

**Ideas to Improve Organizational
Relationships Between Units and
Their Chartered Organization**

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June 1, 2012

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Ridgecrest, NC
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Ideas to Improve Organizational Relationships

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Walter Lynn Bates

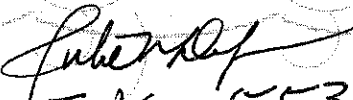
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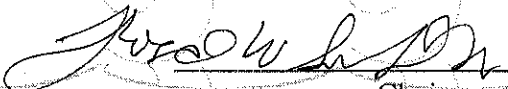

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My deepest thanks to the Great Smoky Mountain Council Commissioner, Mr. Don Lee, and to the Toqua District Commissioner, Mr. Bill Tribble, for giving me the opportunity to serve as a unit commissioner and for the examples of dedicated and leadership that they so obviously display. I also want to thank my home unit, Troop 530, for understanding when I had to be absent while fulfilling my duties as a commissioner. Finally, I want to thank my lovely wife for understanding and allowing me to participate and serve in the various niches of Scouting that are available to us.

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ABSTRACT

One of the most critical facets of the health of a unit in the Boy Scouts of America is its relationship with its Chartered Organization. When these relationships are weakened this is a dangerous situation for any unit because without a sponsoring organization there is no unit. The unit is attached to the chartered organization and cannot stand alone.

Relationships between these organizations should be as strong, flexible, and beneficial as possible. The intent of this paper is to provide the reader with some ideas on improving weak or compromised unit to chartered organization relationships or to maintain healthy ones. The primary means to recovering or sustaining good Boy Scout unit to Chartered Organization relationships is by emphasizing the mutual benefits that they enjoy, by becoming more aware of the common values that they share, and by providing the healing balm of service. The Scouting unit was established by the sponsoring organization to fulfill one of its desires or purposes. In order for two organizations to have a strong relationship and to prosper together they must share a mutual benefit.

Regularly communication with sponsoring organizations on both successes and failures, demonstrates to the host that they are benefitting from taking part in the Scouting program. Organizations choose to host Scouting units because they want to promote the shared values that Scouting teaches. Service is the key that unlocks doors for the Scout unit. By being not only a good steward of the parent organizations property but also serving in any capacity possible, the unit can repair and strengthen its relations with its chartered organization. The chartered organization is the host of the Scout unit. Every good guest should communicate freely with its host, it should hold up the banner of the values that they mutually support and demonstrate a life lived by the Scout Oath and Law and finally the unit should do as all Scouts should and do a good turn of service whenever possible.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

One of the most critical facets of the health of a unit in the Boy Scouts of America is its relationship with its Chartered or Sponsoring Organization. Every Scout unit, whether it is a Cub Scout Pack, which serves first through fifth grade level boys, a Boy Scout Troop that serves middle school and high school aged boys, or a Venturing Crew or Varsity Team that serves older high school and early college aged Scouts, must have an organization that agrees to sponsor them and provide them with some of their most basic needs. The Boy Scouts of America operates with the method of providing a program to a local organization that wants to provide the opportunity for the youth in their area to participate in Scouting. Often times this relationship begins as a desire for the organization to provide kids with the adult leadership, equipment, and opportunity to go camping or to have some other type of outdoor experience. The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America along with the supporting local councils provides the framework and instructions to safely conduct this outdoor program but the chartered organization provides the means and facilitates it. Chartered organizations can be local civic groups, businesses, police or fire departments, churches, school groups, or any other organization that agrees to provide basic needs for the unit for a one year charter. Each year the local council, the unit, and the chartered organization have to sign a recharter to agree to continue this support for another year at recharter time. The unit's charter or agreement with the local council and the sponsoring organization is only valid for a one year term. Many times these agreements carry on for several years and multiple

