



National ScoutParents Initiative Launch Plan Engaging More Parents with their Child's Unit Fall 2008

Scouting has always depended on volunteer registered adult leaders, primarily parents of Scouts, to lead packs, troops, teams, crews, and ships. It is also part of Scouting's tradition that most parents who are not registered leaders pitch in from time to time to help out. To encourage involvement and more engagement of volunteers at all levels, the Boy Scouts of America has developed the National Parent Initiative.

The **National Parent Initiative** is a unique opportunity to engage more parents in Scouting, especially at the unit level. The emphasis is on capturing a parent's interest and support to become more involved and committed to the success of their child's Scouting experience. It will enhance youth and adult enthusiasm, recruitment, retention, achievement, and the family FUN of Scouting with a passionate commitment by all who participate.

A new unit position was created and officially became a part of the program on Sept.1, 2008. The adult application allows for registration in this position, as well as parents making their commitment on the youth application. The official launch was shared at the May 2008 National Annual Meeting.

ScoutParents Canvas Bags Provided to Councils

A supply of canvas bags was provided to each council based on 75 percent of their registered traditional units as of December 2007. These bags are designed to be given to an adult after he/she has registered as a *ScoutParents* unit coordinator. Items that may be included in the bag from the council include:

- A welcome letter from the council with details about the *ScoutParents* initiative and the council's plans for implementation
 - Invite them to go to the *ScoutParents.org* Web site for more information on the initiative.
 - Encourage them to take the *ScoutParents* Unit Coordinator Fast Start training located on the Web site or through direct connection to the Online Learning Center at www.olc.scouting.org. They must create a MyScouting account to receive credit for the training.
 - Reference your local council's Web site as a good tool for keeping up with the council, and discovering ways they can become more involved in Scouting.
- A copy of the council's calendar of events for the coming year
- A copy of the council's most recent newsletter

Role of the ScoutParents Unit Coordinator

All units are encouraged to appoint at least one **ScoutParents unit coordinator** who will serve as a registered member of the unit's committee or as one of its assistant unit leaders. The coordinator will complete the adult volunteer application and pay the annual \$10 registration fee. Coordinators will go through the regular adult background check like all other registered leaders. Larger units may have more than one person serving in this key position.

The **ScoutParents unit coordinator** welcomes all parents to the unit and keeps them informed by doing the following:

- 1) Assign parents to help with at least one specific task, assignment, or project annually.
- 2) Provide an orientation for all parents about how the unit works and the benefits to their family.
- 3) Keep parents updated on the unit's program and their child's involvement.

This position will help involve more adults with the unit's program, thus creating a better informed group of parents connected to their child's Scouting experience. The support and commitment of parents directly affects the quality of the unit's program and provides a more meaningful experience for everyone, especially the Scouts!

Fast start training is available for all *ScoutParents* unit coordinators. Access the training by going to the official *ScoutParents* Web site, www.scoutparents.org; the national Web site, www.scouting.org; or directly to the online learning site, www.olc.scouting.org. This training will assist them in understanding their position and with learning how to work closer with the parents in their unit.

When a new *ScoutParents* unit coordinator is officially registered, he/she will receive an e-mail from the National Council welcoming them to the program and encouraging them to go to the *ScoutParents* Web site for more details and support.

Each registered *ScoutParents* unit coordinator will be encouraged to create a MyScouting account, giving them access to other resources to support their efforts. This access will also give them the ability to print a member roster of the parents in their unit who are active *ScoutParents*. There is also a special leadership emblem available through Supply for this registered position. They can wear it on their uniform if they want to become a uniformed leader or they can wear it on a T-shirt or hat if they desire.

Position Being Created and Added to Revised Adult Application:

- A minimum of three adults must be on the unit committee, including the committee chair.
- This new position will have a specific volunteer code—PC.
- The fee will be \$10, the same fee as other adult positions. They will receive *Scouting* magazine and are eligible to subscribe to *Boys' Life*, as are all adult leaders. The minimum age is 21, and a criminal background check will be conducted.
- Fast Start training is the same for all units and available through the Online Learning Center.
- The registration fee can be pro-rated based on when they register.
- There may be multiple positions in traditional units without additional fees.
- A position may be transferred for \$1 to another unit or council.
- The person will serve on the unit committee and can count as one of the two minimum committee members needed for a unit to charter or recharter.

- The person is equivalent to a member of the unit committee, but with a specific title.
- The person can multiple in the same unit in any position except Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, Varsity Coach, crew Advisor, Tiger Cub den leader, Cub Scout den leader, or Webelos den leader.
- A unit may have more than one person holding this position, especially if the unit has a large number of members. If there is more than one person holding this position, they can count as the minimum of two committee members needed to charter or recharter.

Commitment as a ScoutParent

All parents should be involved with their Scout in the unit's program. Parental support is welcomed and encouraged.

There are a number of ways to be involved:

- 1) Perform an occasional task to assist the unit's program.
- 2) Participate directly with your Scout.
- 3) Go to and observe Scout meetings.
- 4) Assist with outings.
- 5) Support the program financially.
- 6) Coach your Scout's advancement and help with the earning of recognition.
- 7) Influence your Scout's continued participation.

Your Involvement as a ScoutParent

Those parents who are willing and able to commit to their Scout's unit are invited to become *ScoutParents*. Each unit is encouraged to or should have a *ScoutParents* unit coordinator who will match willing parents with various tasks which need to be performed to help the unit function.

There is a wide range of tasks that vary greatly as to time and skills required. Examples of potential tasks are available on the Web site, as well as leader manuals. For computer purposes, the position code for anyone who checks the block as a ScoutParent will be **PS**. The minimum age is 21 for any parent/adult who commits to participate. There will be no fee required for parents to become active as a ScoutParent.

ScoutParents Commitment on the Youth Application

Each parent may make a commitment to be a part of the initiative by marking the box on the youth application under the parent portion that reads:

- "I commit to be an active ScoutParent."

There is a place for parents to enter an e-mail address on the youth application under the parent portion. This will assist councils, districts, and unit leadership in making contact with parents to keep them informed and involved. All parents who check this box and provide an e-mail will receive a welcome message from the National Council thanking them for becoming involved with their child in Scouting.

All leaders and parents are encouraged to visit www.scoutparents.org to keep up with what is going on in Scouting. There will be a welcome orientation for parents, explaining more about the program their child has joined and how they can help make it the best possible experience. A message will be on the cover of the youth application to provide direction to parents as they agree to participate.