eighty percent say “liking the activities Scouts do” and “wanting to go on hikes/trips or outings” influenced their decision to join.

Similarly, enriching activities are key reasons parents want their sons in Boy Scouting. Parents value and point to “fun and adventure” and “involvement in community service projects” (cited by 96 and 90 percent, respectively) as reasons to have their sons belong to Scout troops. Also, a majority of parents say that Scouting is a positive alternative to “watching TV” (79 percent) and “playing video games” (74 percent).

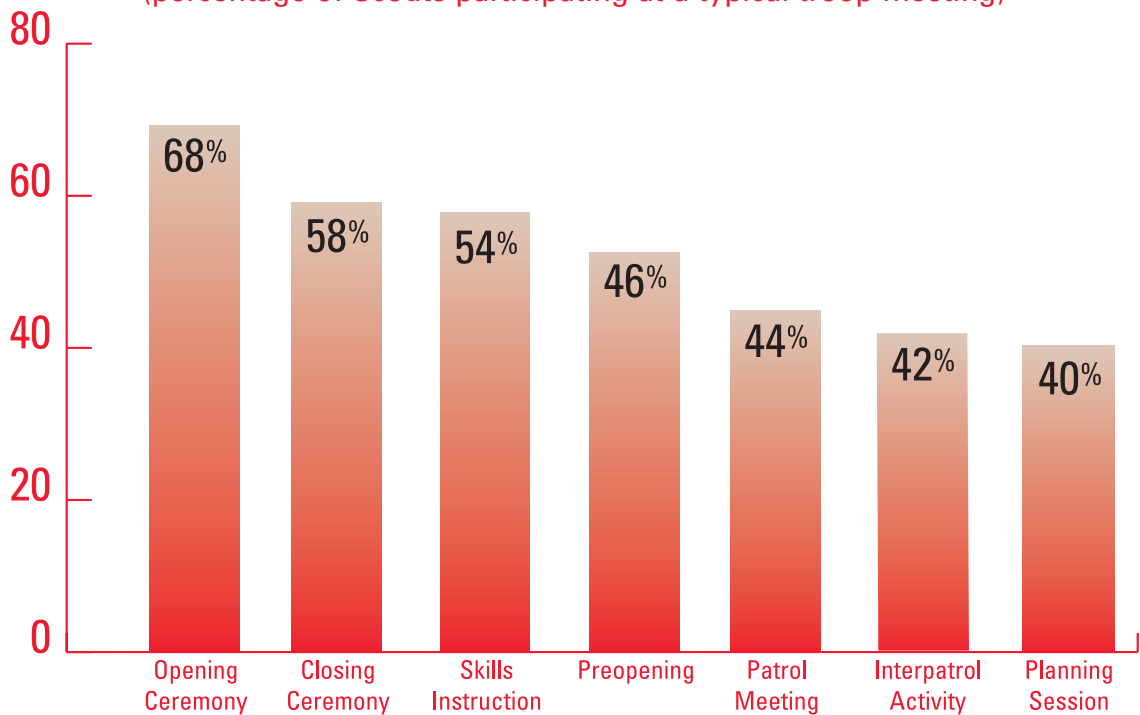
A consistent core set of activities is common at Boy Scout troop meetings. Maintaining a common structure gives boys a sense of boundaries, which in turn frees them to focus on establishing personal goals to accomplish within the meeting framework. A majority of boys participate in formal openings such as flag ceremonies or the Pledge of Allegiance (68 percent); skills instruction, such as learning to use computers or a global positioning device (54 percent); and formal closing ceremonies that might involve planning sessions for future events (58 percent).

Other common elements of troop meetings that contribute to a Scout’s learning process include preopening activities (46



