

Friendstorming

on Tour



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

“When you serve as a district volunteer you are part of a worldwide movement, composed of people who are dedicated to a common goal, who use organization as a means, not an end.

“The whole hope of the movement rests upon two assumptions:

“1. That unit leaders can use the movement’s program in a manner to make a difference in the lives of young people.

“2. That district volunteers will do whatever is necessary to ensure every unit leader’s success.”

From The District, No. 33070

Friendstorming

on Tour



A council-presented process coordinated through district Key 3's and nominating committees with the purpose of generating large numbers of prospective volunteers for various levels of district service.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Friendstorming on Tour

Friendstorming on Tour Revealed

What It Is

A volunteer prospecting “best method” with the potential of surfacing large numbers of potential candidates for various levels of service. It is presented by council leadership at regularly scheduled district meetings.

How It Works

The council executive board officially adopts Friendstorming on Tour and indicates a “tour stop” is to take place at a district committee meeting in every district. Two council “tour guides,” a prominent volunteer and a high-level professional, conduct each stop. At this meeting, names of prospective volunteers are offered up, sometimes in response to discussion-generating questions. The district Key 3 and nominating committee are then responsible for follow-up on the resulting list.

How It Came to Be

Friendstorming on Tour was created in Seattle, Washington. Volunteer leadership there concluded the major barrier to filling district positions was not a lack of willingness, time, or recruiting skills, but a lack of prospects to approach. Their tour of 12 districts surfaced more than 1,200 names. Later, several Western Region councils implemented the program with a wide range of results—some better than others, but all positive.

What It Is Not

It is not a district program. It is initiated and presented by council leadership. This approach has led to better preparation and improved group dynamics. The district committee’s role, and that of the nominating committee, are in the next steps: volunteer selection, cultivation, and recruitment.

The Role of the Nominating Committee

Friendstorming on Tour is not meant to supplant the nominating committee’s contribution to strengthening district volunteerism. An active year-round nominating committee is an invaluable resource and will make a tremendous difference in the actual recruiting results. The group should be involved throughout, and it must be involved in nominating to the district committee all those who are to serve as active voting members: the district members at large and officers.

Maximizing Outcomes

Or How to Generate 100 or More Prospects Per Tour Stop

- Stops are scheduled during months when district committee attendance is relatively high, with promotion beginning six weeks out.
- Prospecting results are transcribed electronically, and both paper and electronic copies are maintained and backed up in the district and council files.
- Volunteer recruitment performance goals are developed for youth-serving executives. They outline prospect follow-up, cultivation, and recruitment.
- Field staff and district Scouters are trained in, and rehearse and use, the best methods for conducting successful volunteer recruitment efforts.
- Friendstorming becomes a regular district committee meeting agenda item.

Friendstorming on Tour

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Friendstorming on Tour

Taking District Volunteerism to the Next Level

Countless dedicated Scouters cheerfully tackle multiple volunteer positions and do their best to succeed in all of them. But at best, even with their love of Scouting and commitment to service, they can only give partial attention to many of the responsibilities involved. This of course can leave important functions unaccomplished.

Asking them why they wear so many hats will most likely lead to comments that it is their answer to a general shortage of volunteers—that there aren't enough people to fill the positions necessary to properly maintain the health of their district's units.

It's easy to imagine what sounds like a simple solution: Get more volunteers! And it is, indeed, *not* all that complicated.

Publications such as *The District* and *Selecting District People* provide effective roadmaps to filling specific positions. But when you realize you need to double or triple the number of commissioners, committee members, trainers, roundtable staff, and other district positions, how do you begin?

Friendstorming on Tour is a new way to surface new friends: people who would fulfill the commissioner role as a “friend to the unit” and people who would support units in the other district functions. It seems natural to look for the kind of people who already make Scouting great—our present and future friends.

A typical Friendstorming on Tour stop at a district committee meeting can turn up as many as 100 names of potential new volunteers. It also generates enthusiasm among the current Scouters to welcome new people into the Scouting family. Last, it results in a commitment within the district leadership to turn these prospects into new “friends” to help expand the possibilities.

