



## Recruiting Best Practices and Other Helpful Recruiting and Join Scouting Night Information for Units

I. The BSA National website has a BSA Best Practices Portal via MyScouting.org. It can be found at the following link:

<https://bestpracticesportal.scouting.org/Pages/Default.aspx> . There are also fillable PDFs for posters, fliers and door hangars <http://www.scouting.org/Home/Marketing/Recruiting.aspx>

II. Powhatan District Recruiting Best Practices are dynamically shared via the Powhatan District Dropbox. Every unit should contact Megan Ball for access at [powhatanmarketing@gmail.com](mailto:powhatanmarketing@gmail.com) Any unit can access any and all information on the District Dropbox at any time and can add information that might help other units at any time as well. If you want to share your unit's recruiting best practices, please post them directly in the Dropbox in the appropriate section or send them to Membership Chair Inge Gedo at [inge.gedo@yahoo.com](mailto:inge.gedo@yahoo.com).

III. Every Unit is highly encouraged to use multiple opportunities to recruit new youth every year to keep your unit "strong and growing". The Powhatan District Membership will have District level recruiting events and presence at community activities and will funnel any contacts to units. The District Membership team can also help units with posters, flyers, My Friend Is A Scout invitation cards, Join Scouting Night (JSN) boxes of goodies for recruiting, or other resources as well as to help with recruiting ideas and strategies. The District Marketing team can advise a unit on or can help publicize to media the events, awards, recognitions, and recruiting activities/events if the unit provides content.

IV. A strong Spring recruiting campaign along with a strong Fall recruiting campaign can make for a strong recruiting year. Every unit needs Tiger Cubs and graduating kindergarten boys are eligible to join in June. The Unit Membership Chair or Membership Coordinator is encouraged to create an annual recruiting plan or strategy with year-round recruiting opportunities (even if they are at regular unit events), but concentrated with a strong Spring Recruiting Campaign and a strong Fall Recruiting Campaign that targets new youth of all scouting ages for your unit.

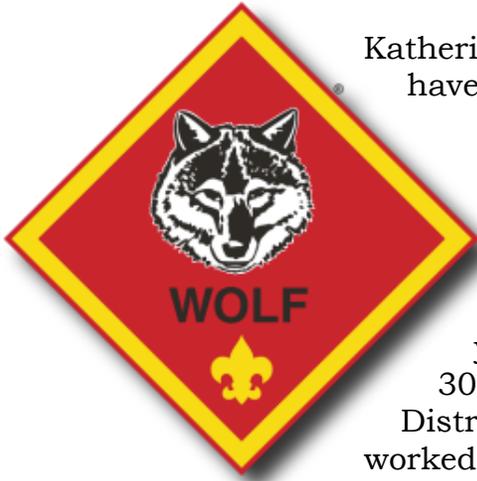
V. Tried and true methods can be very successful for recruiting, but don't be afraid to think outside the box in how you reach out to all the schools and other organizations or places where youth and parents can be found in your area.



VI. Resources to help the Unit Membership Chair/Coordinator can be found on the Powhatan District Dropbox and on the National BSA website, to include a Membership Chair/Coordinator guide and Recruiting guide. Don't forget to add your best practices -- whether it is about particular kinds of activities for the youth and/or for the adults that have worked best during a Join Scouting Night, other events during the year that you use as recruiting events that have worked well to attract youth/families, or specific logistics/planning details that one should not forget in planning a recruiting campaign or recruiting event.

VII. To get the ball rolling, I have asked a few units to share some of their recruiting best practices from 2014 at the March 2015 Roundtable. They are attached and this information will also be posted on the Powhatan Dropbox. Each unit that provided information ahead of the Roundtable also agreed that fellow units could contact them about any of the information or ideas they provided. Their contact information is attached to the best practices they provided. I also hope you share your ideas at this and other Roundtables, via Dropbox, and just in person so we can all help each other have a great recruiting year for all of our wonderful units.

