**Boy Scout Troop 539**

**Ethan Allen District**

**Green Mountain Council**

**Webelos to Scout Transition Guide**

**Welcome!**

For those of you that are new to scouting (or just new to Troop 539), we welcome you to the journey and experience of Scouting. Scouting has a rich history of helping boys learn skills, values, and ideals to better enable them to live an enriched life. The purpose of this guide is to help the parents better understand the Scouting experience. For those parents who were involved in Cub Scouting, you will find there are many things that are different such as the leadership of the Scouts. For those parents who were Boy Scouts, you may find that some things are very much the same as when you were active in Scouting. Other things may be very different now that you are the parent.

**A Boy Led Troop**

Yes, you read that correctly. Scout Troops are led by the youth - or more to the point, they should be led by the most experienced Scouts. Parents are here to help guide and mentor the Scouts whereas in Cub Scouts the parents planned the activities and led them as well. Parental involvement is needed to make sure the Scouts are safe. Parent will help determine things such as “do we have anyone qualified to teach that skill”, “do we have funds to pay for that trip”, “do we have enough parents for adequate supervision at that activity”, etc. To that end, parental involvement is a critical piece of the troop’s success.

**The Mission, Aims, and Methods**

The mission of the Scouts BSA is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. From the Scoutmaster Handbook we learn that “every Scouting activity moves youth toward three basic aims: character development, citizenship training, and mental and physical fitness.” This too is where adult mentoring really comes into play. Below in Table 1 you will see some of the methods of Scouting and how they progress between the different areas of Scouting.

Here is an excerpt from the Advancement Guide: *From Cub Scouting through Venturing and Sea Scouts, the program puts methods to work. Together they lead to mission fulfillment. For example, Scouting ideals put forth in the timeless instruments of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, represent the most basic method. Moving on, we know young people want to belong to groups. Throughout the Scouting program, we provide a place where the sense of belonging is an outcome, practicing skills, exploring interests, learning values, forming friendships, and enjoying adventure. Associations within families and with a variety of adults are critical methods too, especially in terms of providing support and recognition and in developing mutual respect. Advancement is the method by which we promote and encourage the ongoing involvement and commitment that keeps members coming back for more. It works best when it is built into a unit’s program so that simply participating leads to meaningful achievement and recognition - and to a continually improving readiness for more complex experiences.*

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cub Scouting** | **Boy Scouting and Varsity Scouting** | **Venturing** | **Sea Scouts** |
| Living the ideals | The Ideals | The Ideals | The Ideals |
| Belonging to a Den | Patrol Method | Group Activities | Group Activities |
| Using Advancement | Using Advancement | Using Advancement | Using Advancement |
| Involving Family and Home | Adult Association | Adult Association | Adult Association |
| Participating in Activities | Outdoors | High Adventure and Sports | High Adventure, Outdoors, and Nautical Activities |
| Serving Neighborhood and Community | Leadership Development | Leadership Development | Leadership Development |
| Wearing the Uniform | Wearing the Uniform | Uniform available | Wearing the Uniform |
| Character Connections | Personal Growth | Teaching Others | Teaching Others |

**What Does All That Mean?**

Scouting encourages youth to develop physical, mental, and emotional fitness. In conjunction with parents, Scouts learn to adopt and live by meaningful personal standards. These traits help to serve as a cornerstone for success in life. Scouts learn to develop personal strengths by following the examples of others through hands-on experience. Some activities include outdoor skills such as camping, hiking, kayaking and rock climbing. These will help test and develop fitness and provide opportunities for youth leadership. Merit badge incentives will help in mastering hobby and career skills. Many Scouts learn new skills that foster into long term career goals. Scouting encourages youth to expand and test their personal initiative, courage, and resourcefulness.

Imagine all of this learning and experience being gained while having fun at the same time. Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement, is credited with saying that Scouting is: **Fun with a Purpose**.

**What is the Patrol Method?**

The patrol method gives Scouts and experience in group dynamics and leadership. It places responsibility on them and teaches the Scouts how to accept it. The patrol methods allow Scouts to interact in small groups, typically six to eight youth, where they can easily relate to each other. Within the Patrol there will be a Patrol Leader who helps to lead the group for a six-month period. Most Troops have elections every six months for the Senior Patrol Leader, who leads the Troop, as well as the Patrol Leaders. This is one method where leadership changes and youth have an opportunity to learn how to lead others.

