

Chapter 20 - The Support System



Other groups and people who offer training/development and resources form the support system that helps you deliver an effective Cub program. They bring a wealth of experience and skills from Scouting and other walks of life to your team.

Partner and Group Committee

Scouts Canada enters into a partnership with a partner; these may be a religious institution, service club, business, community group, police department, or some other organization. A partner agrees to provide Scouting programs to its young people, other young people who live in the community, or both.

Scouts Canada provides the program and program support, including support teams, leader training/development, uniforms, books, resources, and camping facilities. The partner may provide meeting facilities, financial support and other forms of assistance. They may also establish guidelines for recruiting and training leaders to meet its own ideals and goals. Scouts Canada, in consultation with the partner, ensures that a group committee is elected or appointed to administer the Scouting program for the group.

Some partners are content to provide a hall and assist with establishing a group committee, then they step back from active involvement. Others take an active interest in the operation of their groups, regarding them as components of their youth education programs. If your partner takes an active interest, you can expect a wide range of support. They may also expect you to conform with their youth education policies.

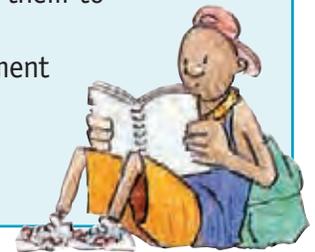
The group committee is responsible to both Scouts Canada and the partner for the operation of section programs. It supports your pack with:

- Administrative services such as registration, screening and enrolment of new leaders, auditing financial records of the sections, annual reports to the council and the partner.
- Fund-raising.
- Financial support for leader training/development.
- Purchase of group equipment.
- Financial assistance to sections when necessary.
- Acquisition of a distinctive group neckerchief.
- Planning group events such as a family banquet.
- Promoting activities to link section programs and to encourage advancement.
- Supervising and helping section programs, if required.
- Succession planning for all volunteer positions.
- Recognizing volunteers for their effort and contribution.



In return, your pack and the other sections support the group committee by:

- Having a representative on the group committee and sharing the discussion and decision-making on all matters, not just those of interest to the pack.
- Reporting on pack events.
- Giving notice of planned outings.
- Providing Cubs, leaders and parents for fund-raising activities.
- Helping to plan and participate in group events.
- Keeping accurate administrative and financial records, and submitting them to the group committee for audit.
- Cooperating with other sections in joint activities, including advancement of Beavers to Cubs, and Cubs to Scouts.
- Sharing scarce resources fairly between sections.
- Abiding by partner and Scouts Canada's policies.



If your group committee gives your section less support than you would like, consider the possible reasons. Like you, group committee members are volunteers with limited time. Unlike you, they are seldom directly involved with the Cubs and don't often get the immediate job satisfaction that comes from making a successful activity happen. Be clear about the support you require and how it will benefit the youth.

Good communication with the group committee is one of the duties of the leadership team. Make committee members aware of pack activities so they can give you the help you need to make your job easier. Put your group committee members to work. Unless you make specific requests of them, they may assume you have everything in hand. Group committees can often take care of many of the pack's time-consuming details to allow the leadership team more "quality time" with their Cubs.

Support to section Scouters: that's the essential role of the group committee. Several resources are available to help them do their jobs effectively. *By-law, Policies, and Procedures (B.P.& P.)* contains lists of duties of a partner and a group committee. *The Group Committee Handbook* describes these duties, and suggests ways to carry them out. (Both publications are available on Scouts Canada's web site, www.scouts.ca.) Scouts Canada also has a *Camping/Outdoor Activity Section in B.P.&P.* to assist leaders and group committee members to plan and prepare for camping/outdoor activities. This section contains:

- Scouts Canada's policies and procedures for camping or outdoor activities
- Advice on necessary forms and applications
- Accepted practices
- Other helpful information (e.g. insurance, emergency plans, and incident reporting).

