

AUGUST: PEER-TO-PEER RECRUITING

Music Full then under

JESSICA: The music has started, so that means it's time for *Scouting* magazine's August ScoutCast. Anissa Hicks is a little under the weather, and as we wish her a speedy recovery, I'm Jessica Robinson, along with Ryan Larson. What's up, Ryan?

RYAN: Howdy, Jessica! Thanks for pinch-hitting. This month's topic is going to be all about ... drumroll please ... Peer-to-Peer Recruiting!

JESSICA: Let's find out more about that.

Music Fades

JESSICA: And here to share everything we need to know about Peer-to-Peer Recruiting are Scoutmaster Angie LoSavio and Senior Patrol Leader Karina Venegas of Troop 216 out of the Pathway to Adventure Council. Angie has been involved in Scouting through Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts over the last eight years. Having served as an Assistant Den Leader and an Assistant Scoutmaster in Boy Scouts, she is currently excited to be the Scoutmaster for a growing troop of girls, thanks to the recruiting efforts of Karina and her impeccable Peer-to-Peer Recruiting skills. Welcome to ScoutCast, Angie and Karina.

ANGIE: Thank you for having us.

KARINA: Thank you.

JESSICA: Now, Angie, what does Peer-to-Peer Recruiting mean?

ANGIE: Peer-to-Peer Recruiting means having our existing Scouts in the organization serve as ambassadors for the Scouting program and our troop. So they essentially are our front line and they have a great ability to go out and recruit new members amongst their peers.

RYAN: Now, Angie, I am a leader in a Cub Scout pack and when we do recruiting, we do flyers, youth talks, and so I guess my first question is: does this really work? I mean, how many in your troop were there to start and how many are there now?

ANGIE: So, we had six members to start off and, we currently have 22. So, we've seen a lot of growth.

JESSICA: That's amazing. Now, Karina, do you have a plan for Peer-to-Peer Recruiting or is it just natural?

KARINA: For me it's definitely a natural process. Anytime I see an opportunity with friends or neighbors, I'll talk about my experiences or what happens during meetings.

RYAN: When you are doing your Peer-to-Peer Recruiting, when do you do it? When's the best time?

KARINA: Anytime I'm interacting with my peers, it's a great opportunity to promote Scouting. Scouting has so much to offer, from traditional outdoor education programs to the career-based experience, through the Learning For Life Explorers program. I personally think that Scouting has something to offer to everyone.

RYAN: So, Karina, you've caught the bug of enthusiasm in talking to your friends. Have you been able to get the other youth in your unit to do the same?

KARINA: Yes. A lot of the Scouts go to the same school, so we talk to other peers in our school and we get them to join the troop.

JESSICA: Now, I have a question for both of you. What are the benefits of having a larger troop or crew?

ANGIE: With a larger group, you'll see naturally a lot of diversity not only in the ages and the grade levels that are represented but the interest in the group, the talents in the group. Outings are more fun. There's always more hands-on deck for participation in activities and for dreaded duty roster. But one thing that I've really seen kind of play out as well is that within the larger troop you also have a lot more peer-to-peer teaching. So, you've got the older Scouts who have had more experiences, who've advanced in rank, sharing their skills with the younger Scouts. And sometimes it means a lot more when a skill is passed down from an older Scout to a younger Scout rather than from an adult leader to a Scout. Those are definitely some of the advantages that we've seen so far.

JESSICA: Now, Karina, what do you think the benefits of having a larger troop or crew are?

KARINA: There are more youth leadership opportunities within the troop. You might not necessarily have a librarian or a scribe in for our troop. There is also additional resources like parents who have certain professions and they're our merit badge counselors. Every now and then in my troop, a parent will coordinate with their employer to sponsor a merit badge course. Recently we had a parent that hosted an automotive merit badge and taught our Scouts the basic fundamentals of automotive maintenance. For having a large troop, we get introduced to new challenges that you might not see smaller troops like dealing with different leadership styles.

JESSICA: That's fantastic.

RYAN: Now, to Angie, from my Scouting travels, I've found that Peer-to-Peer Recruiting is probably most effective with Cub Scouts. Does it really work with older kids?

ANGIE: I would argue that it's even more effective in older kids. So, as a Scout gets older they are definitely more independent in choosing their activities and how they spend their free time, and so that's when peers become really influential. So it's always nice to be able to join an organization if you have a connection to that through a friend or a teammate or a classmate. And this is one situation which, peer influence can be a really positive thing. We hear so much about negative peer influence but this is a really positive way for peers to influence one another.

RYAN: How do you motivate them? I mean, for Cub Scouts I can pretty much motivate with a sticker, but with like older Scouts, how do you do that?