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generations of Scouts, Scouters, and members of the sponsoring organization. At times the members of the organization may grow away from the unit or lose track of its operations and the annual recharter time becomes a mere matter of paperwork. In these instances or even worse when a member of the unit behaves in a manner or perceived manner that is not attractive to the members of the chartered organization the relationship between these two entities can become strained or weak. This is a dangerous situation for any unit because without a sponsoring organization there is no unit. No place to meet, no equipment to go camping, no funds or bank accounts to operate with. The unit is attached to the chartered organization and cannot stand alone. Relationships between these two organizations should be as strong, flexible, and beneficial as possible. The intent of this paper is to provide the reader with some ideas on how to start thinking about improving weak or compromised unit to chartered organization relationships or to maintain relations that are viable and healthy. The primary means to recovering or sustaining good Boy Scout unit to Chartered Organization relationships is by emphasizing the mutual benefits that they enjoy, by becoming more aware of the common values that they share, and by providing the healing balm of service that can heal and repair a broken relationship.

CHAPTER 2

RELATIONSHIPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

The American Century Dictionary defines a relationship as “a state of being related, a particular association, or an emotional state between two” (Urdang 488). This definition is especially pertinent in the case of a Scouting unit. A Scouting unit is emotionally and legally attached to its chartered organization because of the common goal shared between the adults involved in a Scouting unit who wish to give young people the opportunity to learn about and appreciate the outdoors. This is the desire that originally brings the chartered organization to Scouting to offer to sponsor a unit. This desire is on the forefront of the shared relationship and should always be first among any personal or characteristic agendas or desires. This desire to serve the young people of the community is the cement that joins the two organizations, the Boy Scout unit and the chartered organization, and it also holds them together as long as this goal is still evident. The American Century Dictionary says that an organization is a group that is organized or arranged, in the act or organizing, a common body, system, or society (Urdang 406). As described above the Scout unit and the chartered organization are actually one common body that shares in the belief that our youth should participate in the Scouting program and have the opportunity to safely grow and learn to appreciate our natural resources and the outdoors. Organizational relationships come in several different types that serve different purposes. Clairenstein stated in her May, 2011 article titled Types of Interorganizational Relationships that “Interorganizational relationships between

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businesses or nonprofits are also known as strategic relationships. The philosophy behind forming an Interorganizational relationship is the idea that both groups can benefit more from working with one another in some configuration than working independently” (Clairenstein 2011). Organizational relationships include alliances, consortiums, sponsorships, and subsidiaries. A sponsorship is a type of Interorganizational relationship where one organization provides financial or other support to assist another in meeting its goals or fulfilling its purpose (Clairenstein 2011). Our Scouting units are truly sponsored by our chartered organizations. The chartered organizations provide Scouting with a means to fulfill its purpose. With an understanding of the terminology pertaining to organizational relationships we can begin to understand how to plot a course to improve them. The chartered organization is the host and benefactor of the Scouting unit and should always be treated with due respect. The Scouting unit was established by the sponsoring organization to fulfill one of its desires or purposes. The wish to provide the youth it serves or those in the surrounding community with the opportunity to participate in the Scouting program. Mutual benefit is the common ground that these two organizations meet on.

CHAPTER 3

MUTUAL BENEFIT

In order for two organizations to have a strong relationship and to prosper together they must share a mutual benefit. Scouting benefits from the chartered organization in that it is provided with financial support and backing, a pool to select adult leadership from, a facility to meet at and a place store equipment, the necessary equipment to fulfill the outdoor program, and sometimes even a common body of young people to recruit from. But how should the chartered organization benefit from the unit in return creating mutuality. The home organization came to Scouting to fill a void or to fulfill one of its goals. The Scouting unit should never lose sight of this desire by the sponsoring organization. A key element of the unit to chartered organization relationship is the chartered organization representative. The chartered organization representative is a person who works with the home organization and acts as a liaison between the two groups. This person is also registered with the Boy Scouts of America and the more active they can be the better understanding they will have of the activities of the unit and the clearer vision the unit will have of the goals of the sponsoring organization. The chartered organization representative may in all practical purposes represent several units to the home organization. Many larger organizations that want to see youth of all ages have an opportunity to participate in Scouting sponsor units from Cub Scouting all the way up the Scouting program to Venture crews. The Chartered Organization Representative can become quite busy in just facilitating meeting times, places, and

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approving adult applications, which is one of their duties. The units should strive to offer timely and relative information to the representative through out the year.

