

JULY: CHALLENGES AND SUCCESS STORIES OF THE ALL GIRL DEN

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AMY: Welcome to the July CubCast, listeners! I'm Amy Hutcherson, Webelos Den Leader and Membership Growth Coach for the Northeast Region. I'm here with Senior Writer for *Boys' Life* Magazine, Aaron Derr.

AARON: OK, listeners, we're now about six months into having all girl dens in the Cub Scouting program and you're probably wondering – hmm, how's that working out?

AMY: Yeah! We're kind of curious about that ourselves

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AMY: So, we invited Jenny Hickey to share her stories with us. Welcome to CubCast, Jenny. Tell us a little bit about yourself.

JENNY: Hi, Amy and Aaron. I am the Cubmaster of Cub Scout Pack 4 out of the Park Grove neighborhood in Portland, Oregon. I've also recently been helping with our girl's den. My Scouting actually started when my brother joined Cub Scouts. I was that classic, tagalong sister that we keep hearing about that attended every event and meeting. I knew my son would join the first chance he got, so I joined with him in 2014, and recently we've been able to add in my daughter, Mackenzie, as of January 15th, 2018, when she became the first girl Cub Scout in our council, Cascade Pacific, followed by my niece and three other girls.

AMY: Awesome! So how old is Mackenzie now?

JENNY: Mackenzie is 7.

AMY: I bet she's so excited. So let's get started with a cautionary tale, Jenny. What are some of the challenges you've encountered or maybe you've heard about?

JENNY: Battling all of the negative media and sharing within the community about what girls in the BSA really looks like has been my biggest struggle. It is a great program for both boys and girls. Our girls meet on their own each week together while all the boys go into their respective dens. We have had a few den meetings combined in the times we've had a field trip. and that's OK. Just as packs have always held joint activities amongst their dens, that has not changed with the addition of girls into our official Cub Scouting program.

Another challenge has really been ensuring that we are recognizing all the Scouts equally and using correct terms in our ceremony, songs, and skits that are inclusive of all our members. Meeting space have been another challenge for some units, but luckily in ours we have been fortunate to have enough space to all meet on the same night, in the same location, with our dens in their own rooms after our opening flag and announcements.

AARON: So what kind of advice would you give to other Cub Scout leaders who are facing these similar challenges? What can they do to overcome the challenges?

JENNY: Keep moving forward. That's been my motto through all this, keep moving forward. Follow the plan that BSA has outlined and you should have success with the awesome new chapter in Scouting history. If you get opportunities to share positive stories with your local newspapers, news channels, or on social media, do it. Do it the first chance you get. BSA and Cub Scouts are in a pivotal moment, and our story can help the success of this program by showing our local communities that our values, vision and mission have not changed at all. That vision and mission is to prepare every eligible youth to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Law. It does not say "prepare young men." It says, "prepare every eligible youth," which now we can include all members of the family, both boys and girls.

We also need to remember to be flexible. Just like the weeks I have combined all my Scouts that showed up for a meeting, we did what worked that week. I pulled the parents beforehand to ensure it was OK, and we were all able to have a great meeting that night. As for ceremonies and songs or skits that may say "him" or "boy," those are very easy fixes by the leaders or presenters of those ceremonies. Most of them can easily be revised to simply say "Scout" or "they" or "them," and in some instances you could even leave the word "boy" and in the next verse say the word "girl." The key is to make all members feel included and part of your Cub Scout Pack.

AMY: I'm so excited to talk about this and I want to share that here in our offices someone has been posting around a lot of pictures and stories from social media about all of our girl dens out there. Can you tell us some of the success stories that you've heard about or you've had in your own den?

JENNY: I don't know where to begin on this! There's been so many successes. Within our pack and area, I have noticed a reinvigorated group of leaders. Leaders that had maybe taken a step back from Scouting are now jumping in feet first to get the ball rolling on this. I've seen grandparents, aunts, uncles coming in to help their nieces, nephews, granddaughters be successful in this stage of Scouting.