### Productive/Creative Use of Time: Common Activities During Troop Meetings

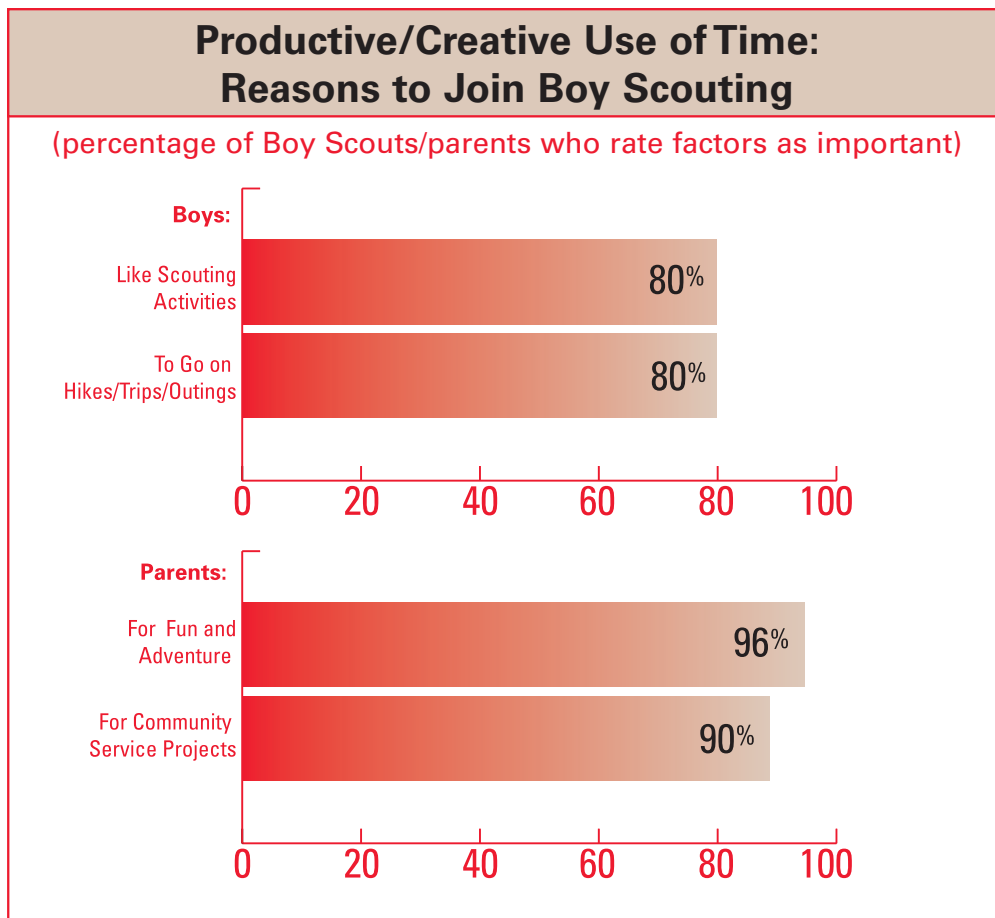
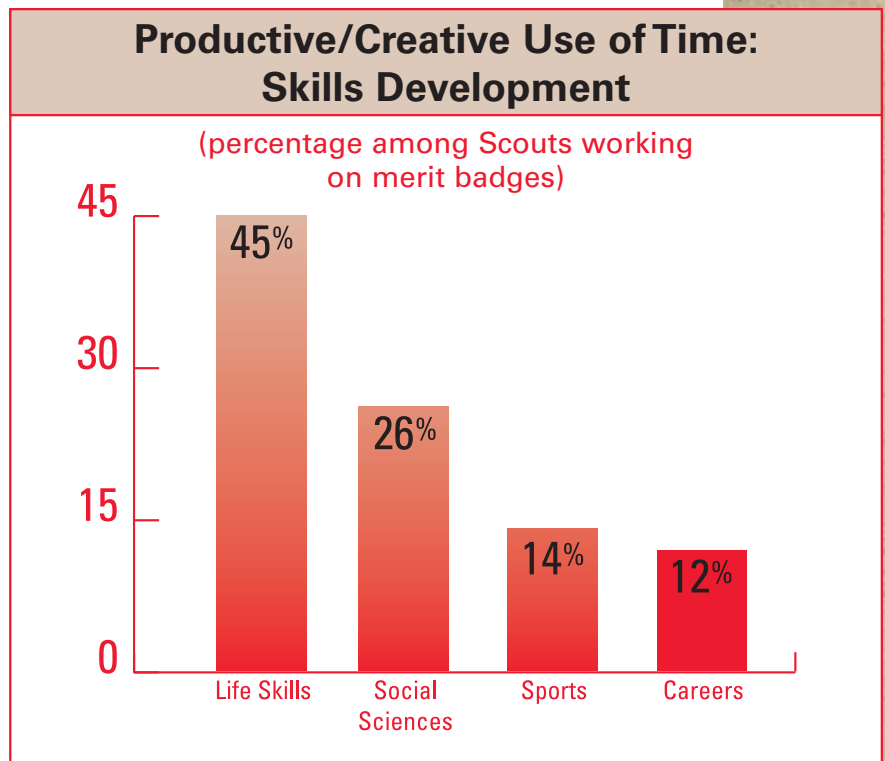
(percentage of Scouts participating at a typical troop meeting)



percent), patrol meetings (44 percent), inter-patrol activities (42 percent), and planning of trips and outings (40 percent).

Some time at each Boy Scout meeting is devoted to advancement and merit badge work. These activities are designed to help young men develop skills and acquire knowledge that will benefit them in other aspects of their lives. At a typical meeting, about one-quarter of Scouts devote time to these program elements (27 percent on advancement requirements and 24 percent on merit badges). Common merit badges worked toward include those in the categories of life skills/personal development (45 percent), social sciences (26 percent), sports/athletics (14 percent), and career exploration (12 percent).

