

FEBRUARY – WHY YOU NEED TRAINING (and how to get it!)

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GINA: Welcome to ScoutCast for February. I'm Gina Circelli, Digital Producer for *Boys' Life* magazine, with *Scouting* magazine blogger, Bryan Wendell.

BRYAN: Hey, Gina. So, do you know what month it is? It's Training Month and we're going to talk about why it's important, how to get trained, everything you need to know about training.

GINA: I am super ready to get pumped on training! Stay tuned. It's starting right now.

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GINA: We're with Dan Maxfield. Dan is a lifelong Scouter and tireless volunteer with more than 50 years of service to Scouting. Some of that includes serving on the Advancement Committee, Program Content Committee, and Commissioner Support Staff, but trust me, the list of his Scouting service could go on for days. Max joined us back in August of 2017 to talk about the new e-learning courses. Welcome to ScoutCast, Dan.

DAN: Well, thank you. It's a pleasure to be with you today.

GINA: Okay, let's jump right in. I am curious as somebody who maybe doesn't have a background in Scouting. Who should be taking training?

DAN: The answer is everyone. But I would say especially and particularly anyone that's new to the Scouting program and with some of our girls beginning to join that pertains to any leadership that would come along with them in the next few months. But also, training is important for anyone who's maybe just changed their job description recently and thus the duties that they're gonna perform.

BRYAN: So what kind of training are we talking about? Like what are some different options that are available to new volunteers?

DAN: The first thing is the Basic Leader Essentials Training for new direct contact leaders. And then there's a lot of supplemental training that's available to enhance knowledge for those who are already either basic leader trained or maybe have been in the Scouting program for a while or just changed their adult leadership role and want to catch up.

BRYAN: Dan, can you tell us real quick what a direct contact leader is, for those who might not know?

DAN: A direct contact leader is that person who is the actual Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster of a troop and is therefore on the front line of working with our youth on a regular, week-to-week, month-to-month basis.

GINA: Great. So when should someone begin training?

DAN: Listen - for a new leader, as soon as possible; start right away. After you join, within the first six months or so, certainly something should begin to

take place. And then, as often as reasonable or possible, for really anyone else, because expanding your knowledge and keeping up with what's going on and the changes that occur is just a good idea.

GINA: But what kind of time commitment is getting trained, especially for somebody jumping in and just wondering what is this going to involve?

DAN: That depends on the role you're gonna play. If you're going to be this direct contact leader that we were discussing earlier, the training is very fundamental and basic and to start off with, it's probably gonna take you two and a half or three hours of just the basic understanding of the program and how it works. Then after that's completed, there is going to be an overnight and day-long outdoor learning experience in order to understand the role you play with the youth in their outdoor activities in camping and cooking and hiking and knots and all the things that they do that relate to this program and how it advances, and then the advancement that they get as a result of doing all that stuff. So, that's probably the major length for a new participant. And then for someone that's just looking to do some updates, those are kind of things that you can take either online, 'cause there are online things available, or maybe you go to what's called the University of Scouting that a council might put on, and you just pick classes kind of like out of a college curriculum, and you take an hour-long class here and an hour-long class there.

BRYAN: You kind of answer my next question which is where does this training take place? It sounds like it's a mix of online and in person, but are those interchangeable or are there some courses that are only available online while others must be taken in person?

DAN: Well, a lot of the basic leader training and many of the supplemental trainings are in fact online and you can take them at your convenience.

BRYAN: So that four hours you mentioned, that could be broken up into chunks.

DAN: Oh, absolutely. So, you sit down, and you do an eight-minute piece here and a nine-minute piece there and a 12-minute piece here, and you kind of do it at your convenience as your schedule permits. Now, districts and councils sponsor more local, face-to-face live kinds of trainings as part of their annual training calendar process, so they have offerings that are going on probably throughout the year which you can pick from when your time permits. And then, in addition to that, some of our National High Adventure Bases such as Philmont Training Center in New Mexico, whole week-long training sessions during the summer months and you can schedule those a year in advance, again to suit your schedule. The bottom line here is that with all of that available there's just really very little excuse for not obtaining necessary training in a timely manner.

GINA: What are the benefits of training?

DAN: If you go to a doctor or you fly on an airline, you expect the doctor, nurse, pilot, steward, to have some sort of certification and training for the jobs they do. Likewise, the teachers and the people you send your kids to at school every day. So, if you are a community-minded person and you take the opportunity to participate as a leader in the Scouting program or any community organization, I find it hard to imagine that you really wouldn't want to do your best to actually make a difference. And that requires you

to understand the roles and duties you're going to play, which means you need training. So, the benefits of the training are understanding what you're going to do in the job that you're going to do so you're effective, and you thus then achieve the four aims of the Scouting program which are character development, citizenship training, mental and physical training, and leadership development.

BRYAN: And I think the BSA has done a nice job of making the trainings digestible and easy to use and not giving you a lot of excess stuff. So, Dan, you and I and Gina, we all buy into the need to get trained, but what if someone is listening and they've got that leader in their unit who just says, "I'm not going to get trained. Training is not really something I have time for or an interest in." How do you get over that reluctance?

DAN: That's a hard one. There are some people that are self-taught. They read material. They watch. They talk to people. They ingest things, they get it and understand how to do it, and they do it just fine, and they follow BSA principles. As long as that's happening, and the kids are having a great time and advancement is taking place - everybody is good with that. But you know what? Those are not the majority of the people. Sometimes when you have the leader you described, probably the committee that runs that unit and the chartering institution that runs that unit need to have a conversation with that leader or those leaders and suggest that there are some things they probably ought to do that would make them better at what they do or perhaps - and this would be the last resort- but it may be time for a leadership change.

