

AUGUST – FINDING YOUR ALL-GIRL TROOP LEADERS

Music Full then under

PAULA: The music has started so that means it's time for the August ScoutCast. *Bryan on Scouting* blogger, Bryan Wendell, is on assignment for *Scouting* magazine, so I'll be sitting in for him this month. I'm Paula Murphey, Managing Editor of *Boys' Life*, *Scouting* and *Eagles' Call* magazines and former ScoutCast co-host.

LEE: And I'm Lee Shaw, Team Lead, Membership Growth for Southern Region and Director of National Alliances. It's nice to have you back for this episode Paula. OK, listeners – by now you all know that girls will become eligible to become Scouts in 2019, which will be here before you know it.

PAULA: We talked a few months ago about new unit development, so now let's talk about recruiting leaders for those units...

Music Fades

PAULA: ... With Scott Berger. Scott is a 50-year BSA veteran who currently serves on a multitude of committees and taskforces with the Patriots Path Council in Florham Park, NJ. Welcome to ScoutCast, Scott.

SCOTT: Thank you!

LEE: Scott, what are the qualifications we're looking for in troop leaders?

SCOTT: We're looking for people who are good with youth. They need to be willing to have a lot of fun and to learn right alongside with the youth. They also should believe in our mission, which is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law and they should be prepared to actually make a difference. They should really feel that the work that they do with our youth will make a difference in society and in their communities.

LEE: What you really described was just because it's an all-girl troop, that doesn't make a difference in terms of what we're looking for.

SCOTT: That's exactly right. This is an exciting time where we'll finally be able to offer our great program to not just young men but young women, and the leaders will need the same qualifications.

PAULA: Scott, who is responsible for finding troop leaders and where do they find them?

SCOTT: We are all responsible for finding great leaders. We can get recommendations from our existing leaders. Some councils have used the method of friend-storming, which is where a group of folks get in a room and just call out names and ideas of where these folks might be able to help. But technically the chartering organization is responsible. However, many times the leaders come from those recommendations and from parents basically. Nobody should be thought of as not qualified, if trained, to be a good leader. One of the best places to find great new leaders might be parents of the incoming Scouts. They are motivated to have their

young person involved in our program and they are a great resource for new leaders, but we shouldn't limit our search there. There are school officials, teachers and principals, even the custodians make great leaders for Scouts. The leaders within our community, local politicians, whomever might feel like they want help to give back. Community leaders, and the civic organizations that exist in our communities; Rotary Club, for instance, is a great example of somebody who might charter a unit and those members might want to participate as well in becoming a leader. But one of the things that I'm really excited about is Venturing and Sea Scout young ladies or young men who are 21 one year old, aging out of the program, might make great new leaders for a new troop, and it's a resource that we should really consider. I could suggest that councils establish campaigns in their communities to try to attract women leadership groups or women entrepreneurs that meet on a regular or semi-regular basis. Those women might be thinking, "How can further give back and how can I engage in my community?" and Scouting is a perfect way in which to do that.

LEE: What are some of the ways that you can become comfortable or at ease when it comes to approaching someone for recruiting that leader?

SCOTT: We don't want a new leader to feel overwhelmed, like they need to have 12 assistant Scoutmasters or a fully developed troop committee on day one. As long as we have our minimally required leadership in place, we can start our program and start recruiting further adult leaders as we go. So, start slow, make it easy, and not overwhelm anybody that you might be inviting to your unit. Many hands make easy work. The tasks don't need to be huge. Asking a mom or a dad to help simply drive to camp on the weekend is a great way to begin to engage a new family into Scouting.

So, that would be my main recommendation as far as inviting new people in, but don't forget the chartering organizations are there as well, so working closely with them is a great way to try to help engage more people when we're starting a new troop.

PAULA: You've touched on some of them but what are some of the challenges you see in recruiting leaders?

SCOTT: It's basic human nature. There's the fear of the unknown or the fear of great responsibility when it comes to dealing with youth, and none of that should be taken lightly. We want to make sure that our adult leadership feels that responsibility and that we want to make sure that there's a completely safe environment for our youth. Many adults don't have the time to devote as much time as they might want, but if we break down tasks kind of small we can make those little small bites quite doable. Some people are afraid perhaps that they had no experience working with youth, and that's where our established and more experienced adult leaders can reassure new leaders that we provide all the training that would be necessary and there's nothing really to fear. Everything that we do is well thought out and we certainly won't let anybody fail. Potential, new leaders may never have volunteered for anything before, and we need to make sure that the process in becoming engaged is not overwhelming either. We want to make sure that everybody who is willing to step up feels that it's easy and welcoming and fun.

LEE: I'm glad you mentioned fun and not to overwhelm people because it can become overwhelming. Scott, in your 40 years of experience, can you just

share one personal example of what you did that helps one overcome the challenge of recruiting the leaders?

