

## **APRIL – HOW VENTURING CAN HELP, NOT HURT, YOUR TROOP**

### **Music Full then under**

PAULA: Hello, and welcome, dear listeners! So, you know how at the end of every show, we invite you to send your ideas for topics you'd like to discuss? Well, we do read them and give each one careful consideration.

LEE: That's right, Paula. And several of you have asked for more discussions concerning the Venturing program.

PAULA: One email in particular caught our attention and we've invited him to join us in the discussion.

LEE: So stay tuned everyone. Patrick Higgins will be here for the April 2015 ScoutCast – How Venturing Can Help, Not Hurt, Your Troop.

### **Music Fades**

LEE: As a youth, Patrick Higgins served as a staff member for three National Order of the Arrow conferences. He also worked on the 2005 Philmont staff, 2007 World Jamboree International service team, and 2010 National Jamboree staff. Patrick joined the profession in 2012 and currently serves as a senior district executive with the Simon Kenton Council in Columbus, Ohio. Welcome to ScoutCast, Patrick.

PATRICK: Thank you very much.

LEE: It's good to have you here. Okay, so let's get right into it. So why would anyone think that Venturing would hurt their Boy Scout troop?

PATRICK: A lot of the things that I've heard from Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters is that they see Venturing as something that will take kids away from their program. Since Venturing has a higher minimum age to join, they see it as it's going to take their experienced boys away from the troop and take away their potential for leadership positions like senior patrol leader and some of those other ones that typically go to some of the older kids.

PAULA: So why is that not true?

PATRICK: The biggest misperceptions out there is that you have to give up your membership in a troop just to join a Venturing crew. We actually encourage you to do both as long as you got the time to do so. Venturing is much more activity-specific. For example there are crews that strictly are around the shooting sports, hiking crews, whitewater rafting crews. It's a much more specific activity that's meant to really supplement time in Scouting, not to replace it.

PAULA: I served as a Venturing crew advisor a number of years ago, and the crew I worked with was strongly associated with the Boy Scout troop. And we found that as a lot of those boys achieved Eagle, they would then join the crew at that point which contributed to a really strong crew, but, since they had even more leadership opportunities in the crew, we found that that troop, that they did not leave, benefitted from their experience in the crew and made it an even stronger troop.

PATRICK: Oh, definitely. Once you get to the high school age and you're kind of working on the Life and the Star and the Eagle ranks, you've been in the troop several years, you've been to the same summer camp year after year. The Scouts might get a little bored of that. Venturing gives an opportunity to try out some of the other experiences you can have in Scouting.

In my personal experience, we started a Venture crew out of my troop because we wanted to focus on a little more of the youth ministry-based. So we pulled some boys from the troop, also some girls from the Girl Scout troop and we put together a youth ministry-based Venture crew and doing so we went through and earned one of the religious emblems. We actually put on the Catholic Camporee that year which, when you're planning Camporee for 500 and something people as a high school student, that's just a really cool experience and I know we all learned some great management-type things from going through that process.

PAULA: That's fantastic.

LEE: It sure is. How can Venturers help a Scout leader with mentoring?

PATRICK: The nice thing with that is that Venturers a lot of times can be seen as more of an easy-to-approach leader than maybe a Scoutmaster is simply because they're closer to a Scout's age. When I was in Scouting as a fifth or sixth grader, I always felt more comfortable going to a high school student or one of the older Scouts to say, "Hey, I've forgotten how to tie this knot, can you help me," or "Can you help me put up my tent?", because a lot of what Scouting teaches is independence and you don't always want to be going to your Scoutmaster for help, especially sometimes when that Scoutmaster might be your parent. It's nice to have

more of a peer to go to talk things through and to accomplish things that way.

PAULA: So expanding on that idea of how helpful Venturers can be, how can Venturers help out with a Scout's service project?

PATRICK: Venturers basically can be force multipliers. Depending on what the service project may be, you may have a very labor-intensive project that might not be necessarily appropriate for some of the younger Scouts to do just because of having to lift certain weights or having to do some of the more manual labor-type things. Whereas having the Venturers who are high school or even college students may be able to perform some of the tasks that the younger Scouts simply wouldn't be able to do.

LEE: That's great. How do Venturers fit in with the Boys Scouts' summer camp program, Patrick?

PATRICK: Really well. Venturers can go to Scout camp just as the Boys Scouts can. A lot of that, you need to check with the local council policies and rules. Several camps will have kind of a separate high adventure or other experience for Venturers. Also a great way for Venturers to get involved is to be on summer camp staff. Unfortunately, I didn't get that opportunity because I was in marching band in high school, but I know a lot of my friends that were Venturers were on summer camp staff went on to some of the high adventure bases to be on staff there. Just really kind of a great opportunity to get involved over the summer instead of just sitting at home on a couch all day long.