ANGIE: I really find that our Scouts just in general in our troop are very self-motivated. They are really motivated to learn new skills. Some are motivated by just being able to go to the outings and experience new adventures. So, one thing that I find helpful is to find what motivates that individual Scout and kind of build on that.

RYAN: Now, Karina, I have to guess that the Scouts in your troop are probably involved in other organizations, other youth activities. Are you tapping into those other organizations?

KARINA: Absolutely. If it helps a Scout advance in ranks, complete merit badges, or complete service hours, I'd say it's a great idea.

JESSICA: Now, Angie, how can the parents of your Scouts get involved in recruiting?

ANGIE: So, one of the primary ways is to support their own Scout in the Scouting program and allow them and encourage them to attend meetings and outings, because the more their own Scouts are attending and participating, the more invested they'll be in the program and the more likely they'll be to go out and recruit from a peer-to-peer standpoint. And then, as a parent you develop a network of friends who are parents as well, and parents speaking to parents can carry a lot of influence. If a parent has had a good experience having their children in Scouting, then

that also carries a lot of weight. And then, as parents are involved, they can become involved as troop leaders as well, then that leads to more recruiting possibilities as well.

RYAN: So, Angie, were you able to give Karina any resources like, I don't know, a sample email or a postcard? Were there any resources that you were able to steer her to?

ANGIE: Nothing formal, but resources that are available and useful to potential incoming Scouts and their parents are our troop website, which really does a nice job of outlining calendars and events and opportunities. It kind of allows that potential recruit to take a look and see what we're doing. And then our Committee Chair and our leadership is always happy to talk to parents of potential recruits to give them more information about the program. We have a nice handout and informational packet that we have available for new families, and that shares a lot of answers to questions that potential incoming Scouts and their parents might have.

RYAN: And there is a plethora -yes, plethora of resources available at Scouting.org at the Membership Marketing Hub. We're talking about videos, postcards, and a host of other resources.

JESSICA: Okay, we'll back with more on Peer-to-Peer Recruiting right after this.

COMMERCIAL: *Boys' Life Warehouse Sale*

RYAN: So, Angie, are you asking the Scouts like every meeting, “Hey, did you recruit somebody this week?” or are they just telling you that they are recruiting people when they’re out and about?

ANGIE: We definitely don’t ask or require Scouts to recruit, but it becomes obvious when they recruited someone because they’ll just bring them to a meeting and introduce them and will share information with them on the troop. We find a way to recognize them in front of the group. One of the things that we really encourage amongst our Scouts and our troop is public speaking, and so we have come up to the front and we introduce them. And we kind of have a little back-and-forth in terms of who they are and where they’re from and what they like to do, and so it’s a way to introduce them in a very informal way to the group. But we do award our Scouts who have recruited with a Recruiter Award at our Court of Honor, and so they’re recognized in that respect.

JESSICA: Is there anything else about Peer-to-Peer Recruiting that you think ought to be shared with our listeners?

KARINA: I encourage all Scouts to continue telling their story and experiences they have during Scouting. I talk about the fun parts of camping and doing merit badges and, what we do in meetings.

JESSICA: That’s great.

ANGIE: That's absolutely true. Sharing those personal stories goes a long way and it's probably the most positive and influential thing that a Scout can share with peers. It is a very influential process, and it is an opportunity for something very positive.

JESSICA: Well, this just proves that Scouting is better with friends. Angie and Karina, thanks so much for joining us on ScoutCast.

ANGIE: Thanks for having us.

KARINA: Thank you so much.

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

Safety Moment – Hazard Trees

RYAN: Okay, here we go with Reminders and Tips for August. New Scouts and leaders can now register online. There's a playbook and resources to assist you through the process at [Scouting.org/onlineregistration](https://scouting.org/onlineregistration).

JESSICA: And 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 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. Tune into the February 2018 ScoutCast to learn more about it.

RYAN: In this month's issue of *Boys' Life* magazine, dive deep with an Arizona Sea Scout ship as they go scuba diving around the California Channel Islands. This month's issue also includes a roundup of fun facts about Smokey the Bear, who celebrates his 75th birthday this month.

JESSICA: And did you know that you can take an entire century of *Scouting* magazine everywhere you go with the *Scouting* magazine app? For less than five bucks 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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JESSICA: That's a wrap for the August ScoutCast. Thanks to our guest, Angie and Karina, for joining us, and thank you to you for listening.

RYAN: And thank you, Jessica, for helping out with this episode. And for you audience members out there, are there any other topics that you think we should talk about? Just send us an email to ScoutCast@scouting.org or a tweet to [@BSAScoutCast](https://twitter.com/BSAScoutCast). With that, I'm Ryan Larson.

JESSICA: And I'm Jessica Robinson. We'd love to hear from you.

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