Communication is the key to recognizing issues early and ensuring that both parties are getting what they desire. Before going further in to the methods of assuring that both organizations are benefitting mutually lets first look at why many organizations want to sponsor Scouting units. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is a very large and benevolent sponsor of Scouting at all age levels across the United States. They say in their Scouting Handbook for Church Units in the United States that the purpose of supporting and promoting the Scouting program is because "Scouting can help young men and boys enhance close relationships with their families and the Church while developing strong and desirable traits of character, citizenship, and physical and mental fitness" (LDS 2011). Many organizations share a common vision for the young people that they serve and this vision should become the mutual goal of both organizations. The chartered organization representatives, along with the organizations executive officer, are the critical people that the Scouting unit must communicate with to meet this common goal. The executive officer is the primary leader of the organization that sponsors the unit. In a church this might be the pastor, youth minister, or a deacon or elder. In other organizations it could be the president of a civic group or the owner or chief officer of a business. Every unit must maintain a constant relationship and regular communications with these two people. Units can ensure that their chartered organization is benefitting from sponsoring them and that they are meeting the organizations goals by maintaining regular communications and joint visits with them. Unit leaders should always keep chartered organization representatives informed of not only the activities of the unit but

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also of special awards or accomplishments. Sponsoring organizations want to see that their units are alive and participating in district camporees and events and that they are providing young people with the opportunities to advance to become earners of the Arrow of Light, the Eagle Scout badge of rank, or the Venturing Ranger award and the Varsity Denali award, all the highest awards that their respective programs offer. Undoubtedly one of the original desires that brought the chartered organization to Scouting was that of seeing young people succeed. Organizations also want to know that their units are meeting the criteria of the Journey to Excellence, that they are competitive with other area units, and that they are supporting the local chapter of the Order of the Arrow. Units who keep their hosts informed of how their youth are advancing are showing them one of the benefits that they are getting. Units should also inform their chartered organization of changes in adult leadership or set backs like the theft or loss of equipment as soon as possible. These communications can be in the form of newsletters, regular email communications, or personal reports to a committee or board that oversees the organizations participation in Scouting. The means or methods are not as important as making sure that the messages are getting to the right recipients. The organization must know that it is benefitting from having the Scouts conduct a program in its facility. Issues or problems that arise and should be quickly dealt with are more easily handled by parties who are in regular communications and on familiar terms. Another means of providing a religious chartered organization with an assurance that they are mutually benefitting from hosting a Scout unit is by asking to conduct or sponsor one of the Religious awards that are widely available to all Scouts and Scouters. Sponsoring organizations begin a relationship with the Scouting program because they have a void that they would like to

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fill or a desire to see young people offered a particular opportunity. It is critical for the Scouting unit to become familiar with this vision of its parent organization and to take it on as its own goal. Ensuring that units regularly communicate with the sponsoring organization, on both successes and failures, shows the organization what the units are doing and demonstrates to them that they are mutually benefitting from taking part in the program.