Certainly every district is committed to providing the high level of volunteerism necessary to strengthen every unit to the point where each can do its part in achieving the Boy Scouts of America's mission. Friendstorming on Tour represents one additional approach that can lead to dramatic results.



Friendstorming on Tour

The Big Picture

Friendstorming on Tour is a series of meetings conducted in every district in the council. At each one, participants are prompted to remember and suggest the names of as many people as possible who may have an interest in serving in some capacity. It is possible to produce a list of 100-plus names in an hour or less. The district Key 3 is then tasked to follow up with the prospects. They may involve other district members as necessary, but they remain responsible.

The district nominating committee should be invited to participate in the Friendstorming meeting and should be involved in reviewing the resulting list of prospects. And of course, those people targeted as members at large or district officers must be formally nominated and elected. Others who are to serve actively and attend district committee meetings should also go through the nominating committee process. According to BSA bylaws, this is the only way they can become voting members.

Advance Preparation for a Friendstorming Tour

- Introduce the Friendstorming on Tour program to district leaders at a commissioner's cabinet meeting, council-coordinated meeting, district chairs meeting, joint Key 3 meeting, etc.
- Schedule a date for each district's tour stop, preferably a joint meeting of the district committee and commissioners. Taking one hour at a regularly scheduled district committee meeting has proven most effective. Setting up separate Friendstorming meetings has marginalized attendance.
- Select two tour guides for each meeting—typically a prominent council volunteer (council president, council commissioner, assistant council commissioner, etc.) and one senior executive (SE, ASE, DFS, PD, etc.). Be sure they take the time to study this booklet and rehearse together before the first stop. If it is possible for them to observe a Friendstorming session in another council, that too will help with the learning curve.
- At six weeks before each tour stop, send an invitation to all members of the district committee and commissioner staff. See the sample letter in the supplemental materials. It is also important to invite “blue-chip” unit leaders, the district nominating committee, and also, in coordination with the council Scout executive, any executive board members living in the local area.
- Have district leaders gather lists that will help people remember names. For example, unit rosters, training attendees over the last few years, recent unit “Spark Plug” or similar award winners, event attendance rosters, roundtable participants, church and service club directories, business and industry annual reports, foundation board rosters, and any other lists that could contain names of potential volunteers.

Preparing for Each Friendstorming Tour Stop

- To facilitate a working atmosphere, set up chairs in a circle or semicircle. It is helpful if participants are seated at an arrangement of tables or classroom desks, but it's even more important they can see the tour guides without shifting their chairs.
- Have a flip chart and dark-colored marking pens available, also painter's tape or other material for affixing completed sheets to the wall.
- Prepare pledge certificates for presentation to the district Key 3. These should be personalized for each stop on the tour.

Friendstorming on Tour

Meeting Agenda

Introduce the Tour Guides Leading the Session

This should include two prominent council-level people—preferably one volunteer (council president or commissioner, assistant council commissioner, etc.) and one senior executive (SE, ASE, DFS, PD, etc.).

Note: The district executive should be at a flip chart to write down each name along with the name or initials of the person who mentions it, and perhaps a unit number or other clue that will help in researching the prospect. Try to fit as many names on the first page as possible. It looks better! As pages are completed, display them on the wall. Ask someone to help keep a count of the prospects.

Explain Our Purpose

Our purpose tonight is to help you generate a list of prospects who might serve in your district—people who might become our friends or, better yet, friends to our units. Thus, of course, the name “Friendstorming on Tour.” This is an important step in volunteer recruiting. Can you imagine if when the time comes to recruit someone, there is a long list of people who could be considered?

State also how your district nominating committee will be involved. Introduce its members who are present. Thank them for the role they will play in reviewing the list and for noting the prospects who could be involved as district officers or members at large.

Announce this is our (first, second, third, etc.) stop on the tour. Even at our very first stop we recorded (number) names! Since then, our record is (number) names! Maybe tonight we can top that.

Tell a Story . . .

