

JULY: WELCOMING ALL NEW FAMILIES

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AARON: Hello, listeners! Welcome to *Scouting Magazine's* July ScoutCast. I'm Aaron Derr. Please join me in welcoming my new partner in hosting duties, the lovely and talented Gina Circelli.

(FX applause)

GINA: Hi, Aaron! Hello, everyone, and thank you for the warm welcome. Speaking of "welcome," our topic for this month is Welcoming New Cub Scout families.

AARON: That's right. Sometimes a new family might come in with a little bit of anxiety, maybe they're not exactly sure what they've gotten themselves into, and it's important that we make them comfortable. These new parents are future Cubmasters, Den Leaders, anyone else involved with the program. It's important that we make them feel comfortable and actually glad that they've joined the Cub Scouting family. How do we do that? Let's find out.

Music Fades

AARON: Join me in welcoming our guest, Winnie Lee of the Rancho Mesa District, out of the San Diego Imperial Council. Training new leaders is what she and her husband Steven have done for Pack 681 in Rancho Bernardo for over 7 years now. And as she told us earlier, it all begins with welcoming the families. Welcome to CubCast, Winnie.

WINNIE: Thanks for having me!

AARON: All right. So, when we talk about welcoming people, who exactly are we welcoming here?

WINNIE: We're welcoming families, the entire family. We want to make sure be it a traditional mom and dad or grandparents or aunts and uncles bringing the potential Scouter into our program that they all feel welcomed.

GINA: I'm imagining being a new parent or even a youth coming into that environment and everyone's using terms I don't know, and it's just a meeting environment that I'm not familiar with. I'm curious who on the volunteer end is doing the welcoming? You're the new member coordinator, so that's all your job, right?

WINNIE: Right. So, that's actually one of the new terms that we have is NMC. The New Member Coordinator is that person who has been tapped in the adults of the pack that will keep an eye out for that fresh face, somebody that hasn't been coming every single event or is absolutely brand new, especially if they're holding a new flyer for the new season that's coming up. It might be at a Rocket Derby, a Space Derby, or a Pinewood Derby, or even if you're having a movie in the park type of night. There is one specific parent that is wearing the red polo with the welcome logo in the upper left shoulder of their polo to designate, "Hey, come talk to me. Have any questions?" But they're also watching out for those new kids that might be a little shy, and that memory of being welcomed is one we always remember. So, if there's that new kid trying to hang on to Mom and Dad a little bit, I'm getting down on my knees and saying, "Hey, thank you for coming today. Would you like to decorate a Pinewood Derby car? We'd love to have you join us." And have one of the current Scouts come over

and welcome them into the activity. In the meantime, whoever the adults that belong to that child is, we are welcoming grandma and grandpa, aunts and uncles, mom and dad. We explained to them, very cursory, our levels of Lions and Tigers and Bears and Wolves and Webelos, and how that progresses through our grade levels, and just welcome them to participate right away.

GINA: That seems like a very important impression to make, but a lot of our listeners may not be New Member Coordinators. Do they have a role in welcoming new members, new families as well?

WINNIE: As a New Member Coordinator, I don't want to do this job by myself. It is always more fun with friends. So, I'm looking out for that person that has that natural instinct of noticing the new people and noticing what other families' needs might be. I want to develop a team and have a couple of other friends that work this with me. You always want to have that ah-hah moment.

GINA: It's a team effort. Welcoming the member does not just fall on New Member Coordinator.

WINNIE: Absolutely. Doing it with friends is always more fun. There are pins, stickers that we can always put on a kid. It's the - we acknowledge you, we want you to take something home, and we're really looking forward to seeing you again at the next meeting. And so, having resources, such as a flyer that has information of when the next couple of meetings are, and that way the family can put it on their calendar. Nowadays I find that

families love to text so they can text me a question anytime and I get back to them. Now I have somebody's number that's in that pack right away.

GINA: You make a really good point in how important it is to reach families of today. I can't imagine how intimidating it could be if it was more of you walked into a clique environment, but it sounds like it's really important to make great effort to just be welcoming, be able to meet people on whatever communication device they want – if that's texting, if that's in person, what have you, so, I like what you're saying.

WINNIE: A lot of grandparents, they prefer an old-fashioned phone call, so I just make a note reminding myself, hey, call Grandma so-and-so and just connect with them. Very often grandparents don't hear the, "Your grandson is amazing, your granddaughter did this today," and I just need to leave them with one or two "we noticed them" and they will always treasure that.

AARON: Now, Winnie, why is welcoming new families so important to the success of the pack, like at large, the pack overall? Why is it important to get this right?

