

JUNE – TIPS TO EARNING THE NATIONAL DEN AWARD

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AARON: Hello, everyone! We're glad you could join us for the June CubCast. I'm Aaron Derr, Senior Writer for *Boys' Life* Magazine.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson, Cub Scout Specialist. Our topic this month, Tips to Earning the National Den Award, was suggested by one of our listeners, Aaron Talbott.

AARON: Hey Amy. I've got a joke from the Think-n-Grin section of *Boys' Life* Magazine.

AMY: Oh, boy.

AARON: Now, get this. It's a book never written, and the name of the book is *How to Get Awards*. The author is D. Ploma.

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AARON: Well, D. Ploma couldn't be with us, citing other obligations, so we asked Justin Dettmann to help us out. Justin and his wife Katie became Scouting volunteers with the Northern Star Council in Minneapolis, Minnesota, when their oldest joined Pack 111 as a Tiger. I'm going to tell you right now, Justin is one of my favorite people. He was a new Tiger den leader. As a Cubmaster myself, I know how hard that is to fill that spot. Justin served as his son's den leader through the ranks and continues to help

the pack with many things as a committee member. Welcome to CubCast, Justin.

JUSTIN: Thank you for having me.

AARON: So tell us, Justin, what exactly is the National Den Award?

JUSTIN: The National Den Award is an award that recognizes dens that run a quality, year-round program. The award can be earned once in a 12-month period. The pack committee will establish what that 12-month period is, and it's important to note that this award is earned as a team by the entire den, not as individual Scouts.

AMY: Okay, Justin, so why is this award so important?

JUSTIN: A den that earns the National Den Award will be delivering a well-rounded program to the Scouts. The program will include things such as service projects, field trips, character development and Cub Scout camping. By setting their sights on earning the award and using the requirements as a guide, the Scouts will benefit as they receive a great Cub Scouting experience.

AARON: Very cool. So, in a nutshell, Justin, give us the requirements for a den to earn the award.

JUSTIN: I'm glad you asked. The requirements are very simple and the detailed list can be found on Scouting.org or in the Cub Scouts Leader Handbook. The award requirements are broken into two parts. The first part is about a den's active participation in meetings or other activities with 50 percent of the den attending two den meetings and one pack meeting or other pack activity each month. The second part of the award is about a well-rounded

program and can be met by achieving six of nine requirements that include things such as the use of the Denner System, completing service projects, taking field trips, participation in patriotic activities, or camping.

AMY: Wow, that sounds like a lot of fun stuff. I (want to) participate. So, who is responsible in the den for making sure all these requirements are fulfilled?

JUSTIN: Delivery of a quality program is a joint effort among multiple leaders. The den leader will need the support of the Cubmaster and pack committee to deliver a program that includes both den and pack activities.

AARON: So, the listener who suggested this topic to us wanted to know some tips to earning the award. You said a den needs to complete six of nine requirements that focus on service projects or character development or field trips; so what are some examples of activities they can do to qualify for earning the National Den Award?

JUSTIN: For a service project, you can look for opportunities to provide service for your charter organization, participation in patriotic activities or parades. There may already be activities occurring in your community. Just look for those to get involved. A great conservation opportunity could be a cleanup day. My son's pack participates in the annual city-wide cleanup by picking up trash in a local park. And finally, with summer here, make sure you're taking advantage of Cub Scout Day and resident camping opportunities.

+AARON: All right, Justin. My den every year participates in a cleanup project for our community where we walk up and down a street near where we all live and pick up trash. Is that the kind of project that would work and, if so, can you maybe rattle off some other activities that would help us qualify for earning the National Den Award?

JUSTIN: Absolutely. That's a great opportunity. My pack does a similar activity cleaning up trash at a local park as part of the annual city-wide cleanup activity. Other service projects that you could think about are providing service for your chartered organization. For example, my son's pack is chartered by our school's PTO, and every year at a family fun night that they coordinate our unit provides an activity of leather-stamping that all the students attending can participate in. Another great opportunity that that helps get the boys involved in a patriotic activity would be a veteran's ceremony, and every year our pack participates in a ceremony at a local park to honor veterans.