. . . about a unit volunteer who was enticed to join the district. The point of the story is to show how people will surprise you. Sometimes we like to say “No” for prospects, and sometimes it costs us good volunteers. We may also be tempted to point to unit volunteers and indicate we should not recruit them away from the unit. Sometimes of course, we should leave them where they are. Often however, they know of others who could replace them, and sometimes it’s good for a unit to be in a position where it must refresh its leadership.

The story also improves group dynamics, allowing Friendstorming participants to think about who they will mention and to muster courage to put them forth. Without the story, results will not be as good.

Review the Rules

1. We want only names. Some of you may want to mention resources like the NESA list. While this can be a great help, tonight we want only actual names. If you happen to have a NESA list with you, we would be excited to hear about any individuals on it whom you think would be good volunteers.
2. Please avoid saying no for a prospect. We want them to have the opportunity to say this for themselves. There are exceptions, however. If someone mentioned is already active in a district or the council, let us know so we can decide if he or she should be listed. Please also say something if you know a person named has moved away or had a similar change in status, or if for some reason a prospect is unsuitable to serve as a Scouting volunteer.
3. Please don’t be concerned about which positions might be filled by the names you offer. That’s an important consideration, but for later, not just now. When the time comes we will want to involve district leadership and the nominating committee in that process. Tonight we just want to build a list of names.

Friendstorming on Tour

Begin the Friendstorming

To begin, just ask the group if they know anyone “out there,” who ought to be “in here” joining our circle of friends and enjoying the rewards of district service. If that doesn’t get things going, then refer participants to any lists they brought with them. Ask them to look over the lists and give us the names of people they think would be good district volunteers.

As names are mentioned, the district executive (scribe) writes them on the flip chart. He should make a small note of the initials of the person who mentioned each name, the potential volunteer’s unit number, or another reference that will help locate them later.

Every once in a while, as names slow down, use a discussion-generating question in order to get things going again. (See page 12.)

Sometimes it’s a good idea to digress somewhat—to use stalling tactics. Participants will be thinking of people they know; you can almost see the wheels turning. To give them time to think, do things like going back to the chart and counting the names recorded thus far. You can also talk about various district activities, or offer factoids that begin with, “I remember one time at the camporee . . .” or “Did you know we’re leading the council in FOS?” Just about anything can trigger another name.



Stick to the Schedule

After about an hour, you should have 80 to 100 or more names, and they may still be coming. It’s tempting to keep going and extract every possible prospect, but respect the time allowed and gently close off the session in an appropriate way. Urge participants to make a note of any additional names and to provide them to the district executive so she can add them to the list.

Close With “The Pledge”

Bring out the three Friendstorming on Tour pledge certificates signed by the tour guides.

Ask the members of the district Key 3 to stand in front of the group. Show everyone what the certificate looks like. Hold it up and tell them what it says. Then have the Key 3 members raise their right hands in the Scout sign and “Repeat after me.”

“I, (say your name), promise to do my best to systematically see to the follow-up on these names for the good of Scouting in our district.”

Thank them, pass out the certificates, and thank everyone for their participation in this valuable process.

Before leaving the meeting, ask the Key 3 members when they plan to meet next. If they don’t have a meeting coming within the next week or two, suggest they schedule one now so they can review their results and begin working the list as soon as possible.

Friendstorming on Tour

What Happens Next?

Transcribe the List

The district executive should take charge of the flip chart sheets and see the names are transcribed into electronic format. The list is then sent to the district Key 3 and the nominating committee. The DE's role as scribe during the Friendstorming meeting is an important and deliberate choice, and should be considered as part of her essential job functions. For the recruiting to be effective, the DE must be fully involved—one of the owners of the process—and have a SMART goal related to the outcome, one that will be reviewed during the professional performance evaluation process. Serving as the scribe also fits with his role as staff support person. In this position, up front and fully engaged, district executives will think of names too, and of questions like, “What unit is he in?” or “Oh, do you mean Ralph Jones? Is that who you’re thinking of?”