Parents and families that have never been involved in Scouting are also beginning to come out of the woodwork. By welcoming all youth to our Cub Scout program, parents no longer need to worry about who will watch the sister while his brother heads to Scouts. In fact, I have a little girl in my den and early on I had each girl share why she is so excited to be a Cub Scout. And I'm not kidding you, when her response was, "So I do not have to cry on my bed anymore when my brother goes to Cub Scouts and comes home with his awards." That struck me and, honestly, you know, it made me tear up a little because I was totally that sister growing up, and it reminded me a lot of that. To know that little girls like her can be a part of our program is amazing. She will be given all the same opportunities as her brother, even soaring to the height of Eagle rank.

Another really special moment for us was in April, when many of our girls earned their respective ranks after Bobcat was done, and we held a great ceremony with faces being painted for all of the ranks. However, there was a unique twist. We had all the older brothers come up for these girls to help award their rank rather than the parents. The brothers have welcomed their sisters officially into our pack with kind hearts, and it was a great way for me as Cubmaster to say thank you to them and recognize the part they have played in this historic moment in time.

AARON: Very cool. What kind of resources are out there, Jenny, for leaders who might need some help with an all-girl den?

JENNY: There are a ton of resources out there and they really always have been there. The great thing about the addition of girls is that our program is outlined already. Our program hasn't changed. We are still the same program we always have been; we just have girls. So, for this, we don't really need any specific material targeted to teaching girls. The leader guides have always been a great place to start with getting entire meeting plans. These guides will give you a full year of plans for every single adventure offered at each rank. Many of our parents and leaders will also love that they will all be available through Amazon along with the new Cub Scout Handbook.

AMY: We don't, we don't need to complicate anything because the resources we have already are good for everyone. So, is there anything else about all-girl dens that we haven't already spoke about that you think might be shared with our listeners?

JENNY: Keep it simple. Just keep it simple and make it fun. We are not reinventing the wheel here with the addition of the girls. We are simply opening our doors to serve all youth in the communities we live in. Some youth may choose other organizations, some may choose BSA, and some may choose multiple youth organizations like my daughter has. Whatever it is the youth in your unit are doing, please praise them for being involved in their communities. Be careful not to degrade or badmouth other organizations they may be involved in, when topics like that come up.

For some communities, the upcoming popcorn season may be the first time many of your community members see the girls in a Cub Scout uniform. Be prepared to answer questions from those community

members about our recent changes. As leaders and parents that support this change, it is our duty to dispel the rumors and correct the false or misunderstood information they may have.

I'd also like to invite everyone to attend Wood Badge. Check with your local council about the next date it is offered and sign up. This is an in-depth, learning course that all adult leaders should take and will be beneficial to any unit, whether it's in Cub Scouting or Scouts BSA.

AMY: Perfect. Wow, these are such exciting times to belong to this wonderful organization we call Scouting. Jenny, thank you so much for coming on the show.

JENNY: It's been my honor. Thank you for having me.

AARON: We'll be back with Reminders and Tips after this brief Safety Moment.

(July Safety Moment – Aquatics)

AARON: And now for Reminders and Tips. You should be in the middle of completing the requirements for the Summertime Pack Award. A pack can earn the award by doing three pack activities when school is out for the summer, one activity each in June, July, and August.

AMY: So, hopefully, you had a pack activity back in June. Qualifying packs can get a colorful streamer for the pack flag. Dens that have at least half of their members at the three summer pack events can earn a den ribbon. Pack members who take part in all three events are eligible for the National Summertime Pack Award Pin.

AARON: In case you've forgotten, there's still time to earn the World Conservation Award. You can find the requirements to earn the award by going to scouting.org/awardscentral.

AMY: Speaking of awards, maybe your den is interested in getting the National Den Award. Check out the June 2017 CubCast for all the different activities your den can participate in to earn it.

AARON: Next, your fall program planning should be complete by now, including your calendar for the entire upcoming year's activities and events. Be sure to share all that information with the parents.

AMY: To make sure you've dotted every "i" and crossed every "t," download the June 2015 CubCast for full details on everything you need for planning the Cub Scouting year.

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AMY: In fact, you can do that right about now because we are at the end of this July CubCast. We want to thank our guest, Jenny Hicks, for joining us.

AARON: And thanks to you for listening. Have you got an idea for a discussion on a future CubCast? Just send an email to CubCast@scouting.org, or you can tweet us @CubCast. Until next time, I'm Aaron Derr.

AMY: And I'm Amy Hutcherson. We look forward to hearing from you.

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