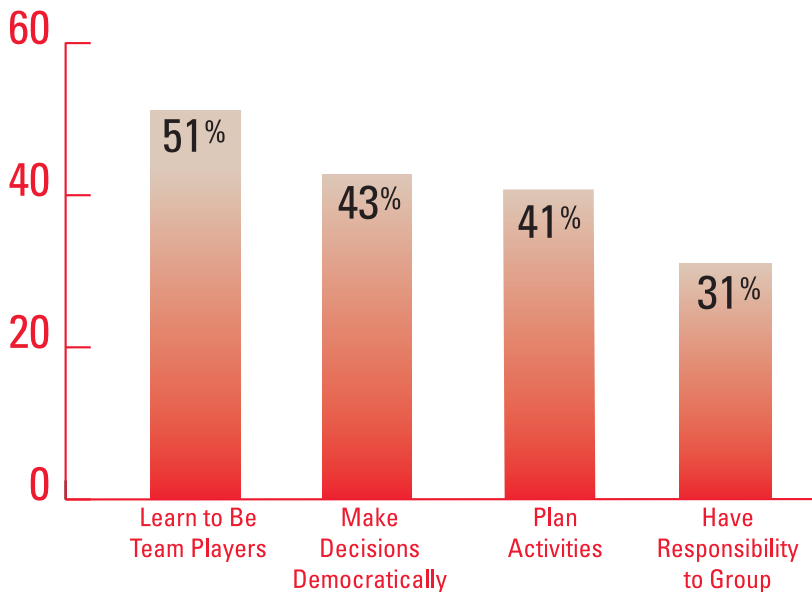
Also, one of five Scouts (20 percent) per month participates in meetings in which an expert or professional makes a special presentation. These presentations are important because they expose boys to skills and knowledge that expand their attitudes toward the opportunities in life. A belief in such future opportunities for personal growth is a key to healthy development.





## Social Adeptness: Working With Others

(percentage of Scouts at a typical troop meeting)



*"My son needed Scouting to develop social skills away from his family. He has succeeded beyond expectations and is now a well-liked, personable young man."*

—Mother of a Boy Scout

## 6. Social Adeptness

Working in groups, accepting leadership responsibility, setting and accomplishing goals, preparing for a job or for college—each of these life skills is taught by the Boy Scouts of America. Boy Scouting uses such experiences to foster the development of social and relationship skills needed for success later in life.

Scouts indicate that during typical troop meetings, they work with others in the practice of such life skills as learning to be a team player (51 percent), democratic decision making (43 percent), planning activities (41 percent), and taking responsibility for ensuring that equipment or supplies are available (31 percent). Notably,

many of these experiences require the boys to interact and cooperate with others.

The close interaction and interdependence among boys in Scout troops effectively meets the need to belong. More than half of boys join Scouting to “be part of a group or team” (54 percent) or to “make new friends” (52 percent). Being a part of a troop (i.e., a team) teaches boys to value and respect other people and to understand how they benefit the lives of others.



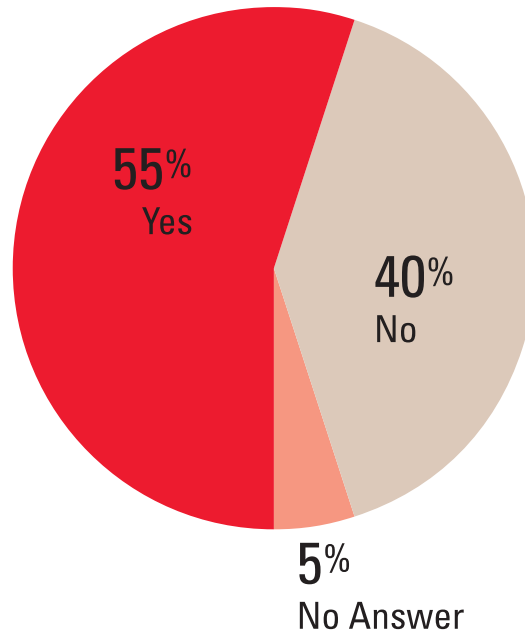
Leadership skills are a primary product of the Boy Scouting experience. At any given time, more than half (55 percent) of all Boy Scouts hold a leadership position in their troop or patrol. These positions encompass a variety of duties, some for troops and some for patrols. The most common include patrol leaders, assistant patrol leaders, quartermasters, and scribes. Additionally, three of 10 (33 percent) take a leadership role for an activity at a typical troop meeting.

“Be Prepared” is the Scout motto. The findings indicate that Boy Scouts agree the program is preparing them for a successful future. A majority of Scouts agree with the statements “The things I learn in Scouting will help me get a good job” (85 percent); “The things I learn in Scouting will help me get into college” (83 percent); and “In our meetings, we set goals for the future” (73 percent).

Additionally, boys in Scouting get the chance to learn from people who are different from themselves. Approximately three-quarters (74 percent) agree that “In Scouting, I learn to get along with people who are different from me.”

## Social Adeptness: Leadership Roles

(percentage of Boy Scouts who hold leadership positions)



*“I believe being a Scout will encourage my son to follow his goals and strengthen his values.”*

—Mother of a Boy Scout



# Venturing

## Venturing's Contributions to Critical Elements of Healthy Youth Development

Venturing is specifically designed to incorporate the six experience areas of citizenship, leadership, fitness, social, outdoor, and service. The research confirms that Venturers consider these six experience areas important both to their decisions to join the program and to their positive experiences in Venturing.

Analysis of Venturers' activities, relationships, and experiences in the program demonstrates successful outcomes in meeting the six critical elements of healthy youth development.





## 1. Strong Personal Values and Character

The goals of the Venturing program include developing skill in ethical decision making, instilling stable personal values, and encouraging the ability and desire to help other people.

The opportunity to practice ethical decision making arises in Venturing when the crews are faced with decisions about right and wrong. Almost eight of 10 Venturers (79 percent) indicate that their group deals with such a decision during a typical three-month period.

