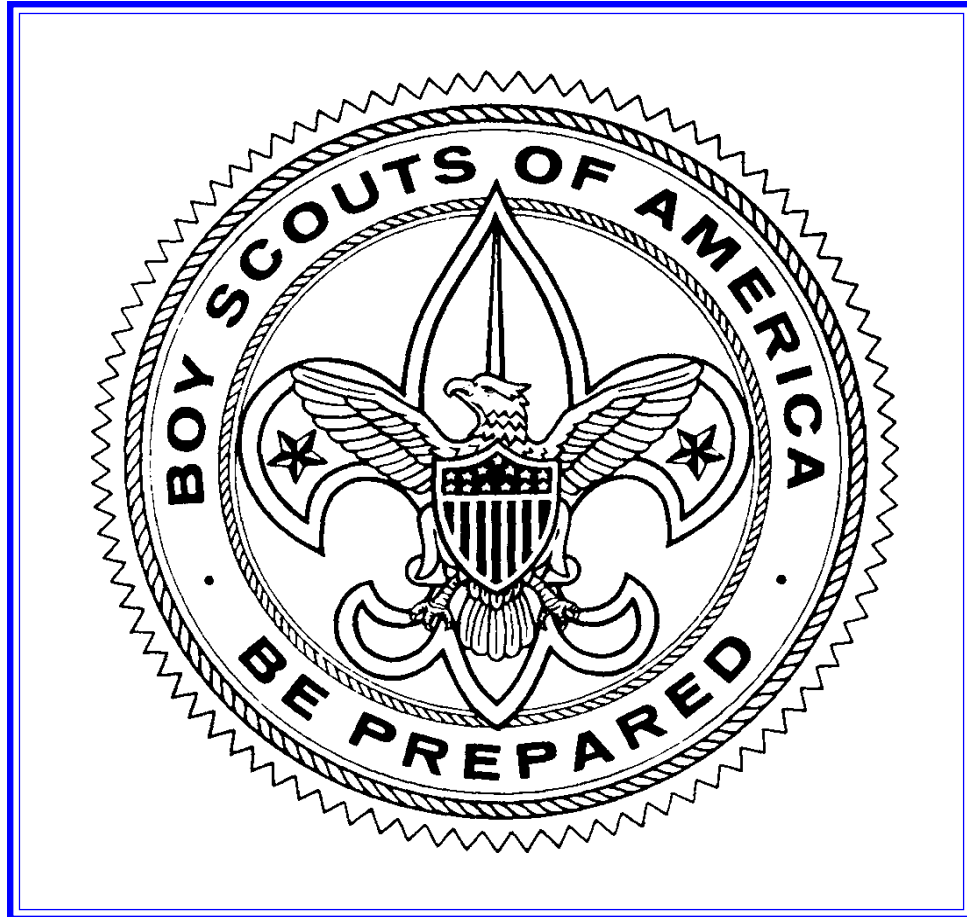


90% of Positive Public Relations Begins with Local Scout Units



Discover easy, fun ways that you can create and maintain favorable public opinion about Scouting. The results may have a dramatic impact on membership growth, financial contributions, and volunteer recruitment for your unit.



Chief Seattle Council  Boy Scouts of America

What is Public Relations in the Boy Scouts of America?

- Promoting goodwill in the community.
- Reinforcing the image of the Boy Scouts of America as a positive force in the development of happy and healthy young people.
- Promoting our comprehensive youth development programs.
- Responding consistently to negative publicity.
- Communicating internally among volunteers, families, and chartered organizations.
- Promoting special events. Camporees, pinewood derbies, courts of honor, and community service projects are all public relations events.

Why is Public Relations Important?

Positive publicity highlights the fun, healthy, community-building activities that are happening in districts and units. This helps establish credibility, an essential ingredient in attracting youth members, volunteers, and potential donors. Public relations is important because the more people who know about the Boy Scouts of America and the benefits of Scouting, the more people there will be to support local Scouting projects and programs.

What Groups of People Should I Plan to Reach?

- Scout-age youth
- Parents
- Adults
- Volunteers (current and potential)
- Chartered organizations (current and potential)
- Community leaders
- Donors (current and potential)



Every Unit, Family & Individual Shares in the Responsibility of Promoting Scouting

People in the community are eager to hear positive stories about their neighbor earning his Eagle Scout Award. They also want to see a photograph of Troop 272 collecting food for the local food bank and Cub Scouts excited as they race their pinewood cars at the local mall.