The pamphlet, *In Partnership for Youth*, available at your local council office and on Scouts Canada's web site (www.scouts.ca), describes the relationship between Scouting and partners.

It takes work to build and maintain an effective group committee. Be prepared to do your share to find members. Let them do their jobs. Fulfill your pack's responsibility to support them, and acknowledge their contribution with thanks. In return, your group committee will ease your workload, help you run your pack better, and unite all sections into a successful team.

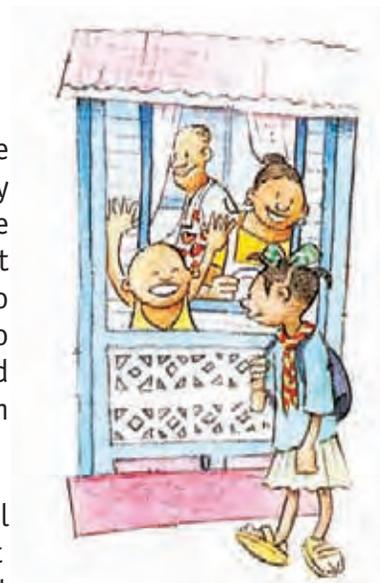
Parents

At registration, it's wise to tell parents you will need their help from time to time; also, identify the type of help you will need. Parents rarely flatly refuse to become involved, but if it happens, tell them you still welcome their youngster. Parents are truly your best resource. Because they want their children to have good Scouting experiences, you have the right to ask them to help provide those experiences. Parents or other adults who help out on a regular basis should become part of the leadership team and be screened accordingly. Adults not on the team require supervision when working with the youth.

If you can initially get unwilling parents to do a small, but meaningful task, you may spark their interest in further help. You won't get 100 percent participation, but don't be discouraged. Cultivating enthusiastic parent support takes time.

Give parents simple, short-term tasks they can do for the pack without too much difficulty. Provide choices so they can pick and choose from activities that might interest them. Some parents have small children at home or heavy career responsibilities. Tailor your requests to their situation. Most important, be sure to recognize their contributions. Everyone likes recognition.

Parents can do many jobs to relieve the leadership team and allow its members more time to spend with the Cubs. Although the group committee often assumes responsibility for getting parent volunteers, you'll find your direct requests for help bring positive responses. Be enthusiastic.



Here are some ideas that you might want to ask parent volunteers to do:

- Arrange telephone communication
- Organize and print newsletters
- Make neckerchiefs
- Help with lunch on special occasions
- Make popcorn for movie nights
- Repair camping or games equipment
- Help collect and organize craft materials
- Provide musical accompaniment (e.g. guitar) for a campfire
- Help collect money or forms for special trips

Parents are responsible for transporting their own children to and from local activities. At registration, ask parents for permission to add their name and phone number to a parent master list that will be distributed to all members. This will allow parents to organize their own car-pooling when required.

Parents also make excellent resource people. Cubs love to have a parent recognized as “an expert” at a meeting. You may have a nurse willing to give First Aid badge instruction, or an avid fisherman, skilled woodworker or market gardener willing to help with other badges. Parents can also be valuable contacts for arranging special tours.





Parent Talent Survey Form

Many new packs find the sample form, shown below, a good way to involve parents. Use it at any time of year, but it's most effective when you include it with registration material.

Sponsor _____

Pack _____

Date _____

Dear Parents:

Welcome to our Cub family. Cubbing is a program for the family as well as for children. We have a fine group of parents who have indicated willingness to help according to their abilities. We invite you to add your talents and interests so that we may develop the best possible program for the Cubs.

This survey will help the committee discover ways you can enjoy helping. Please answer as completely as possible.