More than half of Venturers (56 percent) participate in a service project during a typical three-month period. Service projects commonly take the form of property cleanups (42 percent), food drives (23 percent), blood drives (19 percent), and working with the elderly (15 percent).

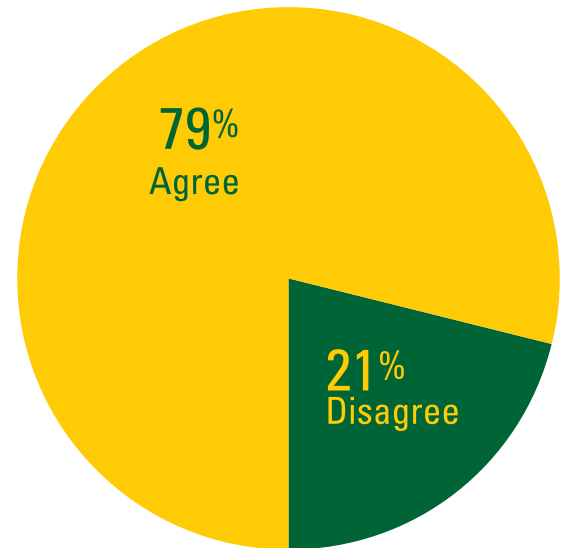
For youth, the importance of service projects is threefold:

- They help meet important physical and emotional needs.
- They communicate the value and importance of other people.
- They allow young people to develop empathy with those who are in need.

## Personal Values and Character: Ethical Decision Making

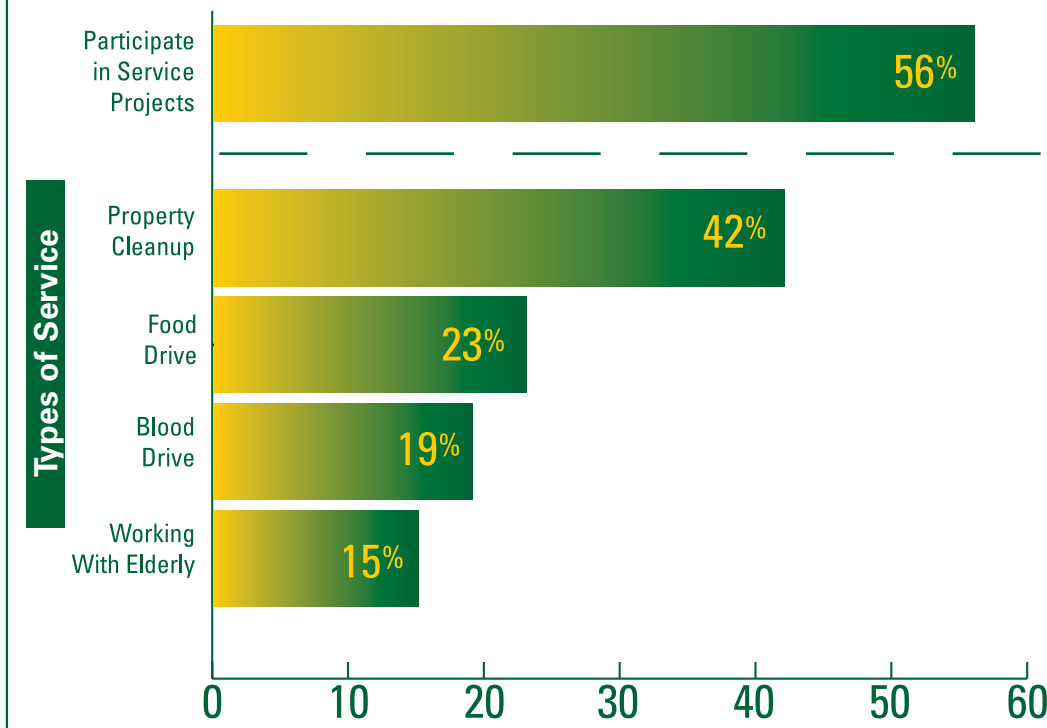
(percentage of Venturers who agree)

“Your crew has been faced with situations when the group had to make decisions about right and wrong.”



## Personal Values and Character: Service to Others

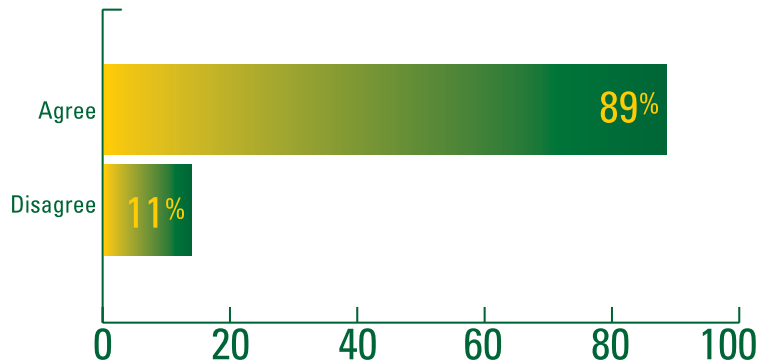
(percentage of Venturers during a typical three-month period)



