

JUNE: PREPARING FOR SCHOOL NIGHT

Music Full then Under

AARON: Hey guys and gals, it's time for the June CubCast! I'm Aaron Derr, Senior Writer for *Boys' Life Magazine*, with the lovely Amy Hutcherson, Webelos Den Leader and International Scouting Program Specialist.

AMY: This month we'll be discussing everything you need to know about preparing for School Nights.

AARON: Sure, this is July, but school starts soon, and we need to "Be Prepared" with this specific recruiting opportunity.

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AARON: So, we invited Chris Jones to join us for the discussion. Chris has been with Pack 217 since 2014, and he just took over as Cubmaster this past January 2018. Welcome to CubCast, Chris.

CHRIS: Thank you very much.

AARON: So, Chris, whose responsibility is it to approach the school to start organizing a recruiting night? Is it the Cub Scout Unit Leader responsibility, the council – who does that?

CHRIS: It's actually a little bit of both in our circumstance. The pack has a really great relationship with our main school in our charter partner and we're around the school all the time as parents so, a lot of us leaders feel

comfortable approaching a principal at our main school. For some of the other schools in the area that we recruit from, we definitely count on the District Executive to kind of set up those appointments and work with our schedule and set up specific days. So, it's really a combination between the council level and then our own pack leadership.

AMY: So, Chris, you mentioned the relationship between your pack, your chartered organization, and in the school. When does this relationship-building start?

CHRIS: In our case, it just so happens that is year 'round. We do a lot of things with the schools. They ever need a flag ceremony at a school assembly, not even a Cub Scout function, they usually reach out to us to do some ceremonial things. So, throughout the year we're always visible and that really helps with recruiting kids and parents alike.

AARON: Yeah. I think having a good relationship with your school is really important for any Cub Scout unit. Right, Amy? I think everybody (would) all agree.

AMY: Absolutely.

AARON: Cleaning up trash after meetings, things like that, you want to stay on the school's good side so if you ever need anything like maybe to host a School Night for Scouting, you've already got the doors open there. So, for those Cubmasters or Cub Scout leaders who have never done a School Night before, when's the ideal time to have a School Night?

CHRIS: School has to be back in session in order to have a School Night, so usually late August, early September. It gives the opportunity for everyone to get back in the swing of things. With our main school it, it's coordination with the principal and then for the other schools we kind of count on our District Executive to set that up for us. We try to have our first pack meeting in early September, so we want the School Night to be about a week before that, leads into the pack meeting and it just kind of works from there.

AARON: And that's probably good advice in general, Chris, to someone who's never done it before. You mentioned support from your district. Go to your District Executive, go to your Roundtables and they have materials for you and there are people there who have done it before who can show you what to expect, right? So, Chris, when we have our School Night, are you recruiting youth and adults?

CHRIS: A little bit, for sure. Mostly the School Night we try and keep it just the kids, getting the kids to sign up and explaining the program to the parents so they know a little bit about what's going on and what to expect. But there's always going to be leadership opportunities year 'round really, so as a Cubmaster I'm always trying to look ahead and identify what type of positions we're going to need, whether it be Den Leader positions or the Secretary position or Treasurer, especially if you know some of these parents that show an interest immediately. "Hey, my son wants to sign up and I'm interested in helping out any way that I can." So, sometimes opportunities present themselves but every time I meet a parent or see them at an event, it's always on my radar whether or not they're a potential leader in our pack.

AMY: Yes, in a perfect world it would be great if you set up leadership in each of the dens ahead of time, but, if it hasn't happened and you have all these youth that you're recruiting, how do you put the adults in place?

CHRIS: Usually after the School Night, we want to have our pack meeting the week after that, so we'll try and invite the new parents for kind of a parents meeting before the pack meeting gets started while the kids are doing their pre-pack meeting games and stuff like that. We'll have the parents in hopefully in a corner or, best, in a different room or the kids are outside, somewhere where we can discuss what volunteer opportunities in leadership, so we'll have the previous leader talk to the parents and reassure them that, here's what I did, here's what worked good, here's the days that I found worked out best for my den. These parents they're like, "Okay, well, that sounds easy enough. Yeah, I'm willing to do that."

AARON: And, Chris, you're in a pretty good position, it seems like. You were involved with the pack for several years before you became Cubmaster, which is like totally ideal. Some of us kind of got thrown into the fire at the last minute and may or may not have made some mistakes along the way. What are some of the common rookie mistakes that you've seen folks make when it comes to a School Night?

CHRIS: Not really going for it from the recruiting standpoint. I've seen that just personal involvement from the leadership really helps. You can't just send out flyers in backpacks and expect it to make its way and have good turnout for the School Night.

AARON: I agree with that 100%, Chris. That was my rookie mistake when I first did our School Night for Scouting; we basically passed out flyers and hoped people would show up. And we realized the next year what a difference it makes if you go out and open car doors for people in the drop-off line and things like that. And then that one night can make a huge difference for your pack.

AMY: And, as always, our listeners who are eager to have resources...

CHRIS: Our local council has that stuff and I don't know if this is everywhere, but we've actually had kind of recruitment incentives that we can hand out to the boys. They take with them to school or soccer practice or baseball practice, where basically they hand out ten cards of here's when sign-ups for Cub Scouts are. They get a cool little patch. and that comes from the council level.

AMY: Great.

AARON: Well, Chris, is there anything else about School Night that we haven't talked about that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

CHRIS: Back to the rookie mistake question that you had earlier is just being personally involved. We like to go to the schools ourselves, we're seen in different capacities throughout the community. I've been trained in how to rally the boys so I feel comfortable going forward this year, going from class to class telling them about the Scouting program and catering it to the group that you're, you're doing from kindergarten to the older boys.

AARON: School Nights have been a tried-and-true method of recruiting new Scouts for a long time. If you have any kind of anxiety or any kind of questions, we just encourage everybody to go to your local district or your council. They'll have plenty of answers for you. Chris, thanks for coming on the show and helping us figure out how to do it right.

CHRIS: Thanks, Amy, thanks, Aaron.

AMY: Now, don't go anywhere. We'll be right back with Reminders and Tips right after this brief Safety Moment.

June Safety Moment - Poisonous Plants)

AMY: All right, folks, here we go with this month's reminders. Now is that time that your unit should be camping. Day camp, resident camp, it doesn't matter for how long or where, just as long as you're camping. After all, that's what Scouts are known for, right?

AARON: 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.

AMY: You should also have finalized your plans for earning the Summertime Pack Award. Your activities leaders should have their June, July, and August activities ready to go.

AARON: And June is the *Boys' Life* special fishing issue. You might think fishing is only possible out in the country, but pro fisherman Tom Reddington shares his tips for fishing in an urban setting. And by the way, Amy, fishing is a fantastic activity for the Summertime Pack Award requirement.

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AARON: And you can read about it right now as this is it for the July CubCast. Thanks to our guest, Chris Jones, for coming on the show.

AMY: Be sure to tune in next month as we find out some of the challenges and success stories of all the girl dens out there as well as the coed packs. I can't wait! I'm Amy Hutcherson.

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. Send your ideas for future episodes by sending an email to cubcast@scouting.org, or tweet @Cubcast. We look forward to hearing from you.

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