

JANUARY – SUCCESSION PLANNING

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LEE: Happy New Year's, everyone! Welcome to the January 2017 ScoutCast. I'm Lee Shaw, Team Leader of National Alliance.

BRYAN: And I'm Bryan on Scouting blogger, Bryan Wendell. And it's our New Year's Resolution to make ScoutCast even better for listeners in 2017, so let's get started with succession planning, which is having the right person in place to take over if, for whatever reason, a Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster or Committee Member needs to bow out of his or her commitment.

LEE: There is a little more to it than just having the first available warm body to fill a vacant slot.

LEE: You need to find the right person.

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LEE: And with that, to help us, is Kathleen Daggett. Kathleen is a long-time member of Troop 32 in Santa Rosa, California, where she currently serves as a committee chairperson. Welcome to ScoutCast, Kathleen.

KATHLEEN: Thank you.

LEE: We're going to jump right in to it. So, in terms of the succession planning, what is the topic all about?

KATHLEEN: It's proactively ensuring you have all the needed, capable adults on hand, and in the queue in case something changes, to keep your troop running smoothly. Succession planning is a process of identifying and assessing and recruiting adult leaders and parents - ready to step in or step up if you need to into these positions.

When we're talking about the positions, they're both the formal positions that you guys were just talking about – the Community Chair, the Scoutmaster, maybe the Advancement Coordinator, the Treasurer – but also all those not as titled or not as formal roles that are necessary in a troop –Popcorn Kernel, the person who manages your medical forms or an event leader or some outing coordinator. All those troop-specific roles that help make it come together for the Scouts; some are Scout-facing and program-oriented activities but some are also that behind-the-scenes more Scout-supporting troop infrastructure sort of stuff as well.

BRYAN: So, Kathleen, other than continuity, which you mentioned, why is it important to have succession planning in a troop?

KATHLEEN: First off, the basic concept of Boy Scouts is boy-led and adult-guided, and we need a good, solid flow of adults to do that guiding. So the adults are needed to do Scout-facing stuff but also to help keep the troop functioning and growing. They build that foundation, a stable framework or safety net of the troop; encouraging and mentoring and making sure all the behind-the-scenes background stuff is happening. That team needs to be a well-staffed and well-trained cadre of adult leaders working together to support

the Scouts putting on the actual, Boy Scout program in support of the Scouts.

LEE: Where do we find these future leaders? How do we identify the leaders of tomorrow?

KATHLEEN: Generally speaking in a troop, you're probably already looking at some. They're the parents of the Scouts, by and large. Every once in a while you'll come up with a grandparent or maybe one of the young Eagle Scout, Assistant Scoutmasters or a community member. But by and large, the vast majority of adult leaders in your unit are going to be the parents. We'll find that much of the Boy Scout literature available on Recruiting talks about identifying prospects as though there's some external well with people out in the committee that you can go to look for leaders. But at the troop level you can generally replace the word "prospect" with parent and those are the people who are going to be the candidates to choose from.

But it's more than just recruiting really. It's also proactively looking forward not just to fill the slots you need filled right now but to be growing and guiding and encouraging and training your parents and adult leaders into, who they can be tomorrow and who do you need them to be in the troop tomorrow to help the boys.

LEE: So, Kathleen, you're really talking about making sure you're able to cultivate the individuals that are currently within the units, is that right?

KATHLEEN: Yes, definitely. And, that really comes from the culture of volunteering with your parents, having them understand that adult participation is expected,

it's presumed –not in a demanding kind of way. Often a troop will say it upfront and it's not so much telling somebody they have to volunteer but making sure people understand that they can and they should and that new adults are welcomed and the people are encouraged to go to training. There's also balance here too. Not everybody is a good fit for every role, That Committee Chair or Scoutmaster, maybe Chartered Organization Rep, they're all looking at those parents and seeing who's got the skills and the time and the talents and the commitment to do different things, and then try to map that to that parent that you can turn into an adult leader.