The Tour Guides Send a Thank-You Letter to the District Key 3

An example thank-you letter is provided in the supplemental materials in this booklet. The council tour guides should use one like it. It encourages the members of the district Key 3 to carry out their pledge to use the names and to enlist the support of more volunteers.

District Key 3 and Nominating Committee Put the List to Work

Using existing resources and methods, plus ideas from publications such as *Selecting District People*, the Key 3 coordinates recruitment of as many prospects as possible. The nominating committee is a valuable resource here. Its members may be able to shed light on who should serve in which positions and can also assist in making the calls. They should look over the list, too, for names of possible members at large or district officers, as these volunteers must be presented for election by voting district committee members.

Friendstorming Is an Ongoing Process

Friendstorming should be incorporated into the district's regular business, and the list of names maintained as a living document updated monthly. The nominating committee, in addition to its official duties with members at large and district officers, should “own” the prospect list. Their assistance in evaluating volunteers, keeping records, and assisting in orientation can mean the difference between real success and simply getting by. Building the nominating committee to this level will be worth the time required to do so.



Friendstorming on Tour

Supplemental Materials

Invitation Message

A Volunteer's Story (Example)

Discussion-Generating Questions

Follow-Up Action Example Letter or E-Mail Message

Friendstorming on Tour Pledge Certificate

Introductory Volunteer Experiences

Resources



Friendstorming on Tour

Invitation Message

Greetings Volunteers of the (Name) District,

As you have probably heard by now, the time is at hand for our stop on the Friendstorming tour! We're looking forward to your participation as we strive to broaden the base of volunteers related to our district committee and commissioner staff. With more helping hands we can expect to accomplish more toward Scouting's mission, as well as lighten the load of those who have had to wear too many "hats."

Please join us for a joint meeting of all district volunteers—district committee, members at large, and all commissioners:

(Date)

(Time)

(Place)

(Address)

(Directions)

Please be thinking about people who would be good additions to our volunteer team. Please also take to the meeting any miscellaneous lists of names you might have: unit leadership, training and roundtable attendance, ScoutParent lists, unit committee rosters, lists of district award recipients ("Spark Plug," Extra Miler," etc.), service club or chamber rosters, business and industry annual reports, foundation board rosters, church directories, etc., and attendance sheets for activities like camporee, Klondike derby, Webeloree, day camp, summer camp, various Good Turns, popcorn, etc.

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to be part of this landmark effort in searching out new volunteers.

We look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,

(District chair) (District nominating committee chair) (District commissioner) (District executive)

Friendstorming on Tour

A Volunteer's Story (Example)

(You can use your own story, this story, or make up a story. Its purpose is to remind everyone that few adult volunteers in Scouting started out knowing it can be fun, satisfying, and rewarding. Over time, however, most find that people who volunteer in the district can be great friends and that the service is not only rewarding, but fun.)

Some years ago, a young boy brought home a flier to join Tiger Cubs. His parents were rather busy with their young family, a new business, and a home. But in their youth, both had had some connection to Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts, so they agreed to go to the meeting.

Mom and dad had heard however, that these initial meetings usually involve an effort to recruit parents to help in the pack. Knowing this, the father, upon arriving, surveyed the room and selected seats in the back, out of any direct light. The objective was to slip through without having to volunteer.

But this pack had a rather clever plan that made hiding in the back of the room a pointless maneuver. If you registered your son, at least one parent was required to sign up to do something. Den leader seemed out of the question, so finally the father agreed to be the coordinator of an event—the easiest event on the list, and months away.

After serving for that event, and making a few new friends, he decided to continue helping with pack activities, and did that for a couple of years. And he made more friends as new boys and parents joined. As a result, this father ended up being a bit more involved—and having fun.

When they asked him to be pack committee chair, he agreed, but figured he had better get educated. Cub Scout adult leader training was an eye-opening experience. It was actually well done and worthwhile, and the people were interesting and helpful. And he made a few new friends in the process.

As committee chair, he felt he had an obligation to go to roundtable (occasionally) and to bring back some information to promote to his pack. But he wasn't obliged to wear a uniform, or sit near the front. In fact, he could sort of sneak in late, grab the brochures, and slip out early.