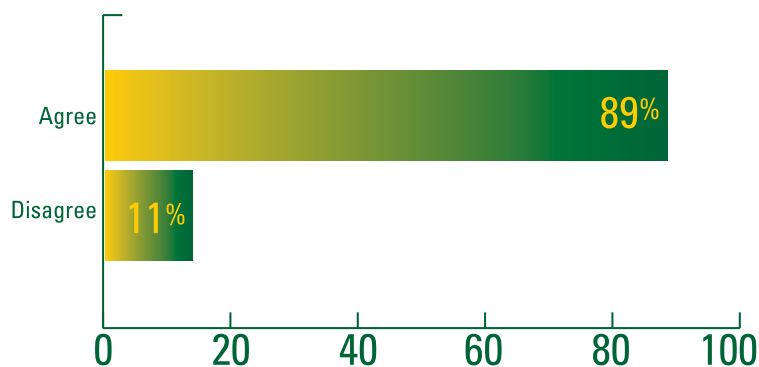
## Self-Worth and Usefulness: Building Self-Confidence

(percentage of Venturers who agree/disagree)

“Being a Venturer has taught you to have more confidence in yourself and your abilities.”



“The activities in Venturing help you prepare for the future.”



*“It is a wonderful organization that makes the youth have self-worth and independence.”*

—Mother of a Venturer

## 2. A Positive Sense of Self-Worth and Usefulness

Venturing provides an atmosphere of teamwork, learning, and accomplishment. Each of these components cultivates a sense of self-worth. Nine of 10 members (89 percent) agree that being a Venturer has taught them to have more confidence in themselves and their abilities. Moreover, 89 percent agree that Venturing helps them prepare for their futures.

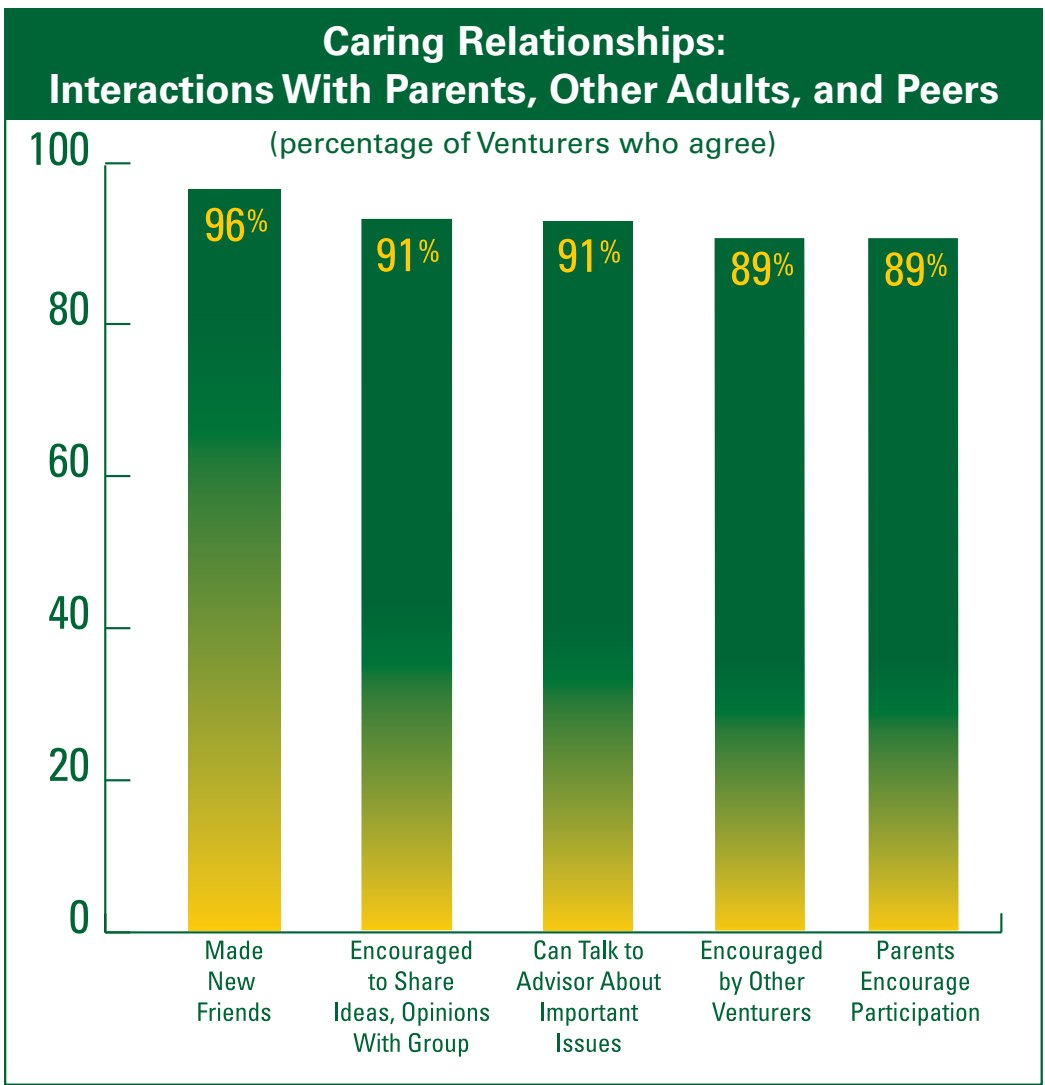
Feelings of self-worth are closely tied to relationships with others. Relationship building between youth, their peers, and adults plays an important developmental role by establishing a place of belonging and security, and it also fosters feelings of value. In Venturing, nine of 10 members are encouraged by their Advisors and other Venturers to share their opinions and ideas. A similarly high proportion receive encouragement from other Venturers and members of the crew.