LEE: Kathleen. I was wondering, where else would there possibly be places or organizations that will allow us to go outside of the Scout parents as part of the succession plan. Individuals who may know other folks from different organizations they're involved in that really doesn't have anything to do with Scouting but they would want the very best for our children, and that would include the Scouts. But can you tell me if there is other places where we can identify individuals to be part of that?

KATHLEEN: Certainly. Depending on who is the chartered organization in a troop - that might be a great source. If it's a church or a community organization perhaps they have other, avenues into adults other than the Scout parents. That parent may know someone from work who might be great. There's ways to get those community members or extended family members and friends in as well. It's really just again casting your net wide. You cast your net within the parents that you have and then you cast your net and ask them to look further out and about into the community and to their contacts as well.

LEE: I was thinking in terms of service clubs and different organizations. Most busy people stay busy because they're involved in so many different things, and so they could be part of Scouting but they also could be part of the Rotary or Kiwanis or other organizations where there are lots of people that are involved in the chamber of commerce. There are so many ways that we can go with identifying people. It's just a matter of keeping that in the forefront of our mind as we go through our daily processes.

KATHLEEN: Definitely.

BRYAN: Now, Kathleen, sometimes extreme things happen and somebody has to leave the troop without any advance notice, but ideally as Lee said, we're kind of preparing these people for the position, so I want to talk a little bit about timing. When is the right time to identify your next Scoutmaster of your troop?

KATHLEEN: Ideally you're looking for your next Scoutmaster while your current one is deeply engaged and happily doing it! You're bringing in the right assistants. Hopefully a number of assistant Scoutmasters are getting trained and perhaps groomed for the role. In our troop it often takes a better part of a year. You identify someone really that, we really want to be the next Scoutmaster, and it's a lot of pilot and copilot time, a lot of having that person walk through and just follow and get trained in partnership before they actually have to take over.

LEE: So, Kathleen, just tell me what role, if any, does generational diversity play in selecting leadership?

KATHLEEN: It's another factor as you're trying to fit the right leaders into your troop roles. Generally right now, many of our parents are currently the GenXers, they're in their 30s and 40s. There are still a lot of Baby Boomers who are in their 50s and 60s hopefully still helping the troop, and we've got those millennial parents certainly coming up in the Cub Scouts and moving into the Boy Scouts. We certainly kind of generalize about those generations but this is really so specific about knowing people individually, who's willing to volunteer in what type of role. We may find that some of these younger parents may want to see this as an opportunity for both them and their son to experience the great outdoors if they had not previously when they were younger. The Baby Boomers may have a lot more time now. They certainly have a lot more experience. They also may be rotating out of some of those physically more demanding jobs and want to take an indoor job. There are still jobs to be done in Scouting where you don't have to go on the 50-miler with the Scouts anymore so it's less generational as fitting the person to their time availability and their commitment and their skill sets.

BRYAN: Yeah, that makes sense. Now let's talk a little bit about lowercase S scouting. Who decides who's going to be that best prospect to fill a position like leader or committee member or even Popcorn Kernel? Who should be identifying those who have the necessary skill set?

KATHLEEN: That tends to be a team sport. Ideally it's a group of people. The Committee Chair, the Scoutmaster, hopefully the Chartered Organization Rep and maybe, depending on the troop, a handful of other key senior adults looking out at not only the adult that are helping and doing things but the parents who have not actually stepped up and aren't helping. Certainly the volunteers get to help make those choices too. They're part

of that team. So definitely a team sport as you're trying to figure it out. The person holding the role right now might be great at figuring out who is a like-minded person to fill the role next.

BRYAN: Yeah. They know what it takes.

KATHLEEN: They know kind of what sort of person that we're looking for. All ideas are welcome when he's trying to find the next person.

LEE: All right. So what resources are available for units to use that would help them become experts at succession planning?

KATHLEEN: The Boy Scouts have resources for almost anything you could think of. There's certainly a number of, of pieces on, Scouting.org and, there is a document Selecting Quality Leaders. There is an online module in the Adult Supplemental Training with the same title that you can go to.