SCOTT: I had been a Troop Committee Chairperson for a number of years, and part of what I felt was my responsibility was to make sure that every new boy that was registering in our unit, that his family felt that they were a part as well. So, when he showed up for that very first troop meeting with his parent, with that youth application, I always had that application in one hand and the adult application in the next. Now, sometimes that would scare somebody a little bit, but most of the time I would let them know that it was there and it would be ready when they were. I wanted to make sure that they knew that there was a place in our unit for everyone and that everybody would have an opportunity to feel that they were a part of our troop. Some parents get involved real quick and some, it would take a while, but I can tell you that the majority of the parents that were involved with our troop, it was because they saw that they could learn something, they could get closer to their own child, and that it was a worthwhile endeavor. That's kind of my story is to make sure that you welcome everybody. Not everybody can participate as much as others initially but they'll feel left out eventually if they're not there, so make sure they feel welcome.

LEE: It sounds like you just created such a family environment with the units. That is so important, where everyone is just kind of pulling that wagon in the same direction, and a family atmosphere can make people do things they probably wouldn't have done otherwise, so, thanks for sharing that personal story with us.

SCOTT: Sure.

PAULA: Yeah, that's great. Very welcoming strategies, you have there. So, are there resources to help with recruiting leaders?

SCOTT: There are some. Certainly, on ScoutWire at Scouting.org there are documents for how to become trained, and the titles of some of the basic training courses. Youth Protection is foremost for that. So, National has certain elements and councils have developed resources of their own as well, but one of the exciting things that's going on now within the current Scout Committee is we're putting our heads together and trying to come up with resources that can be further developed – new ideas, some old ones that need to be revisited – and we hope to get those out to councils relatively soon.

LEE: Well, Scott, you've certainly shared a lot of good information with us, everything from the challenges and creating that family atmosphere that you spoke of and even some best methods for us. But with all of that is there anything else about recruiting leaders for our all-girl troops that you think our listeners ought to know about?

SCOTT: We need to remember that for years, young men have benefited from our program, and this is an exciting time welcoming young ladies into the program as well. The only barrier is going to be adult leadership. We need to make sure that we have sufficient adult female leadership now, but male leadership as well for these new units. Not every parent will be able to take on a leadership role and we understand that. Moms may be

able to help but certainly the dads can be able to help as well. The Scouting BSA program that will start beginning next year, is a fantastic time for dads to work with their daughters and see them grow and mature. We've learned that no matter how involved young people might be with school or extracurricular activities, there's always room for the benefits that Scouting can bring, so young ladies now deserve that same chance that young men have had for a very long time, and they deserve the chance to ultimately become Eagle Scouts. So, I'm hoping that desire will be there for many, many new adult leaders to come, and that will be the inspiration for them to get engaged.

PAULA: These are exciting times to be involved in Scouting, for sure. Scott, thanks so much for joining us on ScoutCast and helping us get those leaders in place for our all-girl troops.

SCOTT: Thank you.

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

(August Safety Moment - Charcoal)

LEE: OK, here we go with Reminders and Tips for August. So, you know all these new Scouts and leaders that you've just recruited? Well, they can now register online. There's a playbook and resources to assist you through this process at [Scouting.org/onlineregistration](https://www.scouting.org/onlineregistration).

PAULA: It's also about time for you to begin cultivating a relationship with your local Cub Scout Pack. A good way to start that is to provide the pack with a Den Chief from your troop. Not only will the pack appreciate the help, but the Den Chief will be a great asset for the Webelos-to-Scout transition in the spring. Want to hear more about Den Chiefs? Just tune in to the February 2018 ScoutCast.

LEE: This month *Boys' Life* magazine is a special reading issue that focuses on fiction. Your Scouts can supplement their summer reading with some exciting as well as hilarious short stories exclusive to *Boys' Life*.

PAULA: For *Scouting* magazine, you can take an entire century of *Scouting* magazine everywhere you go with our new app. For less than 5 dollars a year, you get the entire *Scouting* magazine archives – from 1913 to today – on your favorite device. Just search “Scouting magazine” in the App Store or Google Play to get started.

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PAULA: So that's a wrap for the August ScoutCast. Thanks to our guest, Scott Berger, for joining us, and thanks to you for listening.

LEE: And thank you, Paula. I really enjoyed cohosting with you today. It reminds me of old times. Join us next month, listeners, when Bryan returns for an episode on getting you ready for your first troop meeting. With that, I'm Lee Shaw...

PAULA: And I'm Paula Murphey. Is there another topic that you think we should talk about? Just send us an email to ScoutCast@scouting.org or a tweet to @BSAScoutCast. We'd love to hear from you.

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