PAULA: Patrick, you're providing some really excellent advice and information. Are there any resources available to help Scout leaders or Venturing advisors with how these two programs can work together?

PATRICK: There are several. I might be a little biased, but the first one I'll throw out there is, ask your professional or any of the professional staff there at the council. We're the ones who know who could put you in touch with. Some larger councils may even have a designated Venturing person who is up-to-date on all the programs. Another great way is for Venturing advisors to attend district roundtables. A lot of the times we don't see many there and that's something that I know in my district I'm working very hard to try to change. But we're inviting advisors to come to the Boy Scout breakout just to meet some of the other adult leaders, and part of it's an education piece. We want the Venturing advisor to know what the Boy Scouts are doing, but we also want the Boy Scout leaders to know what the Venturing program is - that it's not there to be a replacement for Scouting or to be competition. That you really can work together. We have a goal that if we start a couple of new Venture crews this coming year, we're actually going to create a Venturing breakout session to do trainings and just be able to have them come to the roundtables, do a little talk to all of their peers. Another thing that our council is doing is a separate Venturing-specific roundtable for the entire council once a month. That's on a Sunday evening so it doesn't conflict with any of the other activities going on and we've seen some great attendance there and it's just a way for Venturing advisors to come and talk about some of the specific challenge that they're meeting, get help from some peers, as well as the professional staff advisor there.

LEE: Patrick, you've provided some great insight. Is there anything else about how Venturing can help, not hurt your troop that we haven't talked about that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

PATRICK: The whole point of Venturing is (to) promote leadership and teamwork and to teach those skills. But those are skills that we are definitely needing to

see in our leaders in the communities. A good way for Scout leaders to think of Venturing is those who go through the Venturing program and learn this leadership, those are your Scout leaders in 10 to 20 years. The females who join Venturing, guys that join Venturing, those are going to be your den leaders, Assistant Scoutmasters and Scoutmasters of tomorrow. Keeping them involved in the program, especially as you go into the college age time period, keeping them involved, giving those good memories, those are going to be the people that come back and volunteer and help out. Every unit is always looking for more volunteers, so if we can set that expectation and set that desire early, then you're just going to pay off rewards down the line.

PAULA: So it's really a big investment. Well, like I mentioned earlier, I'm a past Venturing crew advisor and I can relate to a lot of what we discussed today, so I'm sure listeners did as well. So, Patrick, thank you for the suggestion to have this as a ScoutCast and thank you for coming on the show to share your vision of how Boy Scout troops and Venturing crews can be of benefit to each other.

PATRICK: Thank you for having me.

LEE: Now let's pop in on CubCast, and then we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

### **(Cubcast – Cultivating New Leaders)**

LEE: ScoutCast listeners should download that one next. But now it's time for April's Reminders and Tips. Don't be shy, Paula - tell us everything.

PAULA: April is Youth Protection Month and the Boy Scouts of America takes that very seriously. Now would be a good time to review all the materials and resources from our youth protection website. Just go to [www.scouting.org/training/youthprotection](http://www.scouting.org/training/youthprotection)

LEE: This is also a good time to have a family meeting to watch the DVD "*A Time to Tell.*" It's designed specifically for boys ages 9-14 to help give them a heads-up on ways to keep themselves protected. "*Personal Safety Awareness*" is a DVD designed for the older kids in the troop or crew. You should also go to [myscouting.org](http://myscouting.org) and be sure your youth protection training is up-to-date.

PAULA: On a lighter note, get ideas for crossover ceremonies in the March/April issue of *Scouting* magazine, and professional fisherman Tom Reddington, shares his best fishing tips in this month's *Boys' Life* magazine.

LEE: And because the producers of ScoutCast are huge baseball fans, I would be remiss if I didn't mention the *Boys' Life* story on what it takes to become an umpire for major league baseball. Our producers enjoyed the article and you will too.

PAULA: Finally have you signed up for the research panel? To provide the best youth program, the testing and evaluation team surveys scouting members to learn their opinions on a variety of topics related to scouting programs. Youth members, volunteers, Cub Scout parents and Boy Scout parents are invited to join our research panel. Just go to [www.scouting.org/about/research/researchpanel](http://www.scouting.org/about/research/researchpanel).

**BEGIN MUSIC UNDER**

LEE: And so the April ScoutCast has come to an end, but we can't leave without special thanks to our guest, Patrick Higgins.

PAULA: How about you? Patrick sent us an email and you heard how useful that discussion was. So send us an e-mail to ScoutCast@scouting.org Or tweet @bsascoutcast. With that, I'm Paula Murphey--

LEE And I'm Lee Shaw. Thanks for listening.

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