BRYAN: And if you want that person to be registered in your troop, the Youth Protection Training is the one that if you don't do it you're not a registered Scout leader.

DAN: That's correct, and that's the part of the registration process, and so until you've done that and can show it, you're not even a party to this organization.

BRYAN: And then on the other end of the spectrum, Dan, is someone who's been involved for a long time, and they've got the training and they may have the mentality "I've been trained so I don't need to get trained again," but it seemed like earlier you were saying that you can go to Philmont Training Center to enhance your training. So, I'd love to hear what your thoughts are on those seasoned Scouters and whether there's value for them to continue getting trained.

DAN: If you're in any kind of a profession or in merchandising or a mechanic or whatever, you have to get updated from time to time on the machines you're working on, the cars you're working on, the tools you are using, the latest rules and laws that apply to the work you do. Certainly lawyers, doctors, teachers, and anybody in that kind of a profession has ongoing education requirements on an annual basis. So why would it be any different in this kind of an organization when you're dealing with our youth? We know there are issues related to our youth in our own communities. We hear it on the news on an ongoing basis. So as a leader in this program, why wouldn't you want to be up to date? Why wouldn't you want to have the most current knowledge? Why wouldn't you put your time and effort to making sure that you're doing the best job you can for those kids? After all, that's what this is about. It's not about knots and years of service. The majority of those longtime-serving Scouts probably

already do this kind of stuff on an annual basis anyway. But, if they don't it might be time for that institution to consider their retirement.

GINA: Okay. So, let's say I'm sold, I'm ready for training - what resources are available to help me learn more about what training is available and where can I just access it directly?

DAN: First, you'd want to check the website of your local council to see what it is that they offer and take advantage of that. Then you can check the BSA training site at [scouting.org/training/adult](https://www.scouting.org/training/adult), and you're going to find just about everything you can imagine there, including links to the *Training Times* newsletter and training that's available for the youth that you might want to know about as well. And if you're interested in advancement training as a kind of a side-line, check out [scouting.org/advancement](https://www.scouting.org/advancement), and you're going to find a link there to the Advancement Education presentations that are available and the *Advancement News* that's put out every two or three months. A lot of great information in those resources.

BRYAN: Yeah. I love that *Advancement News*. And then, the BSA Learn Centers at my.scouting.org, and that's where you can see what your current training progress is and take all the latest training. So, Dan, before we let you go and, and get back to all your many different Scouting jobs, is there anything else about training that you want to share with our listeners?

DAN: Well, as kind of a summary of some of the things I might have already said, but you know what? Proper training for the duties that one's going to perform in the Scouting program, it's just important and it should be taken as soon as possible. And adults who have been in the program for a while

should just update their education from time to time to make sure they know what's current, because things change; we see it around us all the time, and things change in the Scouting program too. And, quite frankly, the bottom-line summary of the whole thing is every Scout deserves trained leaders.

GINA: Yeah, that's wonderful. You've sold us on the benefits of training and the many ways to get training, so no more excuses. Let's get trained! Dan, , thanks for coming on the ScoutCast for the discussion.

DAN: Hey, it was my pleasure.

BRYAN: After this brief Safety Moment we'll be right back with Reminders and Tips.

(Safety Tip – Chainsaws)

BRYAN: All right. Let's start Reminders and Tips by taking about succession plans. You don't really like to wait until a milk carton is completely gone before buying a new carton, right? So, in a similar way, having a succession plan means being prepared to replace volunteers in key roles, and now – right now – is a good time to put one in place. The Scoutmaster or the Assistant Scoutmaster in your troop, they may have committed to their responsibilities, but they might not be able to complete that commitment.

GINA: Since our motto is Be Prepared, a successor needs to be identified for the role should something unexpected happen. With a succession plan in place, your troop won't be scrambling around to fill a vacated role, and your troop or crew can maintain its tradition of 100% trained leaders. Tune into the January 2017 ScoutCast for more details.

BRYAN: It's time to talk about the magazines. My favorite time of the episode! Philmont - they have 1,200 summer staff members, people who get paid to be at Philmont all summer, which is like the greatest job ever. Well, a quarter of them are women. And in the January-February 2019 issue of *Scouting* magazine, we had one of the women who worked there talk to four other of the women who work there and they are a backcountry interpreter, a ranger, a Philmont Training Center staffer, and a woman with the awesome job title "musicologist." So that's one to read for sure, Jan-Feb issue.

GINA: I got to peek at that article. It's really cool for multiple reasons. One, it's just cool to see that those jobs exist at Philmont, and then, two, it's great to see the ladies represented there. And as for *Boys' Life* magazine, you can meet NASCAR driver William Byron. Spoiler alert: he's an Eagle Scout!

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GINA: The February ScoutCast has now come to an end, sorry to say it. But special thanks to our guest, Dan Maxfield.

BRYAN: And thanks to you, listener, for joining us. Don't forget to come back next month for an in-depth discussion on Advancement and the trail to Eagle Scout. Until then, and still right now, I am Bryan Wendell.

GINA: And I'm Gina Circelli. Don't forget to send us your thoughts and ideas for future ScoutCasts. It's easy. Send an email to Scoutcast@Scouting.org or tweet us @bsaScoutcast. We look forward to hearing from you guys.

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