A positive sense of self-worth and usefulness is supported through early leadership experiences in Venturing. Almost four of 10 Venturers (37 percent) hold an elected or appointed leadership position within the crew.

## 3. Caring, Nurturing Relationships With Parents, Other Adults, and Peers

Establishing relationships with others is a key reason young people join Venturing. Specifically, 95 percent of Venturers indicate that “socializing with others” was an important factor in their decision to join. Furthermore, 94 percent indicate that such social development contributes to making their program experience positive.

The program is a catalyst for interaction between members, their parents, and other adults. A clear majority of Venturers (85 percent) talk to their parents about what they learn at meetings and outings, and 89 percent say that their parents encourage them to participate in Venturing activities. Almost two-thirds of Venturers (62 percent) talk to adults other than their parents about their Venturing experiences.



Significantly, nine of 10 Venturers (91 percent) agree with the statements “You are encouraged by your crew Advisor and other Venturers to share your ideas and opinions” and “You can talk to your crew Advisor about things that are important to you.”

Peer-to-peer interaction is high among Venturers. Nearly all (96 percent) agree with the statement “You made new friends in your crew.” Furthermore, 89 percent agree that they talk with other Venturers about what they learn in the program, and the same proportion (89 percent) agree with the statement “You receive encouragement from other Venturers and members of the group.”

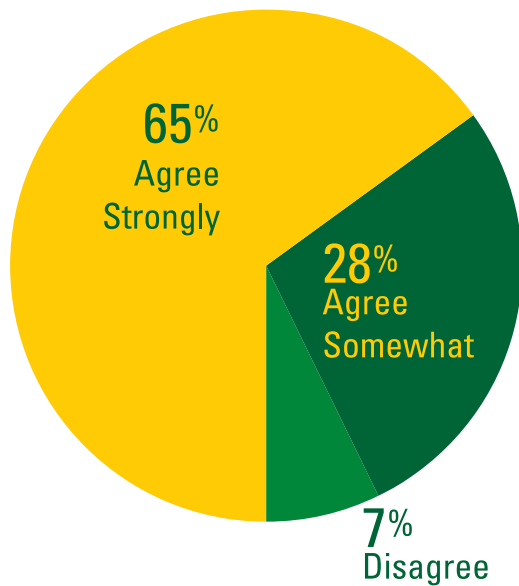




## Desire to Learn: New Experiences

(percentage of Venturers who agree)

“Venturing gives you a chance to do things and go places that you would not otherwise experience.”



## 4. A Desire to Learn

“Adventure” defines Venturing. True adventure is found in new experiences. Because young people have had varied experiences in their lives, the level of adventure in the program is different for each member. The value of Venturing is measured in its ability to consistently challenge members. In a typical three-month period, more than half of Venturers (55 percent) do something they have never done before, and almost half (44 percent) go somewhere they have never been before.

Venturers recognize the unique learning opportunities that the program offers, as 93 percent agree (65 percent “strongly” and 28 percent “somewhat”) that Venturing gives them the opportunity to do things and go places they would not be able to experience otherwise.

The fact that 98 percent of Venturers consider going to college to be important to them attests to their desire for future learning.

*“I know that during his rebellious stage, the program was the only thing we could talk about.”*

—Mother of a Venturer



## 5. Productive/Creative Use of Time

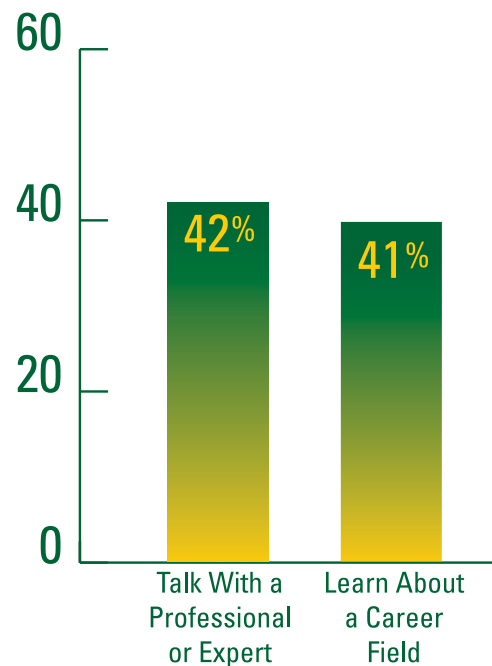
The adventure of the outdoors draws many young people to the program. Outdoor activities are deemed most important overall by Venturers in selecting the program, and rank as the factor that contributes most to making their Venturing experiences positive.

An important element of Venturing is that the program encourages young people to fulfill both personal development needs as well as meeting the needs of others. Over a typical three-month period, a majority of Venturers participate in outdoor activities (68 percent), sports (58 percent), and service projects (56 percent).

