

## **JULY – RECRUITING IN YOUR COMMUNITY**

### **Music Full then under**

LEE: Welcome to the July ScoutCast. Wow, can you believe the year is half over already?

BRYAN: Time flies when you've got some pretty interesting guests talking about some pretty interesting topics.

LEE: This month will be no exception as Michael Ramsey explains the secret to recruiting.

### **MUSIC FADES**

BRYAN: Here for this discussion is Michael Ramsey. Michael is the Dept. Manager of Marketing and Experience Management at the National Service Center in Irving, Texas. Welcome to ScoutCast, Michael.

MICHAEL: Thanks a lot. It's good to be here.

BRYAN: So, Michael, let's jump right into it. Why should a unit share its activities, all the great things it's doing, with the rest of the community?

MICHAEL: It's really important for packs and troops and crews, even Exploring posts, to get out there and spread the word about what really goes on in Scouting and to really get out there and

promote themselves in their communities.

That's important because parents are not thinking about joining. They don't perceive things like recruiting flyers as an "ask." So it's really important that we have a presence in the community and make sure that people know that the Scouts are there and we have a great and dynamic program.

LEE: What are some activities that a unit should be promoting or could be promoting to those parents who don't know about the Boy Scouts of America?

MICHAEL: Oh, that's a great question. As Scouting volunteers and professionals, we all know the great things that go on in Scouting. I mean, it's everything from pinewood derbies to district camporees to events that happen in local parks. There are just a myriad of really cool, exciting things that if youth and families in our communities that weren't involved in Scouting heard about those things, they might be interested in getting their kids involved.

So the easy things are, what are we doing in locations that are easy for the public to come by and take a look? A lot of Scouting units do demonstrations. Sometimes it's just setting up tents; sometimes it's launching rockets. A lot of people think you've got to put together some kind of massive event and do

something really fabulous, and that's great, too. But a lot of it comes down to the fact that all Scouting's local. So it may be something as simple as the flag raising in front of the school on a weekday morning.

BRYAN Michael, who's responsible for recruiting?

MICHAEL: The membership chair is somebody who has responsibility or owns the recruiting or the membership function. That's the person that's the liaison with the district executive that help make sure that those Join Scouting Nights come off, whether it's signs in front of the school, and also being the person who answers the phone call when somebody calls and says, "Hey, I want to learn more about your troop or even a crew, how do I join?" Find that right person, that volunteer within their structure -- and maybe it's a parent - and that way, you've got an emphasis that's really focused on getting more youth and families in the program.

LEE: I could certainly see how having an individual who is the point person, if you will, being responsible could really help out. Would you also agree that there is a possibility that it's everyone's job in terms of parents that are involved and the

Scouts themselves are involved, communities, and charter organizations (that they) can also have a part in that? Would you agree that those are maybe the broader way of looking at it?

MICHAEL Oh, absolutely. The more advocates that we can have out on the street talking about the cool, exciting, fun, life-changing things that go on in Scouting, the better. Your point of involving the charter organization in that process is enormously important. The church or the community organization really has responsibility for that pack, troop, or crew, and they can be the best advocates for getting more kids involved in the program. Totally agree.

BRYAN: Can you give me any examples where the charter organization actually helps with this recruiting process?

MICHAEL: Something as simple as, does the pastor or the leader of the religious organization, is it noted from the pulpit? "Hey, by the way, our Scouts are having a Join Scouting Night." Maybe it's in the program, maybe it's on the bulletin boards. Today, there are electronic bulletins from churches. Do we have content inside of those?

LEE: I had an opportunity to witness Scout Sunday in which the Scouts participated in the actual service, and I thought that was just a great way that probably helped people understand a little bit more about Scouting and the partnership within the church.

MICHAEL: In my church, in particular, when the pastor stands up and says, "If you were ever involved in Scouting, will you please stand." You just get shivers when you look out across the congregation and see the number of people that Scouting has touched over the years and the base of support that we have in those communities as well. Our challenge is, how do we reach out to those alumni and people that have been impacted by the program and bring them to help the next generation of kids?

