

VOLUNTEER

# OUTCOMES STUDY

A STUDY CONDUCTED  
BY HARRIS INTERACTIVE





## Introduction

May 27, 2003

The Boy Scouts of America relies on dedicated volunteers to promote its mission of preparing young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. Today, more than 1.2 million adults provide leadership and mentoring to Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews.

Scout volunteers serve in many capacities, from board members who lead in strategic planning for each council, to district volunteers who provide leader training and mentoring, to unit leaders who organize meetings, encourage advancement, and provide outdoor learning experiences for youth. Together, these volunteers gave more than 288 million hours of service in 2002 to ensure that the youth of America have access to and benefit from Scouting programs in their communities.

Through the work of these many volunteers, the Boy Scouts of America remains the foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training in America. To these volunteers we would like to say thank you for your dedication to Scouting. And, to adults who are not currently Scout volunteers, we invite you to become a volunteer and share in the positive experiences Scouting provides.

Sincerely,

Roy S. Roberts  
President

Roy L. Williams  
Chief Scout Executive



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“You learn how to work with people in Scouting—how to work as a team with other volunteers.”



“Volunteering builds pride in my community. I can drive around and know where all the kids’ Eagle projects are.”

## Background and Methodology

Previous research focuses on the elements of healthy youth development provided through Scouting. Findings from *The Values of Men and Boys in America* (1995) reveal that men and boys with strong Scouting experience often demonstrate higher ethical and moral standards than non-Scouts. A follow-up study, *A Year in the Life of a Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Venturer* (1998), shows that through weekly unit meetings and outdoor activities Scouts gain strong personal values and a positive sense of self-worth, build caring and nurturing relationships with adults and peers, spark a desire to learn, use their time creatively, and gain social skills.

While Scouting’s positive impact on the lives of youth has been explored, what do we know about how Scout volunteering affects the lives of adults? Do they also gain positive outcomes in their lives from giving time each week to the Scouting program? To answer this question, the Boy Scouts of America commissioned Harris Interactive to undertake an important new study aimed at identifying the outcomes of adult volunteering. This study

uncovers some key areas where volunteering for the Scouts has a positive impact:

- ✦ Personal Values and Traits
- ✦ Communication Skills
- ✦ Relationship Skills
- ✦ Survival and Outdoor Skills
- ✦ Management and Leadership Skills

Volunteers were randomly selected from the 84 councils participating in the study. Volunteers were invited to go online to answer the questionnaire. If they did not respond to the online invitation, they were mailed a survey and asked to respond. In total, 16,124 volunteers completed the survey.

In conclusion, this study reveals that while volunteers who become involved in Scouting do not anticipate enhancing or strengthening their skills or values, it is an outcome that some do realize. More important, the study clearly indicates that the primary reason volunteers get involved with Scouting is their desire to share their skills and values with young people.

# Personal Values and Traits

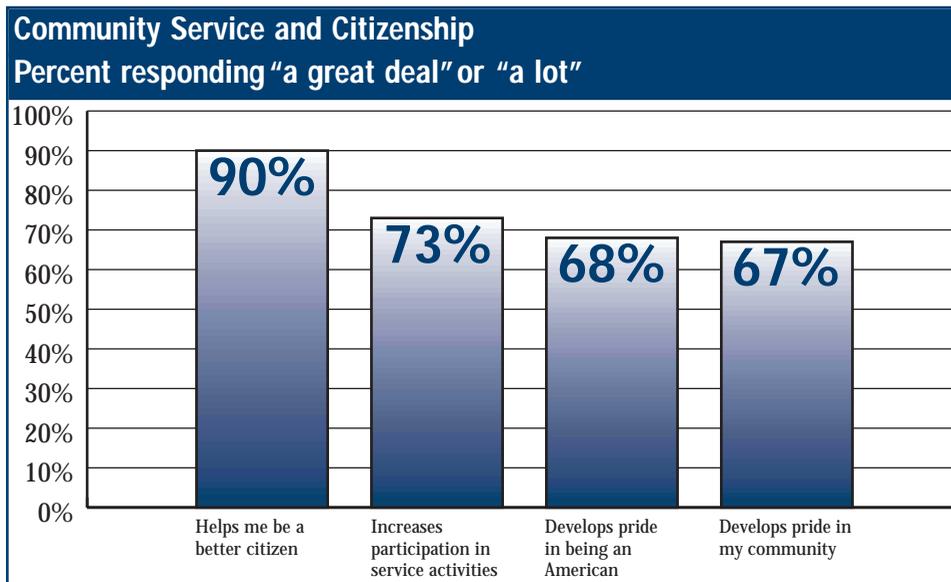
Scouts and adult volunteers uphold the values and principles of the Boy Scouts of America. While personal values are formed before adulthood, Scouting programs reinforce the values already held by adult volunteers and give them an opportunity to act on their values.

