

MAY – The Exploring Program: How it Supports Your Troop

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BRYAN: Hello, and welcome to the May ScoutCast. I'm *Bryan on Scouting* blogger, Bryan Wendell.

LEE: And I'm Lee Shaw, Team Lead of National Alliance. In this episode, we'll be *exploring_a* program that can assist you with your older Scout's development.

BRYAN: If you haven't figured it out already, we're talking about everyone's favorite BSA affiliate, Exploring.

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BRYAN: So, it made perfect sense to us to invite the Exploring Program Administration Specialist, Kristen Falatko and Senior Member Experience Specialist, Garfield Murden. Welcome to ScoutCast, y'all!

GARFIELD: Thank you.

KRISTEN: Thank you. It's great to be here.

BRYAN: So, Kristen, why don't you give us a brief overview of the Exploring program, because a lot of people out there might not know what all is offered in Exploring.

KRISTEN: I'd love to. Exploring is Learning For Life's career education program for young men and women from the sixth grade to 20 years old. What's wonderful about Exploring is that it provides hands-on opportunities,

exciting, real-world experiences for all those youth that are looking to really discover their future.

GARFIELD: I'd like to also add that it's a career-focused, worksite-based program which emphasizes leadership development, character development, social and professional networking, along with community service.

LEE: Garfield, how is the focus of the Exploring program different from Venturing?

GARFIELD: Venturing focuses on adventure, team-building, while Exploring focuses on interacting with business leaders, learning more about a specific career that teens might have an interest in.

KRISTEN: I'd like to add that we like to keep it simple so that there's no confusion. Exploring equals careers and Venturing equals hobbies.

BRYAN: That makes sense. Now I want to talk about some of those careers. A lot of people, when they think Exploring, at least this was my misconception in the beginning, was law enforcement and fire but there's a lot more career exploration going on than just those two areas. Is that right?

KRISTEN: Yes, absolutely, and that's a great point to bring up because law enforcement and fire and EMS are very, very popular programs, but we also have ten other career fields that we focus on. So, actually, Exploring encompasses 12 career fields. We align with the U.S. Department of

Education's 16 career clusters, so on top of law enforcement and fire and EMS we have arts and humanities, business, communications, law and government, and the list goes on.

LEE: That's pretty impressive. Now, how can an Exploring Post support an older Scout's development?

GARFIELD: By providing interacting and potential future employment, by bridging what is being taught in school with career implementations, scholarship opportunities, additional leadership opportunities for Scouts are just a couple of things that can help out.

KRISTEN: Garfield, I love that you brought up bridge the gap. That is so important because Exploring is the career education program. And I have to tell you, we are really one of a kind in the field. There is not a nonprofit or a youth organization that does what we do in Exploring. Schools and school districts around the nation are looking to programs like Exploring to fulfill their career education requirement. A lot of times they refer to as curriculum component. So we really are bridging that gap with the schools for career education programs.

BRYAN: So how do you find an Exploring post, in your area - whether this is a Scout who maybe is ready for a different challenge and is interested in a specific career field and wants to connect with a business in their community? How do you even find one of these posts?

KRISTEN: That part is actually quite easy because we are a part of the Council. We are a part of the bigger picture. So the best way that they can find out is go to their Council Service Center and/or work with their District Executive to find out about the programs that they currently do offer.

GARFIELD: Another thing they could do is just take part in some career interest surveys that they can get engaged into, that might be available to them in their schools, or speak to their guidance counselors that also might be fully aware about the Exploring programs.

KRISTEN: Exactly, yes.

LEE: Okay, so, you can be both an Explorer and a Scout? Is that right?

KRISTEN: Actually, yes, you are correct, but let's get some technicalities out of the way here. So, if you are a Scout you can also be a Venturer; that is technically called a multiple registrant. However, you can be a Scout and an Explorer but you will be dual registered. So, you have to register and fill out the lovely paperwork for Scouting to be a Scout and then you have to do the paperwork and pay the registration fees for Exploring. So, registered in the two separate programs, but you absolutely can be a part of Exploring if you are a Scout.