BRYAN: So, Michael, let's talk about resources. What resources are available to assist Scout leaders with recruiting?

MICHAEL: One of the things that we just launched is something called the Membership Marketing Hub. First of all, I'll say, I hope everybody listening to this has subscribed to the Scouting Wire. If you go to [ScoutingWire.org](http://ScoutingWire.org), you can subscribe to a weekly e-mail digest, and its important news and information coming out from the organization. But you can find the Membership Marketing Hub. There's a link to it at the very top of the

Scouting Wire. And what's included in the Membership Marketing Hub is certainly, posters, flyers, charts, yard signs, stickers (and) all of the recruitment assets are available to everyone. It also includes what we call playbooks - strategies on how to run a great Join Scouting Night and how to promote yourself in the community. You'll even find things there like social media playbooks that helps you understand better, what is Instagram, what audience is it good for, and how might I use it as a promotional tool locally. The playbooks are interesting in themselves. They're a whole different recruiting-type model. There's one built about rocketry. There's one built around fishing. There's even one around STEM; and it's a unique model that basically says, when you join Scouting, we're going to give you a lure or a rocket kit. And when you come back on the next meeting, we're going to either build that rocket kit, and then we're going to launch rockets together, or we're all going to go fishing.

So there's an incentive to join, and then we're all going to have a great first Scouting experience together. So we deliver on that promise that we made at those Join Scouting Nights. The playbooks are fascinating. Go take a look at them.

BRYAN: Yeah. You and your team have done a lot of the work for them,

and I've been checking out that resource. It is really great.

That Cub Scout Playbook sounds really awesome. Is there a Boy Scout version in existence?

MICHAEL: It is coming. It's in development now. There's another set of resources - when you mention Boy Scouting - that's generated a lot of excitement and that's a film called *Troop 491: The Adventures of the Muddy Lions*. It was developed by a former Scout and now filmmaker. It is a fantastic film.

This is a unit development tool - a great way to have a conversation in communities where we've had difficulty establishing relationships before. There are troops out there that are using it as a recruiting tool as well. You can find it up on the marketing toolbox and links to it and a great set of assets there as well.

LEE: I think it would be beneficial for unit leaders to take a look at that information because there are several different templates and different ways to, not only promote the units, but also to encourage the community leaders to get involved and take a closer look at Scouting. So thanks for sharing that information with us. Where can you find the hub again?

MICHAEL: So if you go to [www.scoutingwire.org](http://www.scoutingwire.org) and at the very top

navigation, the banner across the top, there will be a link to the Membership Marketing Hub, and that'll click you right into it.

LEE: Great.

BRYAN: That's awesome. Now, I want to talk a little bit about Boy Scout troops promoting the accomplishments that they've had. We've got them in the troop, and now, let's say they've done something really successful, (or) they've done an incredible service project, they've got 10 Eagle Scouts all getting the award at the same time. Do you have any advice for how they can get that story out there? I mean, they don't have their own PR team like a big company might, so how would you recommend they share that story?

MICHAEL: There's a couple of great things that you can do. People talk a lot about the demise of the local newspapers, but the reality is a lot of our community newspapers are going strong and they are looking for great, positive stories about families, about youth, about Scouting. Something as simple as sending a photo to your local newspaper with a little write up in the bottom of it. Every Eagle Scout project should have somebody assigned to take pictures and share those things with a local media outlet. And it doesn't have to be a newspaper. In today's world,

mommy bloggers, for instance, do a fantastic job of providing news to a very targeted audience. And frankly, it's our target audience that we want to share that with.

There's another opportunity as well. The communications group at the National Service Center has an email address that, if there is a fantastic, positive news story going on somewhere in your community, they're inviting people to send news to [PR@scouting.org](mailto:PR@scouting.org) If there's a local dignitary or celebrity speaking at an event or you have an Eagle Scout that's done something remarkable in terms of a service project or a Scout that's done something remarkable we would invite you to send that story to [PR@scouting.org](mailto:PR@scouting.org) and we'll see if there's a place where we can share that nationally.

**BRYAN:** Michael, what about the Scouts themselves? Surely there's a role for them in this recruiting process. What can they do?