AMY: Okay, great. Where can folks get other suggestions for required activities if they need it?

JUSTIN: We often say it, but the Boy Scouts of America has a rich set of materials that can be drawn from. As a Cub Scout leader, the meeting plans that are found in the Den Leader Guides are full of ideas. And as a supplemental resource, the Cub Scout Leader Handbook is an excellent source. Another great resource is other leaders who can be found at your district roundtables. These leaders will be able to share ideas for programming and may be aware of opportunities that are specific to your community.

AARON: And what resources are available to help with the National Den Award, like after you've done all the requirements, how do you get the award?

JUSTIN: The initial resource anyone will need to work on this award will be a list of the requirements that can be found in the Cub Scout Leader Handbook or on Scouting.org. After the requirements have been met, the den leader will complete the National Den Award form which can be found on Scouting.org. The form is then signed by the Cubmaster and committee

chair before being taken to the Scout Shop to purchase the recognition ribbon.

AMY: Okay, Justin, how is the award presented?

JUSTIN: The ribbon to recognize the National Den Award is designed to be hung on a den doodle or den flag. The presentation of the award, it's really up to the individual unit to decide on the format. The most important thing to remember is to make the presentation special. A pack meeting would be a great place to recognize a den for having earned the award because it will give other dens something to strive for.

AARON: Very cool. Justin, anything else about the National Den Award that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

JUSTIN: The National Den Award is a great tool to help dens plan and run a quality program and provide recognition for running that program. I hope our discussion today has helped get the word out about this often underutilized award.

AARON: I'm going to be honest, I remember hearing about this award a few years ago and I thought, this is something we should to try earn, and then it kind of felt like it might be too much work, but Justin, after hearing you talk about it, it sounds very doable. Thanks so much for coming on CubCast.

JUSTIN: Thank you for having me.

AMY: Let's get a sneak peek of our big brother, ScoutCast. Then we'll be right back with Reminders and Tips.

(June ScoutCast: Who Can Sign Off on Requirements?)

- AMY: So here we go with this month's Reminders and Tips.
- AARON: Now is the time that you and your pack should be camping. Day camp, resident camp, overnights - it doesn't matter - just go camping. After all, it's what the Boy Scouts of America is all about, right? Tune in to the April 2013, CubCast for all the details of a successful camping trip and the December 2015 CubCast will help calm any nerves you might have about it.
- AMY: This is also the time to get your Fall Round Up plan in order. You'll need to get your location, your date, and your time established. The Unit Membership Chair works to decide the date and the Committee Chair or Cubmaster will follow up with the District Executive or the Unit Commissioner to ensure that they have the information to help promote the Fall Round Up throughout your community.
- AARON: You should also have finalized your plans for earning the Summertime Pack Award. All your activities leaders should have their June, July, and August activities ready to go.
- AMY: Plus, you should be recruiting your popcorn kernel or other coordinators of council product sales right about now. Your Committee Chair is the person responsible for appointing someone, but if you know someone who would make a great candidate, mention it to your den leader who will then pass the suggestion along to the Committee Chairman.

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AMY: And that brings us to the close of this CubCast. Thanks to our guest, Justin Dettmann, for being on the show.

AARON: And thanks to you for listening. Aaron Talbott let us know what he wanted more information on, and you can too. Send us an email to Cubcast@scouting.org.

AMY: Also, be sure to tweet your Scouting leadership position to @cubcast so we get a better understanding of who is listening so we can make these podcasts a better tool for you.

AARON: Join us next month for Cubmaster 101. I personally can't wait for that one, but until then, I'm Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson with a quick reminder to head over to iTunes and subscribe to the CubCast podcast. You'll be so glad you did it.

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