Then came Cub Scout resident camp, where the boys and dads played frontiersmen for several days. Talk about fun! At the end, the evaluation sheet asked "Would you be willing to help with planning next year's camp?" He soon found himself on a council program planning committee—where he made another friend. And in the meantime his wife had helped with several pack activities and was increasingly involved as well.

Now his son was starting Boy Scouts, and it seemed only natural to attend Boy Scout adult leader training. Then not long after, someone asked him to accept an interesting role in the district. He has been a district or council volunteer ever since, and his wife has served in a district as well.

How did this family get recruited to add Scouting to its busy life? They made friends through their participation. It's easy to say "No" to adding new chores to your busy life, but it's harder to refuse the notion of having more fun with your friends.

Recruiting can be hard if you have to sell people on the value of contributing their limited time—even to a worthwhile effort like Scouting. Recruiting gets easy when you're just proposing ways to have more fun with your friends. Consider making lots more friends as the first step in district volunteer recruiting.

Friendstorming on Tour

Discussion-Generating Questions

Facilitating a Friendstorming meeting is easy. In fact, sometimes it's harder to stop the names than to get started. But now and then the pace may slow and you may have to encourage people to dig deeper. Below are sample questions that can help trigger additional suggestions. They're not in any order, and you can surely think of others. Pick any one at any point in the meeting. It is interesting to note, though, that often the prospects generated have nothing at all to do with the questions asked!

1. Who do you know in your home unit?
2. How about unit leaders (current or former)?
3. Other unit volunteers? Who are the best den leaders out there? Committee chairs?
4. Unit volunteers you haven't seen around for a while?
5. Who has helped at day camp?
6. Who has assisted at district activities? Camporees, Webelorees, Klondike, etc.?
7. How about people who volunteered in the district in the past?
8. For those of you who have assisted in training, which participants stood out?
9. How about PTA volunteers, teachers, or principals who would make good additions to your district committee?
10. Are there friends or leaders in your church who might help?
11. People who have been recognized at your district dinner: "Spark Plug Award," "Extra Miler," etc.?
12. Little League volunteers? Maybe those who have also volunteered in Scouting?
13. People in the community who might help us raise money? (Service club members?)
14. Members of foundations or nonprofit boards or committees who may have an interest in Scouting?
15. How about people you do business with?
16. How about unit people who have complimented you on the quality of an event or district service?
17. Who is always at roundtable?
18. Do you know of any grown sons and daughters of current or past district volunteers?
19. Who was at your district fund-raising breakfast or other similar event who might be valuable in district operations?



Feel free to add other questions you think would be helpful.

Friendstorming on Tour

Follow-Up Action Example Letter or E-Mail Message

To: The Key 3 of the (Name) District
From: (Name) Council Friendstorming Tour Guides

Congratulations on completing your district's stop on the (council name) Friendstorming Tour and for taking the follow-up action pledge.

Here are some steps to consider as you, the Key 3, strive to get the most from the list of names you and your volunteers generated:

- Meet as soon as possible after the Friendstorming meeting.
- Involve your nominating committee every step of the way, paying attention to the steps outlined in the District Nominating Committee Worksheet, No. 513-332.
- Determine which positions you would like to fill. See that you have simple, realistic position descriptions available. For each, think about the kinds of people you'd like to have in these roles.
- Set a goal for the number of prospect-contacts to be made between meetings.
- Design a plan to see that all new people can be efficiently oriented and trained.
- Review the names. Are there any who in your opinions are not qualified for district leadership, or otherwise should not be considered?*
- Are there any who could be contacted and invited to begin immediately?
- Consider pointing as many prospects as possible toward the unit service opportunities in roundtables, training, and commissioner service.
- Invite the nominating committee or others who are acquainted with volunteer position requirements to help process the names.
- With their help, here's what could be done:
 - Put the names into a database or spreadsheet.
 - Obtain contact information for each prospect: address, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses. Be sure to include notations the DE made on who recommended them or which unit they're from.
 - List what is known about each person's Scouting affiliations and other pertinent experiences. What are they doing now; when might they be available for district service?*
 - Make a note in the database about who would be best for contacting each prospect and inviting him or her to serve. Who has the best chance of getting a positive response?
 - Assign a ranking to the prospects; perhaps divide them into the top, middle, and final thirds. Begin your efforts, of course, with those at the top.
 - Consider the best timing for contacting prospects. If they are currently in an important unit position and there is no one ready to step in, you might want to postpone contact.*
 - Prior to inviting prospects to serve in important positions, consider steps that might prepare the way. Are there other roles that would serve to expose them to district service? See the list of introductory experiences on page 15.
 - Think about a kickoff meeting for the people who were selected to assist in extending participation invitations to the prospects.
 - Make Friendstorming a regular part of every district committee meeting.

