

## **MARCH – CUB SCOUTING: THE FAMILY PROGRAM**

### **Music Full then Under**

AARON: Hello, everyone. I'm Aaron Derr, senior writer of *Boys' Life* magazine. We're so glad you've tuned into the March CubCast. Joining me is the lovely and talented Cub Scout experience specialist, Amy Hutcherson.

AMY: Thank you very much, Aaron. In this episode, Steve Hoskins joins us to discuss the family and how to properly incorporate your family into your Cub Scouting program.

AARON: So, I have a little something to get us started from the Think-n-Grin page of *Boys' Life* magazine. This is a good one. Three men on a deserted island find a lamp with a genie who grants them each one wish. The first man says, "I miss my family. I wish to go back home with them," and then, poof, he's gone. The second man says, "You know what? Me, too. I wish to be back home with my family," and then, poof, he's gone. The third man, now all by himself, looks at the genie and says, "You know what? I miss my friends. Can you bring them back?"

### **Music Fades**

AARON: So, usually, with every topic, there is a discussion about how to get the parents and family involved, but in this episode, Steve, we'd like to discuss the family aspect of the Cub Scouting program in greater detail. For those of you listening, Steve is currently the vice president of district operations for the Trapper Trails Council in Ogden, Utah. He has also served as an assistant Scoutmaster, a district roundtable commissioner, troop

committee chair, and enterprise risk committee chair. Steve works with the BSA National Service Center on claims administration for incidents that occur within troops, teams and crews. Welcome to CubCast, Steve.

STEVE: What a privilege to be here. Thanks for the opportunity.

AARON: I'm a Cub Scout Leader, Steve, and there's a lot of families involved. So, give us kind of an overview - why do we want families involved in the Cub Scouting program?

STEVE: That's a marvelous question. The Cub Scout Parent Information Guide provides a very short and direct answer to your question, and it reads as follows. Quote: "Cub Scouting helps to support your family by providing ready-made opportunities for you and your son to do things together." That was my experience with my three Cub Scout sons, but it was more than just our pack meetings that were a family event. When one of my sons would receive an award, there was a built-in cheering section. Imagine the growth of self-esteem and the feeling of accomplishment when your son received recognition by getting the award and his family was there to cheer him along. This is meant to build strong families in shared experiences in memories. Children know they are part of something much larger than themselves when they participate together in family activities. Cub Scouting just does not work without the family.

AMY: It certainly is a huge aspect for me and my family to be able to participate in the Cub Scouting program together and most of the time I do feel like it's one big, happy family but, Steve, can you point out any potential down side?

STEVE: Oh, another very excellent question. I might address that from two different angles. First, we have to face it, some down side to having

multiple families involved in the same den or pack. Yep, there is absolutely some problems that arise. People are people. Some get along better than others. However, sometimes someone will act in such a way that their actions are intolerable.

Where I lived there were a significant number of fathers who were employed by the federal government. These were bright men, nuclear engineers, physicists, electromagnetic specialists. At Pinewood Derby time, these fathers had been working all year on rare-metal axles, specialized wheels, aerodynamic design car bodies with special paint. These cars were amazing. At times, these dads would not even let their boys touch the car. We finally had to create a Dads Only Pinewood Derby so the boys could have their own race, just between the boys. Sometimes it might even be necessary to make a change in the pack if you can't get the parents to work together. It's important that we be flexible and look for options, just as we did with our Pinewood Derby dads by having a separate race just for them.

AARON: The All-Dad Pinewood Derby Race is a great idea. I can guaran-darn-tee you we'll be doing that in my pack this year. (Laughter) That's brilliant.

STEVE: Now, I would add a second answer. Cub Scouting is fun, lots of fun. The boys look forward to den meetings and especially pack meetings. The awards are cool. And I have found personally my daughters and younger sons who were not in Cub Scouts and who could not participate directly did sometimes feel a little resentful from their brothers who were able to participate and all the fun that they were having. My wife and I had to be aware and make sure our non-Cub Scout siblings were not completely left out, and that can sometimes be a challenge.

And there were far too many parents who thought Cub Scouting was a competition, the competition to win the Pinewood Derby or the Raingutter Regatta or who had the most awards. Unfortunately, too many parents look at that as competition.

AARON: What kind of tasks can we, as leaders, ask parents to do to help out in a productive manner?

STEVE: Parents must keep in mind the ultimate objective of the Cub Scouts is not to win; rather, it is the much more demanding task of learning to do your best. I would make sure that parents, even if they're not a volunteer (to) take the Youth Protection Training offered by the BSA.

Other things I would suggest that parents do: get involved with the planning process. What my wife and I did is we tried to involve the children who were not Cub Scouts as much in the program as we possibly could. For example, I let my daughters build their own Pinewood Derby car. Now, they didn't get to race it at the actual Pinewood Derby. But another thing that our pack did is we just left the track up and let anybody who wanted to run a car, run a car. And that was one way that my daughters got a chance to participate and didn't feel that they were completely left out.

Also important, listen to CubCast. It will teach you a lot about what you need to know.

AMY: Hey, I like that idea. All right. I'm going to confess. I was the den leader for my older son but there with me, along the way was my little guy, probably two or three at the time, tagging along. How can we find a balance?