## Community Service and Citizenship

Volunteers for the Boy Scouts of America agree that Scout volunteering increases their participation in community service activities. Adult leaders have participated in an average of

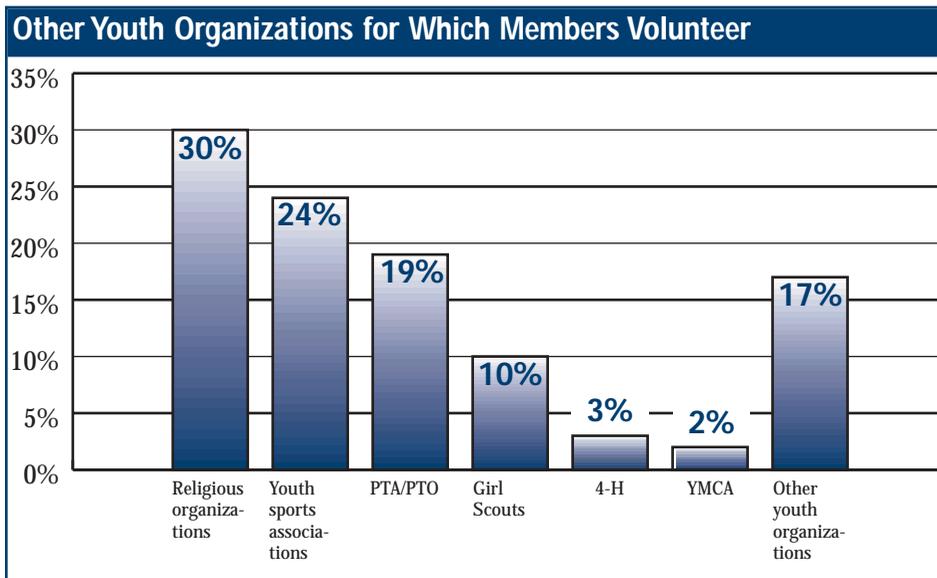
40 community service projects since becoming a Scout volunteer. Scout community service projects range from collecting food and clothing for local shelters, to planting trees, to picking up trash in local parks.

Scout volunteering also enhances leaders' pride in their community and in being an American. An overwhelming majority (90 percent) feel that volunteering for the Boy Scouts has helped them become a better citizen.



“Kids see a good example of their parents being involved with the community.”

Volunteers also agree that Scouting encourages them to become involved in other organizations. Two-thirds (66 percent) of Scout volunteers also volunteer for other youth organizations. Scout volunteers are involved in religious youth organizations, youth sports associations, parent-teacher associations/organizations, Girl Scouts, 4-H, YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, and Big Brothers Big Sisters.



“I’ve joined other organizations because I have learned so much about leadership from Scouting.”

