

“Knives, Guns, and Fire-Selling the Sizzle of Scouting” Troop Open House Recruitment

(A message from Scout Executive Paul A. Wilkinson)

Boys join Scouting because of the opportunity to build campfires, shoot guns, use knives, and because of a variety of other outdoor adventures which Scouting has to offer. It is important that we “sell the sizzle of Scouting” to new boys on a year round basis. Boy Scout Troops should be attempting to increase membership at all times throughout the year. There are several different types of recruitment efforts that a troop can utilize in order to accomplish this task:

1. A Troop Open-House

A Troop Open House lets troop’s roll out the red carpet to welcome guests and show them what scouting has to offer. It is a great way to show off activities and accomplishments to individuals that have never tried scouting.

Hosting a troop open house is a five-step process that has been tried and proven in troops throughout the nation. Each of the following five steps is vital to the event's success:

1. Present a school rally to fifth- and sixth-graders (Utilize the Boy Fact Surveys).
2. Mail the parents of interested youth a personal invitation to the troop open house.
3. Follow the invitation with a telephone call to the parents.
4. Host the troop open house for youth and their parents. This is a great place to “show off” the activities which your troop has done in the past and demonstrate some Scouting Outdoor Skills.
5. Organize a troop or district activity to involve new Scouts right away.

Youth join Scouting for the fun and outdoor adventure. Parents want them to join for completely different reasons—character building and leadership training. Following this plan for conducting a troop open house will help you address the wants and needs of both youth and their parents. For more information and a sample timeline visit www.scouting.org/.

2. Boy-To-Boy Recruitment

One of the best ways to recruit new scouts is by having current scouts that are enthusiastic about the program. A good way to channel this “positive energy” is to have a fall recruitment campaign within the troop. This is where current scouts show their friends and peers all the benefits and possibilities that scouting has to offer. You can offer the prize of a recruiter patch to any scout that brings in a new member. For more information and a sample timeline visit www.scouting.org/.

When thinking about recruitment just remember it is a year round process and not just a once is enough type of program. Don't forget that once you have successfully hosted an open house and have recruited new members you are eligible to receive your 2006 recruiter patch. Just ask for it at the council service center when you turn in the new member applications.

Troop Open House Recruitment Patches

