



**NARRAGANSETT COUNCIL  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**

**MEMORANDUM**

**March 22, 2005**

**TO:** Narragansett Council Leaders & Parents

**FROM:** Joe Gencarella, Council President  
Frank Ferraro, Council Commissioner  
Roger Cardin, Vice President - Program  
Dave Anderson, Scout Executive

**SUBJ: Quality Program & Youth Retention**

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We are all well aware of the tremendous impact that the Scouting Program makes on young lives. The values we build in young people – character, citizenship, fitness & leadership – help prepare them to realize their potential in life and become responsible, productive adults. Imagine how much better our world would be if every young person had the benefit of a quality Scouting Program!

With that thought in mind we continually work to organize new Scouting units in “underserved” areas and aggressively work to recruit new youth into our existing units. We’ve focused on the Cub Scout Program knowing that if we recruit boys early – in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> grade – and give them a quality program they will progress through the ranks becoming Boy Scouts and Venturers, receiving the full benefit of Scouting.

The results of our recruiting efforts have been fairly consistent – and successful – bringing about 3,000 new Cub Scouts into the program each year. Unfortunately, we’re not retaining as many of these boys as we should be – or could be! Through exit interviews with boys and parents who drop out of Cub Scouting we have learned that a properly run quality year round program – with a significant outdoor-action oriented component – would greatly increase retention. **As a matter of fact, more than 70% of the new boys who join Cub Scouting tell us that they expect to go camping in the first six months!**

Experience has proven that units with trained leadership are better equipped to deliver a program that keeps the attention of the boys and those with an active outdoor program have a better track record of retaining boys.

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With these thoughts in mind the Executive Board of the Narragansett Council has launched two initiatives to help units better retain youth.

### **Outdoor Program Support**

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We're doing a solid job in providing outdoor program support to **Scout Troops**. 92% of our Scout Troops and 79% of our Scouts attended summer camp last year – against a National standard of 67%. In addition, through such events as District Camporees and Klondikes there are plenty of activities to supplement a Scout Troops' own year round camping program. (As you all know, a strong Boy Scout Troop has plans and carries out its own active outdoor program throughout the year.)

The results of these efforts are obvious – **our re-registration rate in Boy Scouting is 79%**.

In **Cub Scouting**, the record is not so good – only 36% of our Cub Scouts participated in Day Camp, Cub World, or Adventure Weekends last year against a National standard of 50% - and certainly we should be much better than the National standard! The impact on retention rates is obvious – **our re-registration is only 66% which means we're losing a third of our boys every year!**

Year round outdoor programming also makes a big impact on retention – remember that 70% of new Cub Scouts expect to go camping (this includes day events) in their first six months. In addition to the Tiger Cub Safaris, several of our districts are conducting events for Webelos and some are providing activities for all Cubs.

***To supplement these efforts the council will work towards providing more regular, council supported outdoor program opportunities for Cub Scouts. The eventual goal is to see an activity on "either side of the bay" every other month. These may be day activities or overnight events and may be "sponsored" by the local district but would be open to all. In addition we will continue to work to increase participation in Day Camp, Cub World and Adventure Weekends.***

### **100% "Trained" Unit Leadership by 2007**

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***The Executive Board has adopted a resolution requiring that "direct contact" leaders (Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters, Cubmasters and Den Leaders) be trained as a requirement in order to charter a unit in 2007.***

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As noted above, experience has proven that units with trained leadership are better equipped to deliver a quality program that keeps the attention of the boys and those with an active outdoor program have a better track record of retaining boys. In addition, the Boy Scouts of America's training syllabi – developed by volunteer experts on the National level – provide adult leaders with the latest health & safety resources.

To assist units in training 100% of their direct contact leaders, the Council Leadership Development Committee will offer more training opportunities in more locations throughout the council. In addition, we are pleased to announce that, effective immediately, required courses will be offered at NO CHARGE to participants, except for the cost of meals during OLS and BALOO as specified in the syllabus.

Over the next eighteen months Unit Commissioners and District Executives will work with units to identify their training needs and develop a plan to meet those needs.

For the past 95 years Scouting has been an integral part of communities across Southeastern New England impacting countless young lives. The Narragansett Council and its predecessors have a well deserved national reputation for innovative, quality programming. *Boys' Life Magazine*, the summer camp *Counselor In Training* program, and the *Tot'n Chip* – all began here! The moves described above – an emphasis on year round outdoor Cub Scout programming and 100% trained unit leadership – will continue this fine tradition!

dsa