Name _____

Address _____

Home phone _____ **Business phone** _____

E-mail _____

1. What are your hobbies? _____

2. What are your sports? _____

3. What aspects of your job, business, or profession would be of interest to Cubs? _____

4. Are you willing to help: On the Group committee As a leader As a resource person

5. What other youth groups have you belonged to? _____

6. What youth leadership positions have you held? _____

7. Experience in: Scouting Guiding Other _____

8. Please check categories you may be willing to help with.

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carpentry projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio/Electricity | <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming | <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Games | <input type="checkbox"/> Drama/Skits | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sports | <input type="checkbox"/> Music/Songs | <input type="checkbox"/> Typing | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing/Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking/Basic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other skills (Please list) _____ | | | |

Please return this form to: _____

Your cooperation and help will be appreciated.

(On Behalf of the Committee)



Group Commissioner

This person is recognized as the principal point of contact for the Group and assumes the leadership of the Group Committee, directly accountable to the Area Commissioner. The Group Commissioner's prime function is to ensure compliance with Scouts Canada's Policies and Procedures and Program Standards, and ensures that section leaders receive appropriate program service and support.

Service/Support Scouter

Each Council has a team of Support Scouters especially trained to assist leadership teams. The job of Support Scouters is to help you by:

- Providing advice for problems you may be experiencing with program planning, discipline, leadership, etc.
- Making contact with other Area leadership teams to set up inter-pack events.
- Learning about other program ideas and activities that have proved successful in other packs.
- Orienting and guiding new leaders.
- Accessing training opportunities.



If no one else seems to have any answers, call your Council office. If people there can't answer your questions, they can find someone who can. (Note: The titles of these support volunteers may vary.)

Chaplain/Spiritual Adviser

The group chaplain or spiritual adviser can contribute greatly to your pack. Refer to the chapter on Spiritual Fellowship for more details.

Training and Development

Because Scouts Canada believes leaders need skills and ongoing support to deliver an effective program, it provides opportunities for leaders to acquire the necessary attitudes, skills and knowledge to conduct successful programs.

Scouts Canada encourages both formal (training) and informal (coaching/mentoring, self study, on-the-job training) means of personal development. Leaders commit to acquiring the necessary knowledge and skills for their position within the first year.

Orientation

Your leader development begins with a discussion between you and your commissioner or service team member. The discussion includes:

- Your role and responsibility as a leader
- How your Area or Council is organized
- What your Support team can do to help you
- Other details about Scouting in your Area.

Working together, you will determine what development you need to deliver a good Cub program.

Woodbadge I

Woodbadge Basic Program Planning and Delivery introduces you to the fundamentals of running weekly meetings and outings. Completion of Woodbadge I qualifies you to wear the Gilwell woggle or the tie pin of your section. This should be completed within the first year.

Woodbadge Advanced II

Woodbadge Advanced expands on the skills and knowledge associated with weekly meetings and outings. It's best to start after you've had time to become familiar with the program, learn basic skills, and see some of the problems. Completion of Woodbadge II qualifies you to wear the Gilwell neckerchief and beads, or the tie pin of your section.

Other Development Opportunities

Most Areas or Councils provide opportunities for development on particular subjects, such as nature, first aid, campfire programs and camping. Sessions may take an evening or a day, and are usually very practical. Some Areas bring in outside resource people for specialty topics.

One-on-one discussions with other leaders are important and rewarding means of training/development. When you visit other packs and talk with their leaders, you pick up priceless information. When your Support Scouter or Group Commissioner visits your pack, sit down after the meeting to discuss your program and any concerns. Chosen because of their experience and skills; they are invaluable sources of help.

Some Areas have Scouters' Clubs that meet regularly in an informal setting to discuss a variety of subjects, plan Area events, and exchange ideas and concerns. It's a great opportunity to get to know the other Scouters in your Area.

Many Areas also hold annual conferences where leaders get together to explore topics of mutual interest, have a lot of fun, and develop team spirit.

Other Resources



Scouts Canada's web site (www.scouts.ca) is an excellent source of information and publications to help you deliver an outstanding program. Every registered leader receives The Magazine *Scouting Life* six times a year. *Scouting Life* is an excellent source of program information and updates. See the chapter on Resources for more information.