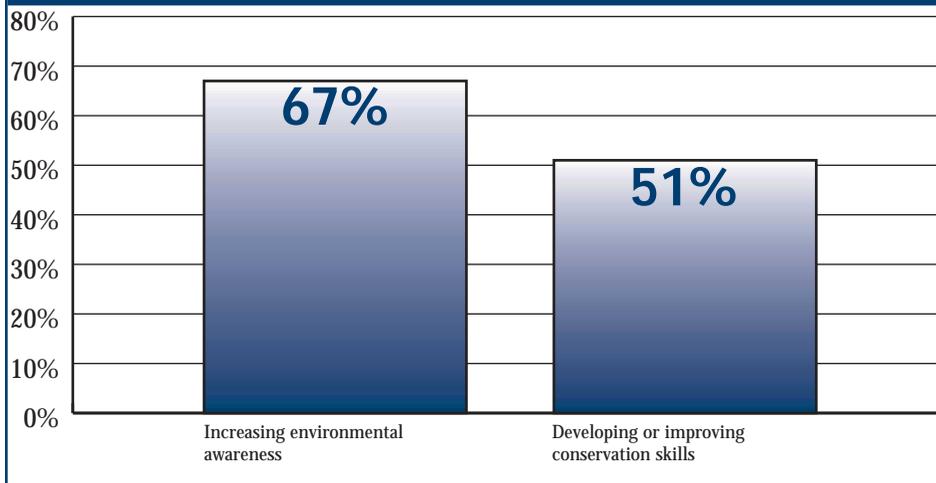
## Conservation

Scouting teaches youth and adults to live by the Outdoor Code—be clean in outdoor manners, be careful with fire, be considerate in the outdoors, and be conservation-minded. Many volunteers come to Scouting with a strong commitment to the environment; however, most indicate that through volunteering they have increased their environmental awareness and developed or improved their conservation skills.

“You learn to use your resources to the best of your ability.”



**Scout Volunteering Encourages Conservation**  
Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”

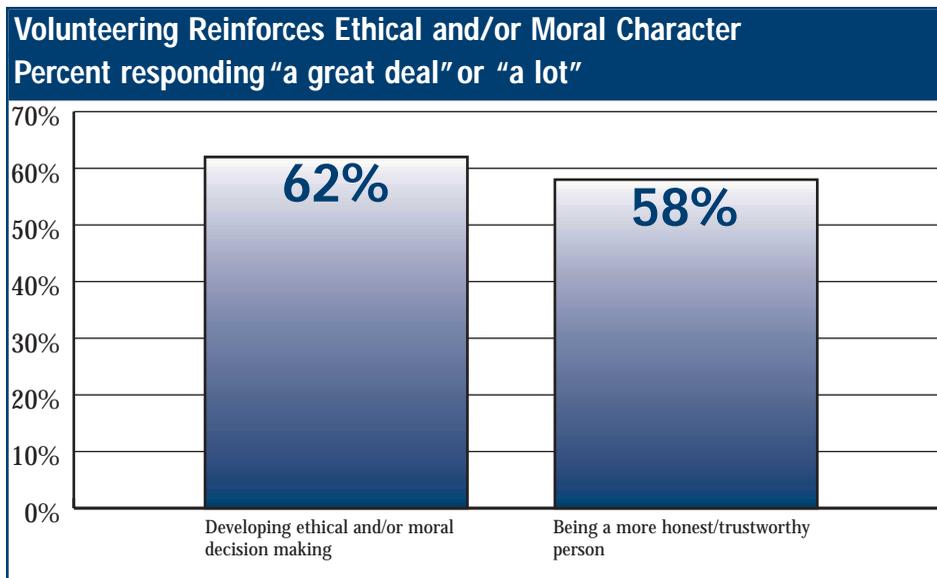


“Hearing the Scout Oath so many times can help you make moral decisions.”

## Ethical and Moral Character

Scouting promotes ethical and moral character development in youth as expressed in the Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturing oaths or promises. Volunteers become role models for these traits as they lead and participate in activities with youth and other adults. Through leadership activities, volunteers' ethical and moral decision making is enhanced and they feel that they are a more honest and trustworthy person.