Without an incentive to stretch—to reach beyond what they already know, see, and feel—young people are at risk of “stagnating” or failing to achieve their future potential. Venturing addresses this need by providing members opportunities to experience new activities, places, people, and ideas. During a typical three-month period, four of 10 Venturers stretch toward their futures by talking with a professional or expert (42 percent) or learning about a career field (41 percent).

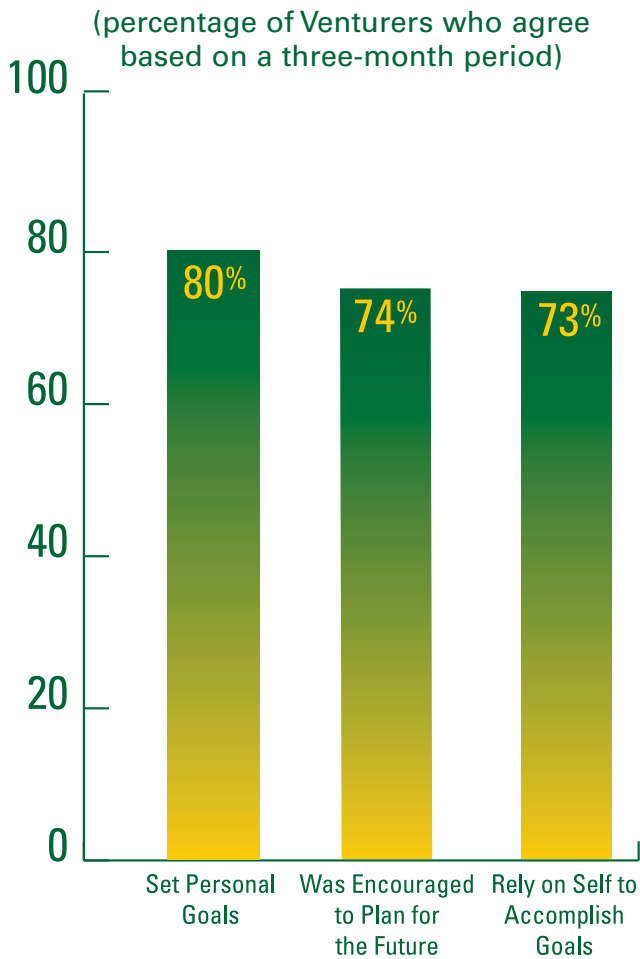
### Productive/Creative Use of Time: Planning for the Future

(percentage of Venturers during a typical three-month period)





## Productive/Creative Use of Time: Goals and Planning



Another important outcome related to productive use of time is found in the program's component of goal-setting and accomplishment. Eighty percent of Venturers agree with the statement "I set goals for myself at meetings and activities." About three-quarters (73 percent) indicate that "I had to rely on myself to accomplish my goals."

In addition, a majority of the members (74 percent) agree that "Venturing encourages me to think about and plan for the future."

### 6. Social Adeptness

Members of Venturing learn teamwork, leadership, and other life skills. These tools equip them to effectively and productively contribute to collaborative efforts and to cooperate with people who are different from themselves. In reflecting on their participation in the program, more than nine of 10 Venturers (92 percent) agree with the statements "You learned to get along with people who are different from yourself" and "You learned something about how to be a team player and work in a group."

*"I think it's a great experience and a good way to have fun."*

—Mother of a Venturer





Venturers practice social skills in meetings. During a typical three-month period, almost nine of 10 (87 percent) participate in a vote or decision made by the group.

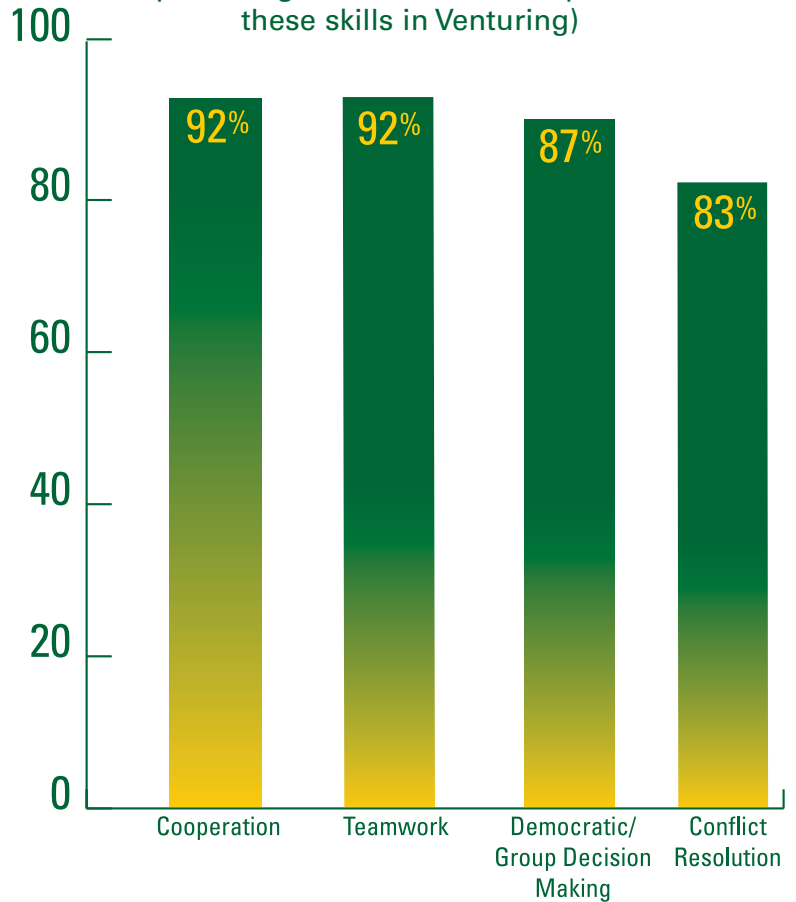
Skill in conflict resolution is an outcome of Venturing, as 83 percent of members agree that they were able to resolve conflicts they have had with others while participating in Venturing outings and activities.