CHAPTER 4

COMMON VALUES

Each program age-specific division of the Scouting program has an oath or promise that its members must agree to as a part of becoming a member. Even the youngest Cub Scouts begin learning their duties to God, their country, their family, and themselves. Boy Scouts and all adult volunteers agree to live by the Scout Oath and Law as a requirement to their participation in the program and they are regularly evaluated to see that they are fulfilling their promises. These values of trustworthiness, loyalty, obedience, citizenship, personal fitness and accountability, cleanliness, and reverence are the values that sponsoring organizations believe in and want to promote in young people. Scouting units have a duty to their parent organization to promote the values that they share and to teach and encourage every one of their members to live by these values as closely as possible. The short period of time that a Scout is at the facility of the host organization is a mere snapshot of his or her life but that snapshot should portray as closely as possible the ideals of Scouting. Unit leaders and adult should insist that every member be cheerful and polite when interacting with the members of the host organization. Impressions are lasting and bad impressions can be eternal, but good manners and behavior can open the doors that bring new equipment or additional storage space. Organizations and their representatives view Scouting based on the behavior of the Scouts that they interact with and if these Scouts will simple follow what they have been taught, try to live by the Scout Oath and Law, and do a good turn where possible, these interactions will be positive. Organizations know and adults should that young people

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learn from example. The adults that lead the young people for an organization should follow even more strictly the values and characteristics of a Scout that the organization shares. It is up to the adults chosen to lead to set the example and the tone of the Scouts.

These same values are what the parent organization wanted to promote when it agreed to host a unit. Extremely destructive damage can be done to the image of Scouting when a member of a unit behaves in a manner that offends the host organization. Chartered organizations should be ensured at once when these misfortunate occurrences happen that these actions are not what Scouting teaches and that the member will be taught and encouraged to live by the values of Scouting. A good report and a positive image of Scouting to the host organization are essential in keeping relationship strong and healthy.

An excellent interaction between Scouts and the members of the sponsoring organization if the organization is a church is to ask if the church will host a Scout Sunday, a Sunday service, where the Scouts, dressed neatly in full uniform, act as the ushers of the church.

They pass our programs, help the congregation find seats, collect the offering, or do anything else during the service where they can be helpful. These events are invaluable in getting Scouts in front of the members of the sponsoring organization and in getting the host involved in the unit. Other possible activities that if properly planned and conducted can improve the image of a Scouting unit to its chartered organization and demonstrate that the youth members are learning the values that the organization considers important are serving at meals or other social events. Any opportunity to interact with the membership of the chartered organization and demonstrate that the Scouts share in the values and beliefs of the organization is productive in improving or sustaining good relationships. Every unit and chartered organization is a little different but the values that

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they stand for should solidly resound together. The adult leaders of a Scouting unit should be familiar with the values that the chartered organization considers important and at all means not only encourage these values in the unit but be an example of them in their own lives. Scouting should not only be good for the boys it served but it should also strive to improve the adults it has chosen to lead. Organizations want young people to have the opportunity to share in the outdoor adventures that Scouting uses as its classroom and they want to see these young people grow into productive, loyal, and reverent citizens of our society. The adults that lead these young people should be an example of what the organizations hopes the youth will become. Healthy and strong relationships between Scouting units and their host organizations are contingent on the unit supporting and promoting the values that the organization considers to be important, the values that brought the parent organization to the Scouting movement and prompted them to host the Scouting program in their facility.

CHAPTER 5

SERVICE

If the human race wishes to have a prolonged and indefinite period of material prosperity, they have only got to behave in a peaceful and helpful way toward one another. ~ Winston Churchill. This is the attitude that Scout units should adopt in serving their sponsoring organizations. Service is defined as work or assistance given to another or a benefit given to another (Urdang 529). Scouting units will never suffer from a lack of opportunities to serve their communities and their chartered organizations if they will only stay in contact and informed. Everyone is familiar with the Scout slogan that a Scout does a good turn daily and every unit should teach this philosophy to its youth and adult members. There are literally hundreds of opportunities to serve the host organization. It is up to the unit leader in coordination with the chartered organization representative to make the units available and willing to cease the moment and do that good turn. Units can help with everything from litter pick-up at the youngest ages to landscaping or food pantry collection and work, to after school tutoring at the host organization for the older Scouts. The particular service is not as important as the recognition that this service to the parent organization is so very much appreciated and builds a lasting impression with the members of the chartered organization. It also teaches the youth members to take ownership of the facilities that they have so generously allowed to use and to take care of them and be a good steward of this property. The young people of the units should be cheerful and obedient as they conduct themselves during service work. This vision of cheerful service can leave a lasting impression. It is also crucial that the Scouts can be