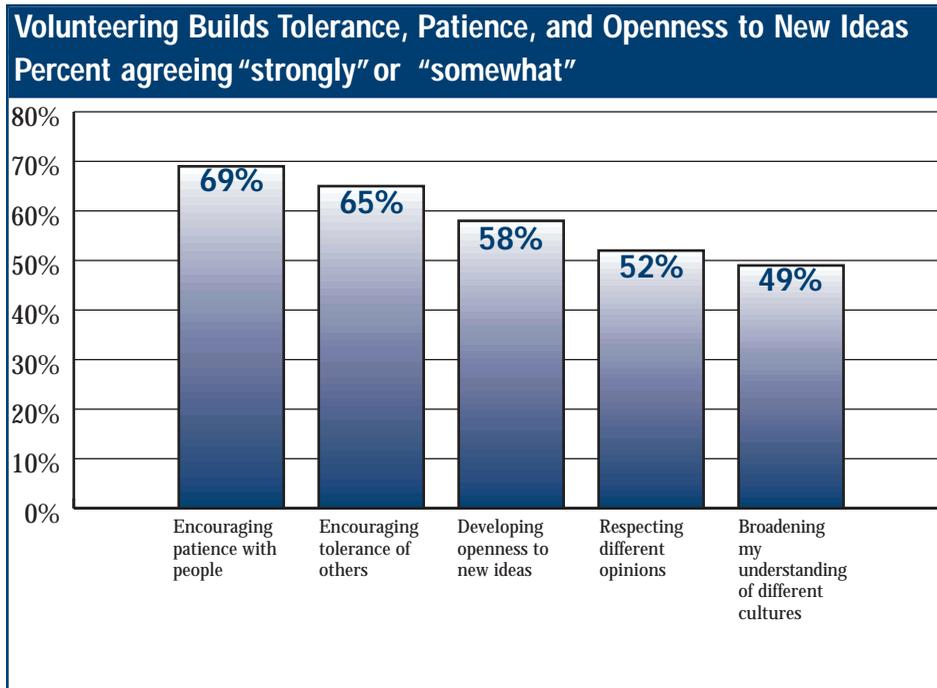
Duty to God is also an important component of the Scouting program. Scout volunteers work with youth in activities and ceremonies that help them think about and express their devotion to God. Although many volunteers come to Scouting with strong faith traditions, more than 40 percent say that through volunteering they have developed a more personal relationship with God.



## Patience and Understanding

Scouts and Scout volunteers come from diverse ethnic, racial, social, economic and religious backgrounds. Volunteers also work with young people between the ages of 6 and 21 and adult leaders age 18 and older. Because of this diversity, volunteers agree that Scout volunteering helps them be more patient and tolerant toward people who hold differing ideas and opinions.

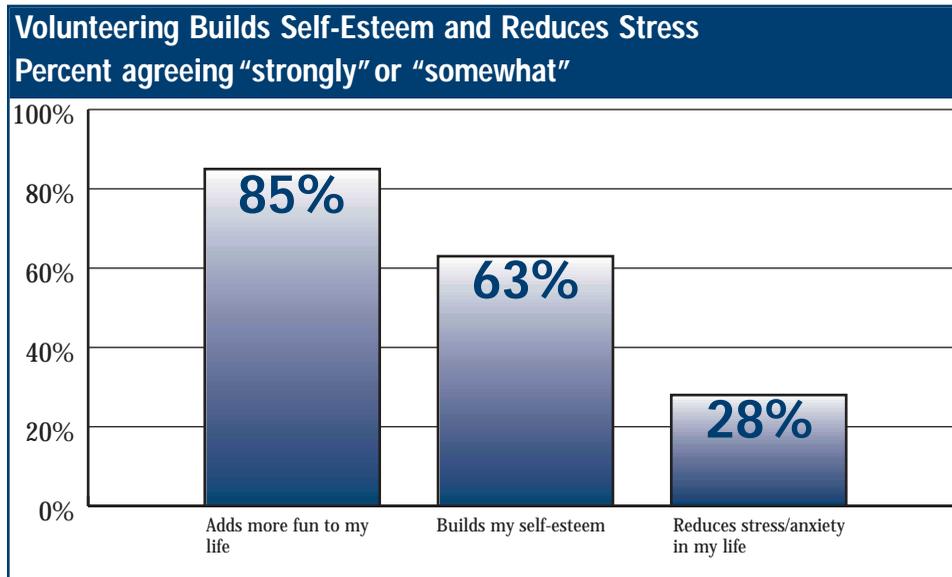
“I think I learned to be more understanding of today’s youth.”



## Enjoyment and Self-Esteem

Volunteers also say that Scout volunteering is just plain fun. One Scout volunteer summarized why volunteering for the Scouts is fun by saying “you get to be a kid again in a way.” More than one-fourth of the volunteers agree that their Scouting activities help them reduce the stress and anxiety in their life.

Volunteers build self-esteem as they set goals and accomplish them. Being appreciated for what they do is also important. As one leader says, “It’s great to see the appreciation from the boys for your involvement.”