## Pack 1160 Recruiting Best Practices inputs:



Katherine and I thought about this and we think the following ideas have benefitted us significantly (in rough order of priority):

- 1) Nearly all of our boys attend Crossfield Elementary. We schedule our Join Scouting Night for the week after Crossfield allows non-profits to send out flyers in "Tuesday folders" each parent receives. This often means that we cannot hold our JSN until the first week of October, but the years we have NOT waited for this, we have only recruited 20-30% of our regular totals. [We realize this is contrary to the District goal of unifying Join Scouting Nights, but this is what has worked for us].
- 2) We have an information table out at Crossfield's Back to School night - very simple, just 1-2 leaders available to talk about our Pack, let them know our annual calendar, and encourage them to come to Join Scouting Night. We take their contact info.
- 3) Before Join Scouting Night, we get in touch with everyone who expressed interest at Back to School night, encourage them to bring checkbooks for dues and let them know we will be looking for den leaders.
- 4) At Join Scouting Night, we have available applications, our annual Pack Calendar, Pack T-Shirts, and a list of anticipated expenses. We start off with a flag ceremony by one of our dens, then dismiss the kids for an activity (songs, leathercraft, etc.) and talk to the parents for 30 minutes or so. Then re-unite and the kids perform a song or share their crafts with their parents. We aim to get as many people signed up that night as possible.
- 5) For those who do not provide applications that night, we follow up and let them know a 'deadline' / target date for turning in applications so we can form dens. This may be 7-10 days after JSN.
- 6) At our September Pack Meeting (before JSN), we give all the boys the 'Invite a friend' cards to encourage them to invite a friend to join the Pack.

Look forward to discussing more at Roundtable.

Tom & Katherine Scott

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## Pack 158 Recruiting Best Practices (or what we think we did right this year):

- We primarily used Join Scouting Night, however, you need to (1) advertise the event to get people there, (2) provide the right information for families to make an informed decision, and (3) follow-up promptly.
- Pack 158 meets at and draws largely from one elementary school. We advertised Scouting and JSN at the PTA sponsored Club Fair, in the PTA virtual newsletter, and with a hardcopy flyer in the Kindergarten students' weekly packets. We also have a presence at two other elementary schools and designated Pack liaisons to establish communications and have a POC for those schools.
- Had a good presence at Back-to-School Night that included leaders and scouts in uniform; videos and slideshows on iPads, tri-fold posters, Boy's Life magazine, etc. At this event, we collected contact information from anyone interested and invited families to JSN to learn more.
- Due to the advertising and participation in Back-to-School Night, we had a very good participation at JSN. For JSN, we had a presence of leaders and scouts in uniform and delivered a slide presentation to parents. The slide show provided information about how Cub Scouts is organized, the advancement levels, uniform and cost requirements, benefits to child development/education, child-protection policies, parent involvement, and planned Pack events, including pictures and videos of Pinewood Derby and our signature Gravity Grand Prix event (soap box cars). We believe that the presentation answered our most frequently asked questions particularly since Cub Scouts is intimidating to new parents because there is so much information that is not all familiar. We were clear on the specific Next Steps the first being "Register your Scout". We provided Scout and Parent applications that evening.
- The information provided has to educate parents on what to expect so that they are making an informed decision; getting the kids excited is the easy part and is done with seeing scouts in uniforms, pictures, videos, etc.
- Our JSN events traditionally have some games and food (cooking hot dogs on a camp grill outside with a tent set up).
- The toughest part (and the limiting factor) is still getting parent volunteers. So, we also seek volunteers at JSN and are direct that we also need Tiger Den leaders identified to make it all happen, as well as a parent commitment for other events later in the year. Last year, we also put together a Den Leader "getting started" checklist and promised that Pack Leaders were ready and available to help guide and answer questions for new Den Leaders.
- You have to follow up with families after JSN. To do that, you have to have families sign in and provide contact information at the event. We had sign-in sheets right at the door. In conversations with parents we asked if they had signed in to make sure we had their information. We immediately followed up with families multiple times via email with electronic copies of the presentation, Pack information, an offer to answer questions, etc. We used different messaging to follow up with families that expressed interest at Back-to-School Night,



but did not attend JSN. We would have followed up more and made phone calls, but we were limited and concerned by the number of Tiger Den Leader volunteers.