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identified as Scouts and that they belong to the chartered organization's unit. Units should strive to not only make sure that their members can easily be identified as Scouts but also identifiably to the unit at the chartered organization. Pack, Troop, Team, or Crew T-shirts, that not only display the appropriate Scout logo, but also the name and location of the chartered organization identify the unit as belonging to the organization. They more importantly show the members of the host organization that the Scouts have a connection with them. This is an important issue with organizational relationships. This mutual ownership can lead or build to the strong viable and stable unit to chartered organization relationships that allow units and organization to do what they had intended to do. To offer the young people of the community with a safe and challenging outdoor program that develops them in to the citizens that will become the leaders of tomorrow. Opportunities to serve are numerous. Adult leaders of Scouting units must seek out these opportunities and make them a part of their annual program. Every Scout and Scouter agrees to live by the tenets of Scouting and part of those tenets is doing a good turn daily. That is what Scouts are expected to do. Taking full advantage of the opportunities to serve and help the chartered organization will prove to be valuable in developing and maintaining strong ties between the Scouting unit and the chartered organization. Cheerful service is the healing balm that cements a unit to its parent organization.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Organizations come to the Scouting program because they have a void that they wish to fill. They have a vision to offer young people an outdoor opportunity that not only teaches them to appreciate our natural resources but also develops their character, instills in them a common set of values, and gives them the lessons they need to lead a happy and healthy life. These organizations have a vision of what they want to offer to the young people they serve or those in the local community. The unit that they agree to charter must adopt that vision as its own and fill that void. It should take on the goals of the chartered organization and do its part in meeting those goals. Chartered organizations want to see the Scout units that they foster, no matter what age group they serve, be active. They want to see the Scouts succeeding and being exposed to the shared values that they promote. They also want to stay informed on the actions of the Scouts, of their successes, special trips, and those of the adult leaders that they have selected.

Communications' are the key to attending to these needs. Unit leaders and Scouts should be comfortable and familiar with their chartered organization representative and executive officer. They should have a constant dialogue and feel like they can speak freely with these leaders of the chartered organization. When this situation is found not only will the relationships between the parent organization and the Scout unit be strong but they will also remain that way because issues and problems can be dealt with frankly, openly, and quickly. Organizations have a belief in a set of core values and they subscribe to those promoted by the programs of the Boy Scouts of America. Part of the

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mission and vision that they hope to follow is passing these values on to succeeding generations. Scouting units must take the challenge of teaching these values and assure that the young members of the unit are exposed to them. The members of the chartered organization want to see the Scouts grow strong, be happy, and learn to be good citizens. By properly following the programs provided by the Scouting movement the unit will fulfill its mission in teaching these common values and the chartered organization will accomplish its mission of developing these values in the next generation. A good rapport between the unit leaders and the home organization will ensure that the Scouts are being taught the values that the organization deems as important. Service is a timeless tenet of Scouting. The Scout who does a good turn daily has become an icon in our society. Scout units have an obligation not only to provide their youth members with an opportunity to serve but to also provide appropriate service to the organization that is hosting them. This service can take many forms but as long as the Scouts take ownership of the service and the task they are completing. That they complete them in a cheerful manner and the members of the sponsoring organization can identify that these are Scouts who are doing service work, and that they are the Scouts who belong to the home organization, this service work will be invaluable in strengthening the ties between the organizations. A Scout who does his good turn today may secure the meeting place of a Scout who has yet to come. Finally, good communications, open lines of conversation, shared values, mutual benefits and understanding, and a little cheerful service are all that is needed to provide Scouting with a secure place to meet and conduct its program for generations to come. Organizations seek out Scouting units because they have a vision of how they want to serve our youth. It is up to the leaders of the Scouting unit to follow

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that vision, not only today but to pass it on to the next generation of leaders who will carry Scouting in to the future and fulfill the wishes of sponsoring organizations yet to come.