*We should avoid saying "no" for a prospect unless there is good reason. The Key 3 will have to make this decision, remembering even people who are busy in a unit or other endeavors will likely want the opportunity to speak for themselves. Also, if a prospect is active in a unit, he or she may know someone who could fill their current position. It might also be time for the unit to go through the healthy process of finding new volunteers.

Friendstorming

on Tour

[1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc] Stop: [Any] District

Pledge Certificate

Awarded on this dd day of mmmm yyyy

to the [Any] Council

[Any] District Key 3:

[Name]

District Chair

[Name]

District Commissioner

[Name]

District Executive

[Name], [Prominent Council Volunteer]

[Name], [Prominent Council Professional]



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Friendstorming on Tour

Introductory Volunteer Experiences

Use these positions to introduce promising prospects to the district—reasonable time requirements; maximum reward!

- Become a roundtable greeter.
- Serve on an Eagle Scout board of review.
- Help at one roundtable breakout session.
- Make one Friends of Scouting presentation.
- Assist for one season of summer camp promotion.
- Become an Eagle Scout service project reviewer or adviser.
- Attend one district committee meeting to provide the unit perspective on district programs. (Honor this person as a guest presenter or speaker.)
- Assist as a Venturing resource list developer.
- Run one day camp station for one week.
- Present an opening or closing ceremony for one roundtable, district meeting, day camp, or other event.
- Help as an Eagle Scout recognition banquet host.
- Present one segment of a district training program.
- Serve on a special steering committee or task force to provide input on a district activity or campaign. **(Note:** Multiple prospects could do this together!)
- Line up a popcorn delivery site.
- Assist with one unit's membership campaign.
- Help promote unit participation in community festivals, parades, or Scouting Anniversary Week activities.
- Assist a few units with rechartering.
- Help a few units with TroopMaster or PackMaster unit-management software.
- Help a pack recruit a new den leader.
- Visit a unit committee and advise on effective and efficient operations.
- Help in a charter presentation ceremony.
- Help with a Webelos cross-over ceremony.

And so on and so on. There are thousands of other introductory experiences. Just use your imagination. Remember, however, the effort must help your district in a meaningful way. High-quality prospects will recognize “busy work” for what it is and will resent being asked to do it.

Be sure to follow up with the prospect after the effort is completed. Was it enjoyable? Is there an interest for more? If there is, make it somewhat more involved, and lead the prospect to the rewards and fulfillment of ongoing district service.

And again, involve the nominating committee. It will be an important factor as prospects move upward toward key district positions.

Friendstorming on Tour

Resources

Planning Your Recruiting Needs

The District, No. 33070

Commissioner Volunteer Duties Cards, No. 34265

Commissioner Staff Roster, No. 34127

District Committee Volunteer Duties Cards, No. 34266

Plan for Functioning Districts, No. 513-622

The Process of Recruiting New Volunteers

Selecting District People, No. 34512

District Nominating Committee Worksheet, No. 513-332

Training: The Key to Effective Districts

Commissioner Administration of Service, No. 34501

District Committee Training Workshop, No. 34160

Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner Training, No. 34256

Cub Scout Roundtable Planning Guide, No. 34410





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