*"He has maintained his interest in camping, water activities, and adventurous challenges."*

—Mother of a Venturer

## Social Adeptness: Skills and Competencies

(percentage of Venturers who practice these skills in Venturing)



# Study Methodologies

## Cub Scouting

The first research panel was designed with the specific intent of reaching back to the introduction stage to Scouting—the Cub Scout age—to explore how these formative years influence positive outcomes from a boy's earliest Scouting experience as a Tiger Cub through Boy Scouting and Venturing. The Cub Scout panel study designed and conducted by Louis Harris & Associates collected information about 1,487 Cub Scouts, 263 Tiger Cubs, and 1,343 parents from September 1996 through June 1997. Cub Scouts were chosen for participation in the study on a random basis from among the 1.4 million registered Cub Scouts. Forty Cub Scout packs were initially selected to participate nationwide. Because of the youthfulness of Cub Scouts (ages 7 to 10), adult leaders were asked to complete survey forms at pack and den meetings, and parents helped the boys with surveys at home.

## Boy Scouting

In June 1997, Louis Harris & Associates began collecting information about the experiences of a representative group of Boy Scouts in the United States. Over the next nine months, more than 1,000 Boy Scouts and many of their parents would share their Scouting experiences with the Harris firm, the results of which form a rich database examining a year in the life of Boy Scouts.

The Boy Scout panel consisted of 63 troops in the contiguous 48 states. With the use of the Boy Scouts of America database of Boy Scouts, 63 Boy Scouts were randomly selected by a random  $n$ th methodology. The troops to which these boys belonged became the panel. The probability of selection was identical for all Scouts. The probability of selection for each unit was proportionate to the number of youth enrolled in that unit.

Of those 63 troops, 47 were eligible and chose to participate. Boy Scouts filled out an initial form about their attitudes toward Scouting and a monthly form about their Scouting activities from June 1997 through March 1998 (excluding December). Parents of Boy Scouts were also asked to complete a survey.

The findings reported are based on the responses of 587 parents and 1,100 Boy Scouts. All of the 587 parents responded to the parent survey. Overall, 747 Boy Scouts filled out their initial survey, and 1,051 Boy Scouts reported on their monthly activities at least once. On average, four monthly forms were received for each Boy Scout, yielding data on 4,097 meeting experiences.

## Venturing

The Venturing program of the Boy Scouts of America is an outdoor adventure program for young men and women ages 14 to 20. It became an official program of the BSA on August 1, 1998. Before this date, Venturing and Exploring were combined in a single program. The analysis in this booklet considers only members of Venturing.

The Venturing panel study was originally designed to collect panel-based data through monthly surveys. Because a high proportion of members did not consistently respond, the method was adapted to include a telephone survey. A total of 500 interviews were conducted with Venturers. Of those, 133 Venturers from different crews were included. Venturers were chosen for participation in the study on a random basis from among the 170,000 Venturers. Venturing crews were selected to participate nationwide, and data collection periods matched those of Boy Scouting.

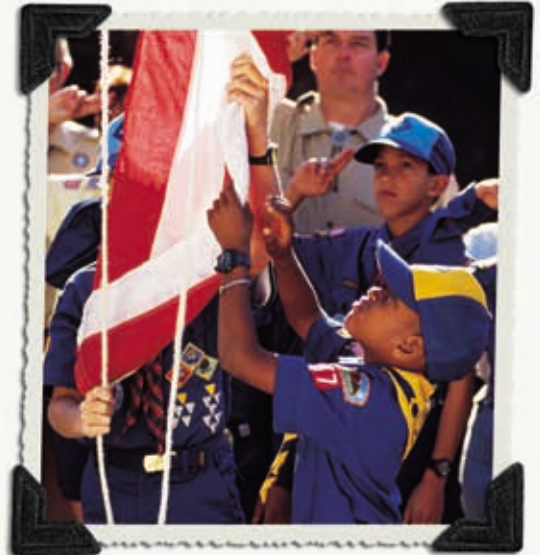
A limited number of copies of the three full Louis Harris reports (Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing/Exploring) are available. The cost is \$30 per report. Please call the BSA Research Service at (972) 580-2103 to order.



Louis Harris & Associates and  
the Boy Scouts of America  
sincerely thank all of the  
Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturers,  
volunteers, leaders, and parents  
who participated in this important  
research study during  
the past two years.







BOY SCOUTS



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