

## Troop Open House References

The attached pages are resources for hosting a Troop Open House. They are meant to be a guideline to follow. Creativity and adaptation should be done to ensure that your plans make sense for your Troop, your neighborhood, your Scouts and the market that you are going after.

The Troop Open House can be completed by following 5 steps:

1. Identify your Prospects
2. Mail and Disperse the Invitations
3. Follow-Up with a Call
4. Host the Troop Open House
5. Organize a Troop Activity

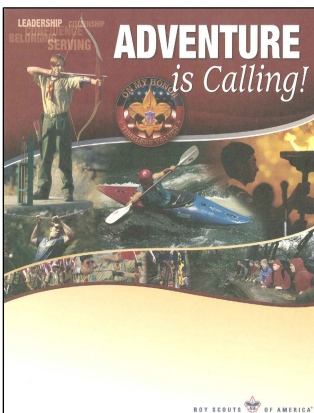
Refer to the next 5 pages which provide examples, more information and steps that your Troop should follow to be successful.

The Coronado Area Council will be following up with your Troop to make sure that you have the resources in hand to be successful. Your Commissioner is also available to help guide you through this process.

The key to Boy Scout Recruiting is **Scout-to-Scout Recruiting**. In other words, use your current Boy Scouts as Scouting Ambassadors to recruit their friends to come to your activities and open house.

### STEP 1: Identify the Prospects

The key to Boy Scout recruiting is boy-to-boy recruiting, or in other words, have your current Boy Scouts (usually the younger ones) be your ambassadors for your Troop. Focus on:



- A. Friends of your current Scouts (invite a friend).
- B. New kids in your neighborhoods.
- C. Scouting alumni. Focus on last spring's Webelos who did not transfer into a Boy Scout Troop. Also, look at your past rosters and re-invite boys that were Cub or Boy Scouts, but dropped out.

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Consider using the Boy Scout Recruiting flyer at schools and churches. You can contact **785-827-4461** to order these... and we can event print the backsides for you!

If you can get into the local schools, consider doing a in-school boy rally:

- A. The Boy Scouts of America recommends that recruitment efforts be concentrated on fifth- and sixth-graders. Several resources can be used to spark their interest, including introducing youth to Scouting with an interactive presentation.
- B. Cooperation of schools is essential to gain access to Scout-age youth. Contact school administration to schedule presentation time during school with small groups of boys.
- C. Plan the presentation to highlight Scouting's activities, high adventure, and outdoor experiences. Display hands-on visuals such as backpacks, canoes, and tents, and allow the youth to check them out up close. Dress in outdoor wear to complete the setting. Allowing some experienced Scouts to assist in the presentation could help the youth visualize themselves as Scouts. The presentation should be no more than five minutes.
- D. Announce that you would like to invite them to join a Scout troop. Explain that they will receive an invitation to join a Scout troop in their community. Pass out flyers or similar handouts announcing the date and time of your Troop Open House.

### **STEP 2: Mail the Invitation**

- A. The next step involves following up on the initial contact with youth who indicated their desire to join a troop. The Scoutmaster should send a personal letter to the parents of each interested youth, spelling out the values of Scouting and extending an invitation for the youth and his parents to visit the troop at its upcoming open house. Include a brochure that describes Scouting's values, to provide further information.
- B. Timing is important. Mail the letter as soon as possible after the survey is completed; schedule the troop open house for the week after the family receives the invitation letter.
- C. Model your letter after the following sample:

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Dear parent:

Your son has taken a step toward building a solid future; are you willing to support his growth?

Your son recently indicated his desire to try his hand at such high-adventure activities as backpacking, cycling, camping, swimming, canoeing, rock climbing, and horseback riding. Our Scout troop will participate in many of these activities in the coming year, and we would like to invite him to join our Boy Scouts Troop.

Scouting has a reputation for helping youth build character and develop self-reliance. We emphasize citizenship, the environment, respect for others, and physical & mental fitness. For almost a century, our programs have instilled in young men the values and knowledge that they need to become leaders in their communities and in their countries.

Please join our troop for our open house at (time) on (date) at (place). You'll get a firsthand look at some of our troop activities, and you can visit with our Scouts and their adult leaders. Take some time to look over the enclosed brochure, and bring any questions or concerns to the meeting.

I look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Scoutmaster, Troop \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone no. \_\_\_\_\_

### **STEP 3: Follow Up with a Call**

- A. On the day or evening before the open house, each prospective Scout's household should receive a telephone call from a member of the troop, ideally the Scoutmaster, who sent the letter. As you make the call, keep in mind that the youth has already expressed his interest, so direct the call to a parent.
- B. To help put the parents at ease, ask the following questions:
  - Did the family receive the Scoutmaster's letter?
  - Does anyone in the family have previous Scouting experience?
  - Do they have any questions about Scouting or the troop open house?

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- Do they know the time and location of the troop open house?
- C. Ensure parents that you look forward to meeting them and will meet them at the door to greet everyone.

## STEP 4: Host the Troop Open House

- A. The troop open house can be conducted as a district wide event for a number of troops, or an individual troop can conduct one independently. The important idea to remember is that Scouting is showcased and each guest is made to feel welcome.
- B. Involve all troop members in the open house from the planning stage. Remind each Scout of the importance of building their troop; be receptive to their ideas. Begin making plans for the open house as early as possible, following these suggestions:
  - Prior to the night of the open house, involve the troop in sprucing up the meeting place. Treat the task as a "spring cleaning" since the troop will be welcoming guests.
  - Prepare a display of troop activities, photos, and awards that the troop has earned.
  - Assign greeters to be at the door to welcome guests as they arrive. Be sure to have adequate seating.
  - Have a printed agenda and a copy of the troop's calendar at each seat.
  - Make assignments for each part on the agenda well in advance. The senior patrol leader should be the emcee of the meeting.
  - Prepare refreshments for your guests if you desire.
- C. The troop open house should follow an agenda, such as the one in this brochure, to help guests gather a broad range of Scouting information. The youth is introduced to basic Scouting skills while an adult troop leader informs the parents about Scouting's values and its positive effect on youth.
- D. During the open house, Scouts and Scouters should do everything possible to make their guests feel comfortable and to answer each question as it arises. Be sure parents know they may ask questions at any time. The guests should be allowed to participate whenever possible.
- E. At some point, the Scoutmaster should explain that both the youth and his parents may join the troop. Have applications available for both Scouts and adults.

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### ***Sample Troop Open House Agenda***

	Assign To:
1 Preopening — Conduct a simple action game for early arrivals.	_____
2 Opening — Hold the flag ceremony. — Welcome the guests.	_____ _____
3 Activity Time A. Skill time for youth — Hot spark — Knot relay — Tent pitching B. Parent orientation	_____ _____
— Explain the ideals and values of Scouting. — Introduce the troop leadership and its organization. — Distribute the troop calendar. — Explain the summer camp opportunity. — Thoroughly explain the costs of troop membership.	
4 Joining Process — Youth and parents complete applications to join Scouting. — Announce information about the next troop meeting.	_____
5 Closing — Scoutmaster's Minute — Closing ceremony	_____ _____
6 Refreshments (optional)	_____