CHAPTER 7

SHORT TALKS

These short talks are intended to help adults who work with Scout units give brief presentations to their chartered organizations and to enhance the relationships between the two organizations by informing the host organization about Scouting. These presentations also remind the chartered organization why it is important that they continue to support Scouting and to host a unit. They could be given anywhere from a formal board meeting or meeting of the organizations members to an informal luncheon hosted by the Scouts to say thank you to the chartered organization. They are in no means all inclusive and each individual speaker should make sure that their information is current and represents the unit accurately. The short talks are presented as a list of talking points that can be expounded on by the speaker.

Character connections or ethics in action programs: Every level of Scouting has some form of character development or ethical decision making program it teaches. The younger Scout programs are taught by the adult leaders but the older programs are discussions that are facilitated by the adults but conducted by the members. Examples of programs are found in the Boy Scout official handbooks and in leader's guides. These programs make excellent talking points to demonstrate how Scouting is teaching the life lessons and values that we all consider important.

Rank advancements and achievement: The Scouting programs all have high awards to recognize youth members who strive to excellence or who show the

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determination to complete the requirements of these awards. These awards include the Cub Scout Arrow of Light, The Boy Scout Eagle rank, The Varsity Scout Denali award, and the Venturing Ranger. These award programs can be used to inform host organizations of the successes and skills that the programs are teaching. They help the members of the chartered organization to understand the goals of the Scouts and to relate those accomplishments with the vision and goals of the organization. These talks should key on aspects of success like leadership positions held, projects completed, or personal challenges that were overcome by the youth member to earn this award. They should always stress that these awards are earned never just given.

Special Trips and Activities: Organizations like to see that their Scouts are active and outdoors. Adult leaders and appropriate youth leaders can help strengthen unit to chartered organization relationships by telling the members of the organization at some appropriate event about an event that they especially enjoyed. A trip to summer camp or a Camporee that was especially challenging or rewarding because the Troop did well in the competitions. These stories and activities spur the memories of the chartered organization membership and give them a common ground to connect with the Scouts and what they are doing. A high adventure trip would be especially productive because it is such an outstanding and unique opportunity in a youth member's life, but especially good hike to a familiar locale is also a good point in building organization to Scout unit relations.

Special Awards and Organizations: Scouts and Scouters are familiar with many of the awards and organizations that fall under the mighty umbrella of the Boy Scouts of America, but simply explaining these awards and opportunities to the members of the chartered organization can be extremely beneficial in building a strong relationship.

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Organizations like the Order of the Arrow and its significance and awards like the World Conservation Award or the Hornaday Award, or WoodBadge training for adults are unfamiliar to those outside of the Scouting family and units should work to educate their host organizations about them. The members of the chartered organization may find them fascinating but they will at least have a greater appreciation of what the Scouts are doing and trying to promote.

The Patrol Method: The patrol method is very familiar to everyone involved in Scouting, but to those who have never been Scouts or worked with them these philosophies is unfamiliar. Simply informing the members of the chartered organization how the patrol method functions, how the unit is governed or operates, what steps like youth protection or the buddy system are used to keep the Scouts safe, or any of the many other aspects of a Scouting units operation can be used as teaching points to inform the host organizations members on the benefits and uniqueness of Scouting.

Et Cetera: Any talk on a subject that shines a positive light on what the unit is trying to do in relation to how it benefits the chartered organization is productive in building good relations with the host organization. The activities and accomplishments of the Scouts and adults, participation in regional or national jamborees or trips, or any other subject that helps the membership of the chartered organization build a connection with the Scouts and the unit will help strengthen those ties. A Scout unit that is doing as it should, may never find itself without a home for long it may have to find a new home but another organization will gladly take it in.

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