**How Do Scouts Advance in Rank?**

Rank advancement is handled by the Scouts completing tasks defined for each rank. The official ranks are Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. Every Scout is required to have a personal copy of the handbook that Troop 539 provides at no charge. This book will help the Scout learn many of the skills for their ranks.

In addition to rank, Scouts can earn Merit Badges. Some of them are required to earn the rank of Eagle Scout. There are over 100 merit badges today that challenge Scouts in physical mental, and leadership activities in addition to teaching them more about citizenship in the local community and the world.

**The main goals of scouting are:**

* Teach youth to become good citizens
* To be clean and respectful of the outdoors and our natural resources
* To learn, practice, and build strong leadership skills
* Learn and develop new skills
* Build a solid skill base that allows them to handle physical, mental, emergency, problem solving, independence, and life skills that can be applied in real life situations

**Scouting Cost**

Cost vary from Troop to Troop and year to year. The common costs among all Troops are the yearly registration fees and budgeting for unit outings.

Year to year costs will differ based on the camping, hiking, and other activities. The cost of summer camp can vary depending on where the Troop goes. Typically, you should budget $450 for summer camp. If you can’t afford summer camp, talk to the Troop adult volunteers about camperships - that’s a camping scholarship. Most Districts or Councils have programs to help Scouts enjoy the benefits of summer camping. If this is a need, you are encouraged to inquire no later than March each year to get the application processed in time. A first year Scout can earn many of the requirements towards the Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks in that one week of summer camp alone. This helps the Scout really get off to a good start with rank advancement and maintain the excitement for the program.

Other cost to consider are the uniform and supplies for outings. As your scout grows, a new field uniform, also called a Class A uniform, will be needed. Troop 539 provides a Neckerchief at no charge, but the shirt, hat, and activity uniform, also called a Class B uniform, must be provided by the scout’s family. These can be purchased from the Council shop at <https://www.scoutingvermont.org/scout-shop.html> or online.

You may wonder why there are two different uniforms. When doing a community service project like planting trees or gardening or other such thing, while it may look really sharp to be in the field uniform, we typically do not want the scouts getting that torn or tattered. When at a troop meeting, Court of Honor where awards are handed out, boards of review and the like, a sharply dressed scout in their field uniform is required.

As a Scouts begins to participate in outings such as overnight camping, this gear will also be needed. A pack, sleeping bag, and eating utensils are typically the first items needed. If your scout has attended Cub Scout camp, much of this is similar. If you are new to Scouting, discuss gear needs with a Unit Leader or review the Scouting Handbook for recommendations.

**How you can help the Troop**

Parents are encouraged to help the youth with their Scouting experience. Parents can become trained leaders such as Assistant Scoutmasters, Scoutmasters, or Merit Badge Counselors. Parents can be members of the Troop Committee to help with planning, financing, or fundraising. Parents can be Patrol Advisors helping the Scouts to plan their activities and making sure that leaders are available to help complete tasks.

Every adult volunteer is **REQUIRED** to take Youth Protection Training (YPT) offered by the BSA. YPT is required for every trained leader with direct scout interaction. The safety of the scouts is one of the highest priorities of the BSA! Did I mention the training is free? You don’t even have to leave your house to take the training. It is available online at <https://my.scouting.org/> There is additional training available for free online as well as in person. Some of these training courses do include fees, so it is best to discuss these courses with the troop committee prior to attending. Every Scout deserves a well-trained leader.

Above and beyond what has been mentioned above, the best way you can help any Troop is to be involved with your Scout’s experience. Some of the most rewarding things about Scouting is participating in outings and events with your kids. You will make memories, see your kids grow and gain skills and independence. You will get to know your children’s friends and you will be part of their Scouting memories as well. It is up to the Scouts to make their plans and it is up to us to help support them in reaching their goals. As hard as it may be to hear, failure is an option and Scouting is a safe place to fail.

**Troop 539 Meeting Schedule**

Troop 539 meets every Sunday night from 6:00 - 7:30 at the Armory in Vergennes ***(COVID-19 Exceptions).*** This meeting is run by the Senior Patrol Leader under the guidance of the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster(s) and other parental help. In these meetings we work on advancement requirements, merit badge work, team building skills, service projects, scouting skills, and games.