- Lastly, all families were invited to the first Pack Meeting and were asked to bring their completed application if they had not already submitted it. That meeting has to be well organized, and we had a parent breakout session during the meeting to review info for families that were not able to make it to JSN, explain the application and fees (and collect), review the annual calendar of Pack events, and seek volunteers, or at least explain what kind of support we would need from parents throughout the year.
- Bottom-line: we had a good plan that included advertising and it involved lots of communications. You have to communicate, communicate, communicate!
- What we are improving for next year:
  - Put a Scouting message in Spring PTA newsletters. Tell parents to e-mail us now if they want to be added to our mailing list for the Fall registration; we'll communicate earlier about events and solicit volunteers for a Den Leader in advance and better prepare that person.
  - In the Fall we need to improve how we collect applications, distribute books and help parents get uniforms. This needs to be a simple, fast process.
  - Organize an outing at the beginning of the year (2015-16 school year) for purpose of helping with recruiting and getting the year kicked-off with the Pack.

Here is my email and cell phone number; I would be happy to field questions.

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## Cub Scout Recruiting Best Practices from Pack 1540

- 1) Set your Join Scouting night at least 6 months before, especially if need to reserve a room at a school. Fairfax County room reservation for schools is online.
- 2) Prepare a recruiting flyer advertising the Pack, Scouts and your Join Scouting Night
- 3) Email campaign – work with schools, church, PTO, etc to send the JSN flyer through email
- 4) Meet with the school administrator to request permission for the following:
  - a. A table outside the school entrance during all back to school nights
  - b. To post some JSN flyers in the school
  - c. To post yard signs on the school property at least 2 days before JSN especially near the kiss and ride drop off area (always know the rules where you post yard signs, the county may collect signs and charge for such collection)
- 5) Back to school nights
  - a. Be early and set up table
    - i. Table should have JSN flyers
    - ii. Scout recruiting posters attached to the front
    - iii. Pictures of scouting events on table
    - iv. Scout handbooks on table
    - v. A number of pinewood derby cars and trophies
  - b. If possible coordinate with Girl Scouts to be there (scouting then has a larger presence)
  - c. Have scouts in uniform assisting in handing out JSN flyers
  - d. Have scouts hold doors for people while they hand out the JSN flyers
    - i. Note may be competing against political recruiters, therefore holding the doors makes the scouts stand apart from them
- 6) Join Scouting Night
  - a. Be sure to have yard signs posted during the days preceding the JSN meeting
  - b. Have scouts and parents available to assist in the meeting
  - c. Have an activity for the new recruits – we have been building boats and racing in the rain gutters
  - d. Have a sign-in at the door
  - e. Have table similar to the back to school night (pictures, pinewood derby cars, etc)
  - f. Have a slide show running with various scout events
  - g. Have a group ready to assist with registrations
  - h. Have a leader present the Cub Scout overview
  - i. Have the recruits and the current scouts go build their boats and race while a leader tells the “String Story” (describing the life of their boy) and then show the Scout Leader overview to the parents
  - j. Get the parents of the same grade together and have select a leader for their newly formed dens.
  - k. Have everyone complete their applications
  - l. Provide everyone a folder with scout information including the Pack’s upcoming events such as the Campout.



At the event we do the raingutter regatta race. The recruits build the boats and get to keep them. The parents have said that the boys talk about those boats for several days after the event.

Throughout the year we try to have some bigger events and siblings can come (the younger ones are who we are targeting). We try for one or two a year. We try to have good entertainment at the Blue and Gold banquet. We have also had a reptile night and had the Wizards mascots come see us.

Let me know if you need more information.

Todd

Contact:

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