BRYAN: And twice the fun, right?

KRISTEN: Twice the fun! Yes. (Laughter)

BRYAN: Okay. So, is there a relationship between a Boy Scout troop and an exploring Post? Can the two kind of work together and support each other? Because this is ScoutCast and I know that there's going to be people who are focused on their troops but they may want to expand what they're doing and, and increase their volunteer sphere, if you will.

GARFIELD: Sure. There's a couple things that they can do. One, by having the Scouts take part in a career interest survey, as we talked about earlier. Another thing they can do is visit an Explorer post.

BRYAN: Oh, that's great.

GARFIELD: Just going down there and seeing exactly what takes place and getting engaged. A Scout leader might consider establishing a post at his or her place of business. That way, those Scouts get an opportunity to see their Scout leaders doing other things other than the traditional Scouting program, seeing that individual in their work environment and maybe building another relationship in reference to what they do as a career and what a Scout potentially might be interested in pursuing.

KRISTEN: I love that! And also retaining the youth, keep them in the program, because they get to progress into that career education, the favorite affiliate program, Exploring. So the benefits of the leaders, getting to know what they actually do in the real world day in and day out, outside of the Scout meetings, as well as keeping them in the program and progressing into discovering their future, and that's what Exploring is all about.

GARFIELD: Exactly.

BRYAN: So, Garfield, is there any concern in the Scoutmaster community that Exploring might take away some of the time that their Scouts have to devote to the program?

GARFIELD: They should not be looking at this as being a constraint or concern because of the fact is, the Explorer post vary in reference to the time commitment. It could be a once-a-month post meeting. It could be twice a month. It all depends on the reference to how often that post meets. It can even be seasonal. (The) bottom line is we want to make sure that our Scouts get an opportunity to get as much exposure as possible and answering any career questions that they might have.

LEE: Well, Kristen, Garfield, I don't know who wants to answer this question, but I have one. I think it's a good one. Are there benefits to the troop other than to an older Scout?

GARFIELD: That is a very good question. A potential merit badge counselor could be found through the Exploring program. Potential leaders could also be looked upon in joining the troop through the Exploring program. These are avenues that there is always a need for in the troop and a great opportunity to help out the Scouting program.

BRYAN: Now, Garfield, you talked about a business leader who's also a Scoutmaster perhaps starting an Exploring post in his or her own business. How would they go about doing that? Is that contacting the

Council once again or how do they get the ball rolling on starting an Exploring post?

GARFIELD: One is reaching out to the Council, getting a better understanding of how to establish an Exploring post, similar to how it is you would start a Scout troop. The other aspect of this is they need to have a conversation probably with their company and say, "Here is a great opportunity to do some good PR, to market a program," to get their particular business more engaged with teens." So, there's different ways that they can do it, but I would say that the best way to do it is really to have a discussion with their Council Executives and get all the information that is needed to start and have a successful Exploring program.

BRYAN: And, Kristen, it's not only engaging with the teenagers in the community, but they also could be finding someone to hire down the road, right? They could be finding their next CEO.

KRISTEN: Oh, absolutely. We like to say that we're the program that's the pipeline for the next generation of that company's or organization's employees.

GARFIELD: They're interacting with individuals that are in those career fields. It's one thing to be in school and being told by your teacher, "When you get into the business community, when you get out there into the workforce, you're going to need this particular skill, you're going to need things such as math, you're going to need things such as English." By being involved into an Explorer post, they're seeing it in action. They are interacting with business leaders that are saying, "If you would like to do what I am doing, this is why it is important for you to study chemistry. This is why it's

important for you to be successful and be very good in math. Even if you decide that maybe you do not want to go to college, here is an opportunity of how you can be successful in a particular field and getting exposure from people that are doing it in their day-to-day operations.”

