

NOVEMBER – USING THE DEN LEADER GUIDE

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AMY: Hello everyone! Thanks for tuning in to the November Cubcast. I'm Cub Scouting Specialist, Amy Hutcherson.

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr, Senior Writer for *Boys Life* magazine. The winter months are approaching and it may be too cold or icy or just downright blech where you live to have your Cubs outside running around doing all the outdoor adventures mentioned in the Den Leader Guide for advancement.

AMY: And here in Texas it's 102 degrees in the shade in the summer, so that's not very good for outdoor adventure either. So what do you do when the Guide suggests an outdoor adventure and common sense tells you to stay inside?

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AMY: Katie Dettmann joins us to help us figure that out. Katie currently serves as Cubmaster for Pack 9111 in Lakeville, Minnesota, and last summer she helped lead a fabulous conference at Philmont on how to facilitate a high-performing Cub Scout Pack. Now she's going to share all that great information with us right here on CubCast. Welcome to the show, Katie.

KATIE: Thanks for having me.

AMY: Now, before we dive into the adventures and using the Guide, let's talk a bit about the desired outcomes for Cub Scouting.

KATIE: So, the desired outcomes for Cub Scouting are to have fun and for the boys to be accepted. When they wrote the program, it starts with development, participatory citizenship, personal fitness, outdoor adventure and leadership development, but anytime you get the group of boys together and you run the program as intended those are all going to be met. They're all well-written into the program.

AMY: So we kind of do it in a way where the boys don't know they're getting all those outcomes.

KATIE: Absolutely.

AARON: What about the den meetings, Katie? What's the desired outcome of a den meeting?

KATIE: For the den meetings, having fun in a smaller group so it's more of a social experience, the kids have a better opportunity to connect together. But we're working on advancement during those meetings.

AMY: Okay, so, Katie, here is the real key, right? How does a Den Leader use the Den Leader Guide to achieve the desired outcomes and the fun that we want in those meetings?

KATIE: The Den Leader Guide - it's like a set of lesson plans that you can use. If you give a new leader the Guide one hour and a trip to Walmart, they can run a great den meeting. When they deliver that program as it's written, as it's intended, they're going to have a fun, organized and interesting event for the boys.

AARON: So how much flexibility is there? Do the meeting plans have to be followed strictly to the letter?

KATIE: Not exactly. The Den Leader Guide is just that, it's a guide, so the intent is that it's going to give you suggestions. It gives you all the resources you need if you'd like to follow the program as it's written out in there. There are certainly requirements that you do have to do, and those are very clearly stated in there as something that must be completed.

AMY: So, can you provide us with some guidance on what to consider when wanting to change a requirement or needing to, based on your situation?

KATIE: So, what's the Cub Scout Motto?

AMY & AARON (in unison): Do Your Best!

KATIE: Yes, right?

KATIE: So, we take that Cub Scout Motto and we use that when making our decisions. You might have a Bear that's required to camp overnight with the pack that has autism or some other disabilities that makes that trip impossible for him? What you need to look at is with the parents figure out what can he do. We can try the campout. If it doesn't work out, he did his best. We need to be flexible for those kinds of kids.

There are cases where the weather may throw a wrench in your system. You might be planning an overnight campout but suddenly there are tornado warnings and you have to evacuate. You did your best. You tried it. You don't need to plan a completely new event.

AMY: We actually had an instance in our den where for the Bear Carnival a young man missed the presentation of the carnival, so as a substitution he

did a neighborhood carnival just with his immediate neighbors and it turned out wonderfully.

AARON: I had a boy in my own Cub Scout Pack who loved Cub Scouting, enthusiastic about the program, came to all the meetings, his parents are great, just had no interest at all in spending the night outdoors. And his parents had no interest, had never done it, it just wasn't a part of their family, it wasn't a part of their culture. And we had him out for the day and he participated in all the daytime activities, did the campfire, had a great time - went home after that. Now, Katie, can a leader simply modify requirements or do you have to get permission to do that?

KATIE: A leader needs to use their discretion when they're modifying requirements. A committee meeting should take place involving the Cubmaster and definitely the parents of the youth that cannot complete the requirement. And in that case you can discuss what an appropriate substitute elective would be.

AMY: So, if there's a requirement where you have to have someone specific come to your den meeting or go to a specific place in your community and those resources just aren't available to you, how can you substitute?

KATIE: For an example, there's a requirement to bring in an Olympic athlete. Well, you might not have an Olympic athlete in your neighborhood so you could easily reach out to a coach or even the quarterback of the local high school team.

AARON: What about this example; let's say the requirement is to go visit a historical site and maybe the closest historical site to where you and your boys live is unreasonable. Maybe its a couple hours away. Are there alternatives for a situation like that?

KATIE: In that case I would definitely look at resources in your community. Is there may be a less well-known historical site that you could go to? Or even is there someone who knows a lot about history, a historian or a vet or somebody who's been through something in their life that can come in and share their experience with your den?

AMY: Okay. So what resources are available to leaders to learn more about how to modify an adventure if needed?

KATIE: So in each of the Den Leader Guides for each of the ranks, they're very clearly laid out what you need to do, what you can do. In addition, the appendix of the Den Leader Guide contains guidelines for working with youth of specific disabilities, and that's very helpful if you are unfamiliar of how to modify or how to work with kids in those situations. It's a great resource - it's laid out very easy to follow, it's comprehensive, really it makes being a Den Leader less intimidating to new volunteers.

AARON: Excellent. Katie, is there anything else about the Cub Scout Leader Guide that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

KATIE: There's a lot of opportunity within the program as written, but, as a general rule if you find something in the Guide that's just unrealistic for your situation, look outside of the box. Look for other options. There are many ways you can meet these requirements.

AMY: Wonderful. So the thing to keep in mind is the Den Leader Guides are just that, they're guides, not mandates. Katie, thank you so much for being on CubCast and helping us to think outside the box.

KATIE: Thank you for having me.

AARON: We'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

(FSB Commercial)

AARON: Now let's jump into Reminders and Tips for November. First, let's talk membership inventory. By now all your new youth and adult application from your recruiting drive should be submitted to the council office.

AMY: It's a good idea to compare the My.Scouting Tools records to your own to make sure there are no discrepancies and that all those new folks are properly registered.

AARON: Now, ask yourself this: do all your dens have Den Chiefs? Talk to your Commissioner or Scoutmaster about recruiting a Boy Scout to serve as a Den Chief. Being a Den Chief counts as a leadership position for the Scout's advancement, so you're doing a good turn by "hiring" a Den Chief. He'll also make a great program assistant.

AMY: As a bonus – you'll find you have a lot more time for yourself, and having this assistant will make being a leader so much easier!

AMY: Download the October 2013 Cubcast to learn all about the joy of having a Den Chief.

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AMY: And that, sadly, brings us to the end of the November CubCast. Thanks to our guest, Katie Dettmann for joining us.

AARON: So, did you enjoy this CubCast? Even if you didn't, let us know. Just send us an email to Cubcast@scouting.org or tweet to @Cubcast. We leave you now with a Thanksgiving favorite from the Think & Grin section of *Boys Life* magazine. What is a teddy bear's favorite food at Thanksgiving? Stuffing! With that, I am Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson. Hope you'll tune in next month for Cub Scout Awards. And from all of us at CubCast ...

AMY & AARON: Happy Thanksgiving!!

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