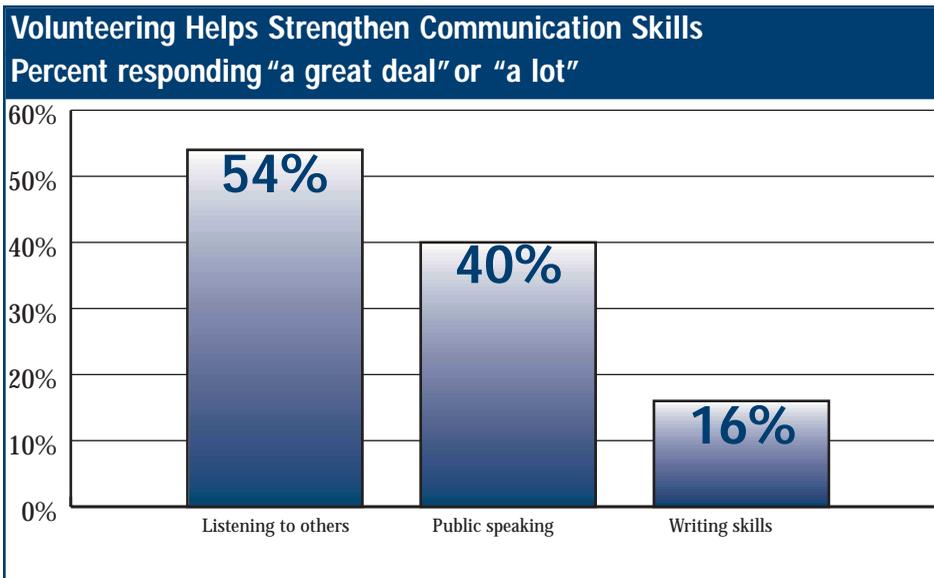


“You get to be a kid again in a way.”

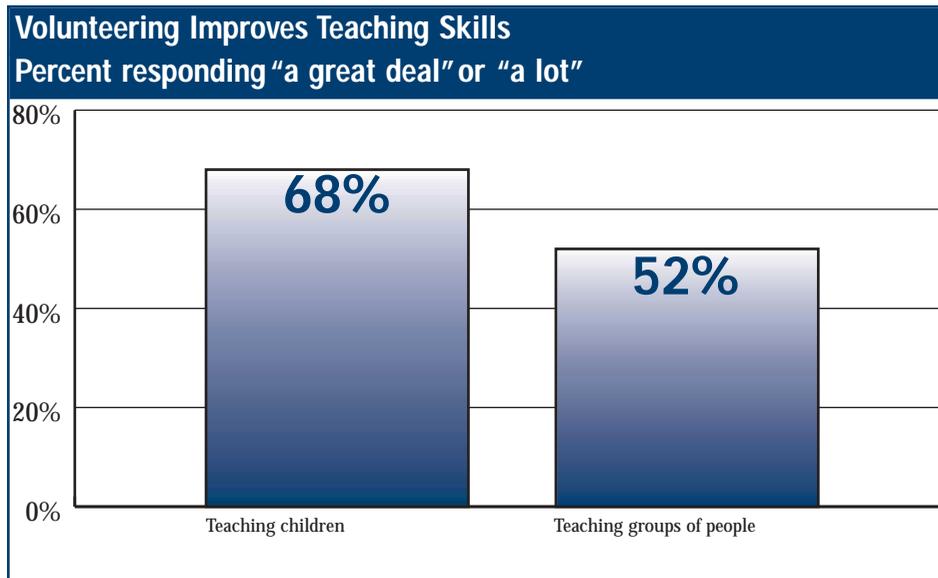
# Communication Skills

In their many roles, volunteers are called upon to communicate with Scouts, other volunteers, community leaders, and parents in their community. Some write newsletter articles for their unit or district, others give Scout recruitment and fund-raising talks in their community, and unit leaders are called on to listen to parents and Scouts and to address their needs. Not surprisingly, many volunteers indicate that this experience has helped them become better listeners and communicators.

“Volunteering helped me be open and more willing to listen to what other people have to say.”



