

“ROCKET INTO SCOUTING” CAMPAIGN***2015 Membership Recruitment Concept Paper [FIRST DRAFT]***

Build An Adventure—Rocket Into Scouting!**It’s Time for A Real Paradigm Shift**

Youth membership has been consistently declining in the Cradle of Liberty Council for years. Traditional membership (Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting and Venturing) has gone from 17,709 in 2008 to 16,096 in 2013, representing a 9.1% decrease. With an especially challenging year in 2014, the cumulative decline could increase to as much as 14% when the membership books are closed.

Many factors can be attributed to the loss, including but not limited to societal and demographic shifts, lack of school access, systemic issues relating to the organization and operation of the Boy Scouts of America, and council staff turnover. What is clear from the current situation, however, is that the level of credibility and relationships between parents, unit volunteers, council staff, and school administrators—all key stakeholders in recruitment and retention—is simply not where it needs to be.

Therefore, a comprehensive plan must be put in place for the Cradle of Liberty Council that incorporates best practices from around the BSA and is focused on rebuilding relationships with all key stakeholders. There is no silver bullet, no one thing that we can implement that will turn around our declining membership. Rather, the answer is a balanced, disciplined approach focused on getting out into the community, raising awareness, and improving the customer experience at all levels. Ultimately, the goal is to bring the magic of Scouting to as many youth and families as possible in a quality, sustainable way.

Much of this plan is based on the successful implementation of the “Rocket Into Scouting” plan conducted by the Northern Star Council in the Twin Cities of Minnesota. The council increased youth recruitment by more than 35% in one year, recruiting more than 4,000 youth in a single night. It is our belief that a similar plan will work for the Cradle of Liberty Council.

Overview

- Plan and execute a coordinated council-wide new youth sign-up night to occur on the same date in mid-September at every elementary school in the Cradle of Liberty Council, primarily targeted at Cub Scout-age boys.
- To unify the campaign and connect recruitment with quality Scouting programming, each new youth who joins at the sign-up night will receive a model rocket as an incentive. Program elements will be developed around the rockets based on STEM and other advancement opportunities for units to use, as well as integrated into existing council-wide outdoor programs (like Fall Fest at Musser Scout Reservation).
- A major reason for holding a coordinated recruitment night at schools is for the purpose of promotion, flooding the media market with a consistent message: “Build An Adventure—Rocket Into Scouting! Go to your local elementary school on September XX to sign-up.” Utilizing the resources of the council’s marketing and membership committees, branded messaging will raise awareness of Scouting in our schools and communities. Promotion will include a website, fliers, posters, billboards, radio, print and TV PSAs, press releases, social media, and in-person interviews.
- Quality local programs are critical to the success of the recruitment campaign and retaining the youth we recruit. Youth and families want to join well-organized and planned programs and are more likely to stay in such programs. To support our volunteers in this effort, quality unit executives and district executives will work with Cub Scout packs throughout the first half of the year to develop solid program, budget and promotion/communication plans.

“ROCKET INTO SCOUTING” CAMPAIGN

2015 Membership Recruitment Concept Paper [FIRST DRAFT]

- At the same time, district executives will visit the school principals in their service areas to open the lines of communication, build relationships, assess the level of school access afforded to us, and secure commitments to use their facilities for the sign-up night.
- Simultaneously, the council membership chair and staff advisor will meet with superintendents to accomplish the same objectives.
- The online BSA membership application will be utilized for those families who cannot attend the sign-up night.
- Spring recruitment efforts will focus exclusively on new units and/or recruiting Tiger Cubs.

Unit Responsibilities

- Packs attend Rocket Into Scouting training in the spring.
- Packs promote their unit throughout the summer at community events (parades, festivals, National Night Out, church events, etc.).
- Packs attend School Open House / Meet the Teacher Night to promote Scouting.
- Packs staff every elementary school during the recruitment night to register new Scouts.
 - Provide a pack calendar with contact information and the next meeting date.
 - Turn in applications at district turn-in location on the night of the coordinated recruitment.
- Designate a separate meeting to orient parents (and recruit necessary adult leaders).

What's In It for the Unit?

- Council-wide marketing efforts to reinforce their local promotions.
- Large council financial investment.
- Simplified sign-up event (less work for the unit).
- First den and pack meeting plans have been prepared for them (rocket theme).
- ALL Cradle of Liberty Council departments are supporting this effort.
- Camping supporting the recruitment theme and providing the EXCITEMENT & PROGRAM.
- More program = More FUN!

Professional Staff Responsibilities

- Meet with every principal in spring to lay the groundwork for fall recruitment. Update school access rating and develop a plan for every school.
- Meet with every pack to ensure they understand the plan to staff every elementary school
- Staff a district turn-in location on the night of the coordinated recruitment for units to turn in applications and receive incentive items for all new youth. (Note: units will have the ability to purchase additional incentive items for existing youth.)
- Organize new units in low-density areas.
- Flier every school to extend an invitation to boys.
- Flier every religious affiliation to extend an invitation to boys.
- Encourage chartered partners to assist in the recruitment of youth for their programs.
- Encourage current members and their parents to promote their pack's Scouting program/ recruitment joining event by providing simple resources to aid this effort.
- Attend school open house/meet the teacher events to provide Scouting information.
- Arrange for classroom talks, lunchroom or playground visits to promote Scouting.
- Promote Fall Fest to all new and existing Cubs.
- Custom plan/date for any unit must be approved.

“ROCKET INTO SCOUTING” CAMPAIGN***2015 Membership Recruitment Concept Paper [FIRST DRAFT]***

Timeline

- **January:** Form a membership task force of 15-20 knowledgeable and influential individuals and present plan for critique and feedback.
- **February-April:**
 - Professional team meets with school principals.
 - Professional team and commissioner staff meet with pack leadership and complete unit health assessments.
 - New unit sales calls conducted in targeted areas.
- **April:** Training sessions held for packs.
- **May:** Coordinated Tiger Cub and new unit recruitments.
- **June-August:** Promotion of Scouting programs in the local communities, churches, community centers, etc.
- **August:** School open houses and meet the teacher events.
- **September:**
 - School talks and flier distribution at every school.
 - Coordinated recruitment night held.
 - Each packs holds a family orientation meeting after recruitment night.
- **October-November:** Fall Fest events at Musser Scout Reservation

Preliminary Budget

| <i>Item</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>Qty.</i> | <i>Cost</i> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Rockets | \$4.00 each | 4,000 | \$16,000 |
| Rocket Launchers | \$25.00 each | 50 | \$1,250 |
| Fliers | \$0.02 each | 100,000 | \$2,000 |
| Posters | \$0.55 each | 2,000 | \$1,100 |
| Yard Signs | \$2.00 each | 1,000 | \$2,000 |
| Website | | | \$5,000 |
| Billboards & Advertising | | | \$10,000 |
| Orientation Literature | | | \$3,500 |
| Branded Pop-Up Tents | \$400 each | 4 | \$1,600 |
| Misc. Fees | | | \$2,000 |
| TOTAL: | | | \$44,450 |