In addition to the weekly meetings, a monthly Scout calendar is published that shows when meetings will occur as well as service projects, fundraising events, and weekend activities. The Troop has selected Sunday nights in order to minimize interference with weeknight sporting and school activities, and it allows time on Sunday’s to return from weekend activities in order to be available for the meetings.

**Summer Camp and Special Events**

In addition to the monthly schedules, out Troop attends overnight summer camp 1 week each summer, and attends multiple overnight weekend camping trips throughout the year. We do not always attend the same summer camp as each camp has its own area of specialty. Each year after the Troop attends camp, the adult leaders inquire with the Scouts what they did and did not like about their camp experience in order to best tailor the week for the interests and needs of the youth for the following summer.

In addition to resident camp, couts that have reached the First Class rank and higher can attend High Adventure camps like, Philmont, Northern Tier, Summit, or Sea Base. In 2018 we had 8 youth and 5 adults attending Sea Base in Florida. As these camps are farther away and include more advanced skills and activities, these camps are more expensive than the typical ~$450 resident camps. In many cases the cost of the High Adventure camps can be $1500 and up. As you would imagine the planning for these camps start far in advance of departure and include a lot of fundraising to aid in offsetting the out of pocket costs for each family.

**Troop Fundraising**

In Troop 539 we do several fundraisers. We participate in Scout popcorn sales every fall (normally in September/October timeframe), Between Thanksgiving and the middle of December we make and sell Wreaths, we sell Christmas trees in December, and throughout the year we collect bottles and return them for deposit. The bottles are collected at a drop box that is located at the trash/recycling pickup location in Vergennes. We have also operated food booths at car shows and wildlife festivals as fundraising events.

For all scouts that participate in fundraising, the Troop operates the fundraisers as follows: Each Scout has their own “account” created by our troop treasurer. For all funds that are raised during fundraising, 50% goes to the Troop account to cover supplies, camping fees, and food for outings. The other 50% goes to the Scouts account. So, if the boy sells popcorn and brings in $100 of profit into the troop, $50 goes into the troop account, and $50 goes into the Scouts account to be used as needed or as directed by the youth’s family. This allows the efforts of the Scout in the fundraising events to be rewarded. The funds that are saved into each Scout’s account can be used as needed for supplies (Troop Sweatshirt or T-shirt), camping supplies like a new hiking pack, or it can be used to offset the cost of summer camp or off-site trips.

**Communication and Contact Information**

Nearly all weekly/monthly communications are done via email to a Troop Distribution List. A copy of the troop contact sheet is provided to each scout that includes the Adult Leaders, Committee Members, and the Scouts themselves. This includes email addresses and phone numbers so that all members can be contacted as needed. In addition to home contact information, all leaders are to be provided cell phone numbers and temporary contact information prior to all outings to ensure that a primary and secondary contact is available before any outing begins. In addition to contact information, annual health and medical forms are required by the BSA for overnight campouts and annual physicals including insurance information and prescription drugs are to be documented before any Scout or even adult can attend resident camp. All food, insect, and seasonal allergies must be identified for each youth.

**Adult and Leader Contact information for Troop 539 can be seen below:**

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| Name | Position | Phone | Email |
| Travis Scribner | Scoutmaster |  |  |
| Rob Jewett | Committee Chair |  |  |
| Dennis Armell | Chartered Org. Rep |  |  |
| David Sausville | Treasurer  Committee Member |  |  |
| Shawn Therrien | Assistant Scoutmaster  Committee Member District Committee Chair |  |  |
| Randy Gates | Committee Member  Advancement Chair |  |  |
| Mike Kachmar | Assistant Scoutmaster |  |  |
| Paul Norris | Committee Member Secretary |  |  |
| Maureen Redmond | Committee Member |  |  |
| Brian Gebo | Assistant Scoutmaster |  |  |
| Jack McGuire | Assistant Scoutmaster |  |  |
| Matt Gagnon | Assistant Scoutmaster |  |  |
| Matt Neffinger | Assistant Scoutmaster |  |  |

**Cub Scout Cross-Over**

Cross over is an annual event that occurs every year between February and April. The event is the culmination of all of the work, effort, and skills the Cub Scouts have learned. It is their chance to be awarded and recognized for their accomplishments as a Cub Scout. It also acts as an official transition point for the youth from Cub Scouting to Scouting.

We hope this Cub Scouting to Scout Transition Guide has been helpful and provides some understanding of how our Troop works. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact any of the leaders listed in the contact section of this guide.

Thank you and welcome to Troop 539!