Here are some Ways You can Help get the Scouting Story out into the Public:

- Submit press releases and photographs about major district and unit events or service projects to local media sources.
- Recruit a unit public relations volunteer.
- Speak about Scouting at service club meetings, religious services, or community events.
- Send press releases and photographs to local business, civic club, and religious newsletters.
- Have Scouts give invocations or conduct openings at various community events.
- Leave information brochures at schools, community centers and chambers of commerce.
- Invite community leaders to attend Scout events.
- Set-up display boards and leave brochures at religious institutions, community centers, or office waiting areas.
- Conduct award ceremonies in visible ways, like during half-time at a game or public meeting.
- Publish articles about Scouting in school newspapers.
- Pick a visible place in the community to do a unit trash clean-up. Bring signs that indentify you and invite individuals to join Scouting.
- Plan a family and friends' open house for your unit meeting.
- Set up booths at community fairs or shows. Include information visitors can take home.
- Encourage youth to share their Scouting story when selling popcorn or other products.
- Decorate a float for Scouts to ride on in a local parade.
- Host your major district and unit events or community service projects in visible locations.
- Encourage your youth to participate in school assemblies, in uniform.
- Display BSA posters at community centers, schools or youth-oriented businesses.
- When participating in community service events, display signs that indentify you and invite individuals to join Scouting.
- Ask community leaders to speak at or observe unit meetings.
- Invite a media outlet to sponsor your event.
- Speak informally with parents, friends and neighbors about the benefits of Scouting.
- Post Scouting information on community bulletin boards.
- Invite civic organizations and local businesses to join you in community service projects.
- Send a letter to the editor. This could be in response to negative media coverage of youth.
- Invite media sources to attend or cover major district and unit events or service projects.
- Have Scouts present demonstrations in business areas like malls.
- Participate in community walks and races. Indentify your group with signs, hats, or stickers.
- Place articles about Scout and Scouters recognitions and advancements in local papers.

Writing Press Releases can be Easy and Fun
Your Youth and Adults will Love Seeing their Scouting Story in Print!

First, Determine What Makes the Story News Worthy:

Is it new or novel? Was a milestone achieved? How does it affect area residents?
Are celebrities involved? Will it impact the community? Is it a human interest story?

Second, Focus on the News Worthy Aspects While Gathering the Information Below:

HEADLINES - Important first impressions. Use interesting, attention-grabbing language.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION - The answers to the questions of who, what, where, when, why and how should be in the first paragraph:

WHO? The organization and individuals involved, emphasize the local angle. Use first and last names, as well as proper titles. Be sure to include your contact information if the reporter would like to know more.

WHAT & WHERE? Communicate this information in an unusual way. Unusual can mean different, better, less expensive, unique, or beneficial to the community.

WHEN? The date and time of the event or item featured. Also, include the date and time for the story to be released to the audience. Submitting current, relevant news items is crucial. For unplanned occurrences, submit the release to the media immediately. For scheduled events submit the release 1-2 weeks in advance.

WHY & HOW? Describe the effects and benefits the event has on youth and community members. Why should this story matter to your audience?

PHOTOGRAPHS - Clear, action-oriented photos with descriptive captions that identify each person. Your photo file should include signed releases by people in the photo and from the photographer, as well as where and when the photo was taken.

QUOTATIONS - from youth, parents, volunteers or community leaders adds interest.

STATISTICS & FACTS - About your unit, the Chief Seattle Council and BSA in general.

Third, Keep in Mind these General Rules of Thumb:

NEATNESS - Double-space and type on one side only of 8.5 x 11" paper. Use 1" margins.

BREVITY - Limit the release to one or two pages. Use short, clear paragraphs. Do not split paragraphs at the end of a page. Type "-more-" at the bottom of page one when the release is two pages. Type "###" to signify the end of the release.

ACCURACY - Verify all names and facts. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are also vital.

OBJECTIVITY - Avoid Scouting jargon, fancy phrases and abbreviations. Make an effort to write from an impartial, informative perspective.

Press Release Templates and District Public Relations Chair Contacts Available at:
www.seattlebsa.org - Positive Public Relations Section