KRISTEN: It is exposing the young people to more of those soft skills, right? Our education system, our universities do a fantastic job in the content part. However, the soft skills is really what’s lacking and that’s what we pride ourselves on in Scouting and Exploring because we can teach the young people some of these soft skills that they are not learning in school. And so that’s another really great added benefit that they can attain in Exploring.

LEE: Wow. This has been a tremendous education for me. So, is there anything else about how the Exploring program can support your troop that we haven’t talked about, that you think our listeners ought to know?

KRISTEN: Yes! Thank you, Lee, for bringing that up because we are so excited to promote the first ever ExploringCast, which is located on our very new public website at www.exploring.org. We are so excited about this website and ExploringCast! So, this is something that you’ve got to visit today and that you have to listen to for months to come. We are under the umbrella of the Boy Scouts of America. The technical term is “affiliate,” but there are so many opportunities to keep our youth in the program and to excel and progress into the Exploring program. So, that’s what we’re really excited about is our brand new public website, Exploring.org, and our new ExploringCast.

BRYAN: You know, Lee, before this interview I was getting a little worried that we might have some podcast competition, but after actually talking to Kristen and Garfield, I think we can probably all get along. What do you say?

LEE: They seem like nice enough people. (Laughter)

BRYAN: So we'll, we'll let you guys share the podcasting space, but seriously, thank you so much for coming on ScoutCast. We're going to be listeners and subscribers from day one of the ExploringCast, so, good luck and congrats with that and, again, thank you for letting us know about the great Exploring program.

GARFIELD: Thanks for the opportunity.

KRISTEN: Yes, thank you guys, so much.

LEE: Now let's get a sneak peek at that ExploringCast. Then we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

(ExploringCast – Exploring 101)

LEE: And now for the timely Reminders and Tips.

BRYAN: This is a busy time of year for outings, so, you need to get your tour and activity plans completed. Units complete a Tour and Activity plan when

planning a local, national, or international adventure. The plan helps ensure your unit is properly prepared, that qualified and trained leaders are in place, and that the right equipment is available.

LEE: And every registered direct contact leader can complete a tour and activity plan application online. Just log into to scouting.org and select the tour and activity plan.

BRYAN: Also, you should be recruiting your Popcorn Kernel or other fundraising coordinator right about now. The committee chair is the person responsible for appointing someone. But, if you know somebody who would make a good candidate, go ahead and pass the suggestion along to your committee chair right now.

LEE: Now, close your eyes and picture it. You're standing in front of a roaring crowd; the spotlight is shining on you. Why? Because you – yes, you – have won the Campmaster's Fundraiser of the Year Award. Now snap out it because now you have to figure out how to earn that award.

BRYAN: I thought (chuckles) I'd earned the award. Now, if you're going to the National Annual Meeting this year in San Diego that's May 25th through 27th be sure to stop by the Campmasters exhibit for more information on how your council can become a Campmasters Fundraising Council. If you're not going to the National Meeting, that's okay. We'll have more information on the Campmasters Fundraiser of the Year Award in an upcoming ScoutCast episode and on my blog.

LEE: Check out the May and June issue of *Scouting* magazine for an article about the exciting Sea Scouting program, and in *Boys' Life* magazine they'll share tips on buying and maintaining the right hiking boots for you.

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LEE: The boots I'm wearing have taken us to the end of this ScoutCast. Thanks to our guests Kristen Falatko and Garfield Murden for hopping the podcast fence and being a part of this episode with us.

BRYAN: And thanks to you for listening, but don't keep all this ScoutCast fun to yourself. Be sure your fellow leaders are tuning in as well. Suggest they do what you do and subscribe to ScoutCast on iTunes or through your favorite podcast app.

LEE: Join us next month as we answer a listener's email about who can sign off on what requirements and when can they do it.

BRYAN: That sounds great. Now, is there a topic you'd like to hear about? Let us know by sending us an email to scoutcast@scouting.org, or tweet us [@bsascoutcast](https://twitter.com/bsascoutcast). And with that, I'm Bryan Wendell.

LEE: And I'm Lee Shaw. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

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