



#ADVENTUREON

SIX SECRETS TO RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

The number one challenge faced by leaders of youth-serving organizations is having too little help from other parents. But why do some organizations seem to have no shortage of volunteers, and meetings and campouts always run smoothly? Here are some tried and true pearls from seasoned Scouters:

1. Set an expectation that everyone volunteers. At the first opportunity when new members join the group, let parents know that they will be asked to volunteer for at least some position. List in writing on a handout which positions have known vacancies with a brief description of what duties are involved. You may have to customize your own list according to your unit's need. Let everyone know that by pitching in with some volunteer role, no one gets all the work dumped upon him or her.
2. Use a family talent survey and require every family to fill one out. In this survey, parents are asked about their own Scouting background and what sorts of positions might suit them. Go through your roster and make sure every parent has responded, and remind non-responders, so no one misses out.
3. Fit the job to the personality. Some folks love to be in front of kids, leading songs and teaching skills, while others are terrified of public speaking and would rather give their service in the background, handling equipment, managing advancement records, camping reservations, or the group's treasury. Do your best to read personalities and suggest jobs that you think are a good fit.
4. Do the ask in the most personal, relaxed forum you can. Avoid the mistake of asking for volunteers by a broadcast email. That approach almost never works. Also, try to avoid complaining publicly about a lack of volunteers. Nothing scares off recruits faster. A one-on-one conversation with a positive tone in a private setting works best. Campouts are a perfect time because parents tend to be relaxed and not stressed about their other obligations. At a campout, parents are enjoying seeing their sons having fun and learning in Scouting, and many parents secretly wish they could be more involved. Also, at a campout they see how much work the unit leaders are doing and feel indebted to them.
5. Once the volunteer says yes, follow up. As soon as you can, contact the volunteer to give him or her a link to youth protection training and a registration form (preferred, but not always necessary for some roles). Encourage them to take online training appropriate to their position. If you have not done so, have a live conversation about the duties expected.
6. Recognize the volunteer right away. At the next opportunity in front of a group of parents, announce the new volunteer's role and ask everyone to thank him or her for stepping up. This makes the newcomer feel great about volunteering and makes it quite a bit tougher to back out!