Most of the adult leader focused guidebooks - our Troop Committee Guidebook, our Troop Leader Guidebook, the Roundtable Planning Guide – all have a piece about looking for volunteers, how to recruit people and how to coach and develop them and, get them training. That's certainly one of the things that we want to make sure all of our volunteers are doing is going to the right level of training. And as they go through it they'll also see that there's usually something in there about recruiting and volunteering.

The succession planning is really, so troop-specific. There's both formal jobs and then there's all those informal jobs that really make each

individual troop go. This is leadership management at its core, so even things external to what the Scouts offer can help with that.

BRYAN: Now, we don't want to have too much turnover within a troop within the adult leaders of a troop, but isn't it nice to have some fresh blood that goes in there and doesn't that tie into succession planning in a way as bringing in new ideas at the adult leader level?

KATHLEEN: Definitely. There are certainly troops that get to be a little too uh, clique-y, and we definitely don't want that. You want a very open and welcoming troop. Scouting is an exercise that we're all raising each other's children so you want lots of parents, lots of thoughts in there all contributing. So, as we bring in those new ideas and those new faces you really do want to make sure that they go through training, they understand the mission and the vision and have a commitment to Scouting. You don't want that rapid turnover but you want a lot of rotation and bringing in those new ideas, that new energy.

LEE: Kathleen, is there anything else about the succession planning that we haven't talked about that you think our listeners should know?

KATHLEEN: First off, always make sure that we're recognizing the parents and the adult leaders. Making sure that we're thanking them early and often, encouraged and supported along the way. The more you can recognize and thank those leaders, the more the word gets out and it's clear to the rest of the parents. Probably the other one is don't forget to do your own exit strategy planning. That little core of people who are working on succession planning should also be working on their own. Each adult

should be thinking about when they're going to rotate out, what's the next thing they're going to do because you want that to happen before it's too late. The key to this is really just getting proactive and doing it. Go out and start doing succession planning. It's ongoing, look at what you've got, look at what you'd need, who needs a break, who needs training, who needs to come onboard, how do we get them there, how do we get them set up for success to do it, how do we make sure ever, all these adults are helping your Scouts put on the best program you can.

LEE: Wow. You know, we talk sometimes in reminders and tips about having backup leaders in place but never really mentioned how to go about doing that. So Kathleen, thanks for coming onto ScoutCast. Bryan and I really appreciate you for this eye-opening discussion and I'm sure our listeners do as well.

KATHLEEN: Thanks for having me. It was great to be here.

BRYAN: And listeners, don't go anywhere because up next, Reminders and Tips.

(Jamboree Commercial)

BRYAN: It's time now for Reminders and Tips and this month's tip is a great one. Family Friends of Scouting, also known as FOS, is an annual council-wide presentation conducted in every pack, troop, crew, team, ship, or post between the months of November and March. The Family FOS campaign asks parents, families, and alumni to consider financially supporting the Scouting program.

LEE: This effort offsets the cost of providing Scouting to your child, so if you haven't already done so, contact your District FOS Chair for more details. Your support and participation in the Family FOS program in your unit is critical for its success.

BRYAN: Absolutely. And now turning to the magazines, be sure to pick up the January-February issue of *Scouting* magazine, as we tagged along with Pack 3 in Idaho as they enjoyed some safe winter fun, and we learned how Boy Scouts – not just adult leaders – helped these Cub Scouts build shelters, go snowshoeing and experience the magic of winter.

LEE: The magic of winter – how 'bout that? Well, for a more serious note, in this month's *Boys' Life* magazine, be sure to read the news story about what Scout's units have been doing to help the people of Louisiana with the recovery efforts following the recent floods.

BRYAN: That's a good turn right there.

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LEE: So that's it for January's ScoutCast. Thanks again to our guest, Kathleen Daggett, for joining us.

BRYAN: And thank you for listening. Be sure to come back next month as we reflect on the importance of Scout retention. And with that, I'm Bryan Wendell.

LEE: And I'm Lee Shaw. If there are other topics you'd like to hear about, be sure to let us know. Just send us an email to Scoutcast@Scouting.org or tweet @bsaScoutcast. We'd love to hear from you.

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