WINNIE: It's important to welcome the families immediately because they are our future leaders. What I'm also looking for is that parent that has a natural gifting. Some families come in as a whole family system and they are just very extroverted. They have always been involved, they want to be involved, and they will jump right in with both feet. Other families are just naturally more introverted or a little bit more quiet and they want to observe and they want to see what part of our pack meets their need. I'm

also watching for that. If you're serving on a committee, you don't have to be the face of our pack. You don't always have to be up there during pack meetings and speaking. Some people are extremely gifted at that and they get energy from it. Other people, after putting them up to public speak, will be drained for two days. I don't want to do that to any family. And if I notice what your natural inclination is, then we'll welcome you into positions and opportunities where it meets your family needs to be able to give back.

GINA: So, if I'm thinking of a typical pack meeting, when does the quote/unquote "welcoming" occur?

WINNIE: The welcoming always occurs the moment somebody noticed that you walk through the door. And if they come up to you and they shake your hand and they at least greet you and greet your child, that is the moment where you realize I didn't just wander in and wander out. I don't want the pack to be known as a drive-through activity. It is something that we always incorporate into all the families. We want to build meaning into why they are giving us their gift of their time as a family. There are so many activities that are competing not just for our children's time, but even for the time of the adults. There are so many different things we can do in most metropolitan areas. Why is Scouting something that they want to dedicate their time to? It's the relationships that we can build, within our den, between Scouts themselves as children, the relationships that they can have to model healthy relationships with a Cubmaster to a small den. When they are beating their skins and trying out age-appropriate activities in front of a bigger audience, they're growing their self-confidence, and we do this as a community in the pack.

AARON: Can you share some tips with us about the process that you use for welcoming people?

WINNIE: Absolutely. So, preparation has a lot to do with it, and the preparation leads to my personal intention of how I want to welcome a person. I can give you an example of this amazing Indian-American family that had called me, and he gave me the story of his son is in second grade right now and saw our Scouts leading the Friday Flag Ceremony at our elementary school. And he said, "That reminded me of my Scouting experience in India." It was such a different program, but it was something that drew an innate desire for that father to want to introduce to his son here in our community. And so, when he called me, he was asking me all the questions of, "What is the points of the Oath and Law that is important?" And he was actually getting down into the nitty-gritty. So, from that initial phone call, the most important part that we had in connection was my listening to his stories, and from there that informed me how much it meant to that family to be able to get started and welcomed into the program. And later I found out he wasn't even at our school but he happened to be with a friend, that is participating in Scouts and he wanted him to see the flag ceremony, so that intention and that welcome actually started with his friends inviting him to visit our school flag ceremony.

AARON: We're going to take a short break and be back with more on the art of welcoming new families right after this.

COMMERCIAL – Boys' Life Warehouse Sale

GINA: So, welcoming is just absolutely crucial to running a healthy unit, it sounds like, but hospitality and being welcoming and outgoing is not always natural to people. Are there some kind of resources available to help?

WINNIE: Absolutely. Our National Team has spent two years, very intentionally developing a training module. If you Google, “BSA New Member Coordinator,” you’ll find a link directly to the training. Once you finish the modules and you are a registered leader, you get the basics of how to be a New Member Coordinator.

AARON: Very cool. Was there anything else about welcoming new leaders and families that we haven’t talked about that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

WINNIE: The most important thing is that we’re trying to connect on a personal level. Welcoming someone isn’t a one-time event. It’s not just running a recruitment event. Welcoming is being able to be a constant, so one of the most beautiful gifts of being a New Member Coordinator is showing up. If you know you can be the consistent person that is always showing up at every pack meeting, or someone on your team is showing up at the pack meeting, perhaps wearing the red polo, you’re immediately identifiable by families that are walking in. In fact, the shirt was so welcoming when I was just going home one night wearing the red polo, because it said ‘welcome’, I had strangers come up to me and said, “Can you help me with something?” And remember to always be welcoming enough that we are there to do a good turn daily.

AARON: Well, I don't know about you, Gina, but right now I am feeling totally welcome, and I'm sure our listeners are too. So, Winnie, thanks so much for coming on the show.

WINNIE: Thank you for having me.

GINA: And listeners, we will welcome you back with Reminders and Tips after this brief Safety Moment.

(July Safety Moment – Physiological First Aid)

GINA: 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.

AARON: Hopefully, you had a pack activity back in June. Qualifying packs 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. Tune into the March 2019 CubCast for some fun summer activity ideas.

GINA: And in case you've forgotten, there is still time to earn the World Conservation Award.

AARON: 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.

GINA: 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 parents.

AARON: And if it's not complete, don't worry. It's okay. Just get it done. I know it seems like a big deal. Sit down and plan that schedule and send it out to all the parents. Now, 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.

Begin Music Under

AARON: 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, Winnie Lee, for joining us.

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

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. We look forward to hearing from you.

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