STEVE: There is an incredible amount of competition for a child's, and frankly a parent's time as well. My wife and I struggled to find that balance at times with our own sons.

AMY: My younger son, he got to do all of the stuff when he was tagging along with me. I'd let him do it because I was afraid it was going to be World War 3 if he wasn't getting to do what his older brother was doing. But I was afraid that he might not feel like the excitement of Cub Scouting when he got to do it for himself, but that wasn't the case. He was excited about being a Cub Scout too.

STEVE: What makes it a greater challenge for Cub Scouting is because Cub Scouting is such a family affair, but you're absolutely right. There are certain things that only the Cub Scouts should be involved with. Now, from my experience, we tried really hard in our pack to minimize those kinds of events so that it only occurred very infrequently, trying to preserve the nature of the Cub Scout family-related type program. So, you need to focus in on those situations, one, where the BSA says no, it's only the registered Cub Scout that can participate, and two, where there may be safety issues involved that could possibly create a problem.

Let me give you a, an example. There was one Cub Pack that decided to have a snowball fight. Well, there was no snow, so they decided to use socks instead. It would have been inappropriate for a very young child to be involved with a sock fight. So you have to look at it and make sure that everything that's being done is age-appropriate and does not violate any of the BSA guidelines or that may be uncomfortable to you as a parent or to the pack.

AARON: That's great stuff, Steve. Any resources you can recommend to us that Cub Scout leaders and parents can go to find more information about these issues that we've talked about: finding the right balance, helping out in an appropriate manner, supporting their boys?

STEVE: Yes. In fact, there are several. One of the things I truly love about the Scouting organization is that there is so much information available at [Cubscouts.org](http://Cubscouts.org) and at [Scouting.org](http://Scouting.org). I already mentioned the Cub Scout Parent Information Guide. Then *CubCast*, *Boys' Life*, *Scouting* magazine, and don't forget the monthly roundtables. It's incredible the amount of information that one can learn from a roundtable.

One other thing that is unique about Cub Scouting is there are also so many Cub Scout volunteers who provide an incredible amount of information to various websites. My only caveat would be to remember to be careful. The program designed by the BSA is a pretty darn good program. If the program as follows as developed by the BSA, your boys will have a phenomenal experience. So those are the kinds of things I focus on: [Cubscout.org](http://Cubscout.org), [Scouting.org](http://Scouting.org). You're going to find all the information you need to accomplish any objective that you have within the Cub Scout program.

AMY: Is there anything else at all you can think of that we might want to share with our listeners about family involvement in Cub Scouting?

STEVE: I've got a lot of involvement with Scouting, particularly as an adult leader, but I have watched the development of my sons and daughters. My daughter is involved in Cub Scouting. I've got one son who's a Scoutmaster, another son who is a Varsity Advisor. The impact on their lives is immeasurable. Scouting is one of the greatest organizations there is and I am delighted to be a part of it.

AARON: We agree, Steve. So, what we're saying is we want the families involved; it's great to have the support as long as the program really revolves around the boy and his growth and his accomplishments. Steve, thanks for coming on CubCast and assisting us with figuring out that balance.

STEVE: Thank you for the opportunity.

AMY: Before we get to the Reminders and Tips, here's a preview of what's coming up on ScoutCast.

### **(ScoutCast – The Guided Discovery Process)**

AMY: Now it's time for Reminders and Tips. I'm going to start off with a recommendation to check out the March-April issue of *Scouting* magazine where you'll go inside a Tiger Cub Scout Safari full of adventure and fun. And, as a bonus, you'll learn how to create this successful overnight camp for your own den.

AARON: Speaking of camp, be sure to start finalizing details for your summer camping opportunities. This includes day camp, family camp, resident camp and pack overnights. Make sure that you have all the equipment checked out so that everything is working properly.

AMY: Also, make sure parents are making fee payments and the site has been reserved. If you haven't already done so, be sure to contact your district about a camp promotion at a pack meeting.

AARON: You also need to be sure that everyone has the proper training. BALOO, which is the Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation, and Hazardous Weather training are required for any campout. It's too warm for skiing or sledding and too cold for swimming or picnics, so why not spend the time catching up on your training? Contact your local council for training dates.

AMY: One last thing. Have you supported your council financially? If not, now is a great time to do so. Be sure to participate in a Friends of Scouting campaign or other Scouting fundraiser.

AARON: Remember, financial donations don't always mean cold, hard cash. See what gifts in kind you may be able to provide to your local council.

### **Begin Music Under**

AARON: So now, our March episode comes to an end. Thanks to our guest, Steve Hoskins, and thanks to you for listening.

AMY: Now, I know you've been meaning to but haven't gotten around to it, but don't forget to let us know what other topics you'd like to hear about. Just send us an e-mail to [cubcast@scouting.org](mailto:cubcast@scouting.org) or tweet @cubcast.

AARON: Tune in next month as we explore the active summertime unit. With that, I'm Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson. We leave you now with this little gem from author Alex Haley: "In every conceivable manner, the family is the link to our past and bridge to our future."

### **Music full to finish**