**MICHAEL:** That's a great question. The way that youth and families communicate today - we're talking social media. Now, that doesn't necessarily mean Facebook in particular because we also know they're using other channels as well. In the past, a lot of organizations have discouraged use of electronics on campouts; we want kids focused on those activities. But there's a place to capture those pictures, those, quote/unquote,

Facebook moments or Instagram moments and invite our Scouts to share those and say, "Look, here's us having a mountaintop experience at the Tooth of Time in Philmont or at a local camp." A lot of people don't really have a troop historian anymore; but have a Scout in our troop that handles our digital. He's shooting video, he's posting it to the troop Facebook page or it's going to go on an Instagram feed where people can see the fun and excitement and hopefully get interested in joining and being a part of the adventure.

BRYAN: That's great, Michael. It concerns me a little bit that a Scout with a single tap can share a photo, his exact location, text with a larger community. So should we be monitoring this?

MICHAEL Absolutely. What you'll find on the Scouting website is the social media guidelines. You've got to make sure that you've paid attention to the ages of youth on those pages and that we're following all the right rules and guidelines on those things. It's important to have some real conversations with boys in our troops about some things to watch out for - personal, identifiable information. We need to make sure it's being used in a way that makes the most sense, but yet keeps people safe.

BRYAN: And you would involve the Scouts themselves in that

conversation about creating any sort of troop policy?

MICHAEL: Absolutely. That's a great opportunity for an adult volunteer to provide some leadership and some direction on it and then have some candid conversations with Scouts about what can go on online.

LEE: Well, Michael, you certainly shared a lot of information with us. Before we let you go, I'd like to ask if there's anything else about promoting your unit in the community that we haven't talked about that you think our listeners ought to hear.

MICHAEL: The most important thing that we can do is to deliver fantastic experience to youth and parents. One of the reasons that organizations like Disney and Starbucks and other world-class organizations like our own do so well is that they deliver a life-changing experience that people just can't wait to go tell other people about. Just deliver a fantastic program that when those volunteers and those parents come home from that weekend or from that event, they can't wait to tell somebody else about it and say, "You've got to get involved in Scouting."

BRYAN: I want to thank Michael for joining us on ScoutCast and really diving into that relationship between a unit and the community

and how it helps a unit recruit more boys into the unit. Thank you so much, Michael.

MICHAEL: Great. Have a good day.

LEE: Let's check in with CubCast, then we'll be right back with reminders and tips.

**(July Cubcast –snippet: New STEM Requirements)**

BRYAN: Okay, Lee, it's time for July Reminders and Tips.

LEE: It's that time of year when you want to get your Charter Organization Representative, also known in ScoutSpeak as the COR, involved in your annual program planning.

BRYAN: This allows the COR to, actually, see what activities the unit is planning for the year and how it can relate to the yearly plan and objectives that the Chartered Organization may have.

LEE: This month's *Boys' Life* magazine has an amazing article about a troop from Fredericksburg, Virginia, who spent their entire summer vacation biking from San Francisco to Newport Beach. That's 4,000 miles. Incredible.

BRYAN: That's a must read. Speaking of stuff to read, please subscribe to Bryan

on Scouting, my daily blog for Cub Scout, Boy Scout and Venturing Leaders. Go to [blog.scoutingmagazine.org](http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org) and find the “get email updates” box. Just enter your information and you’ll get an email every time there’s a new post.

### **Begin Music Under**

BRYAN: So that's it for the July ScoutCast. Thanks to our guest Michael Ramsey...

LEE: ...And thank you for listening. Be sure to tune in next month as we get updated on a few changes to the Boy Scout Program. I'm looking forward to that one myself.

BRYAN: Me, too. So what would you out there look forward to listening to? We'd like to know. Just send us an email to [ScoutCast@scouting.org](mailto:ScoutCast@scouting.org) or a tweet to @BSAScoutCast. So with that, I'm Bryan Wendell.

LEE: And I'm Lee Shaw. Enjoy the summer everyone.

### **MUSIC FULL TO FINISH**