Council and district volunteers hold workshops and training classes for Scout leaders. Leaders in turn provide mentoring and educational experiences to Scouts. Through all of these experiences, volunteers improve their teaching and mentoring skills.

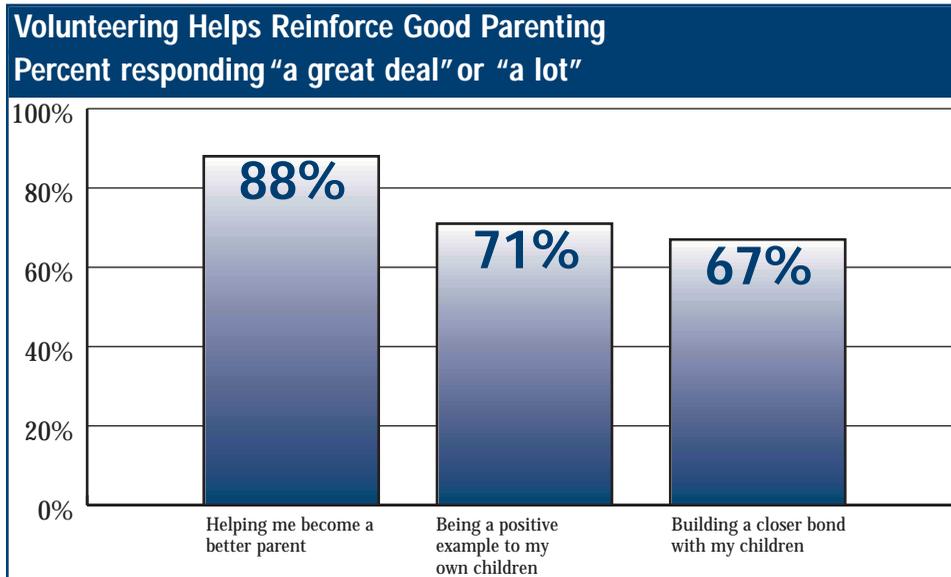


“It’s very satisfying to see the boys grow up.”

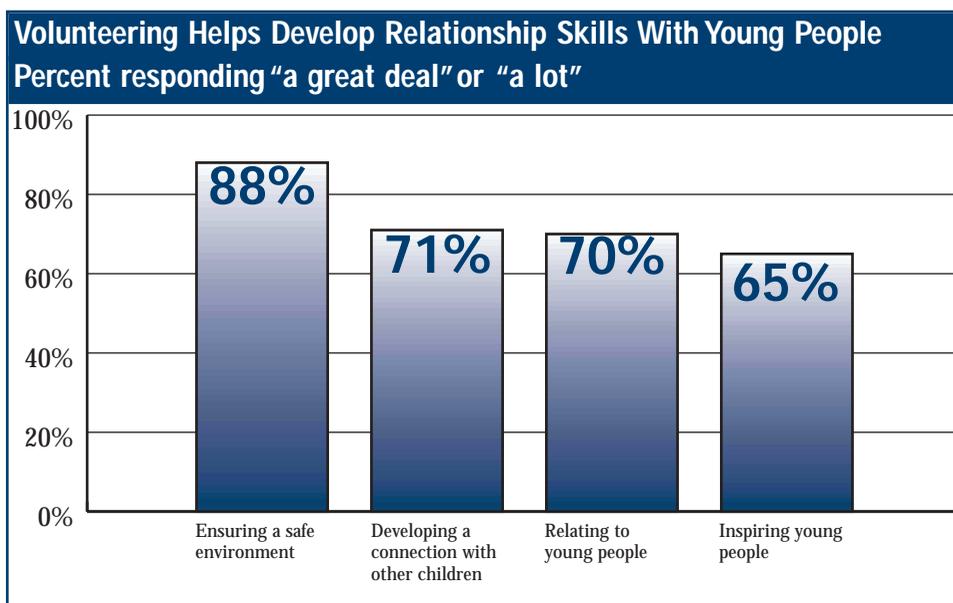
## Relationship Skills

Volunteering for the Scouts is also an aid to good parenting. Almost nine of 10 volunteers say Scout volunteering has helped them become a better parent. They feel that their volunteer efforts are a positive example to their children and help them build a closer bond with their children.

“Scout volunteering teaches you to relate to your kids better.”



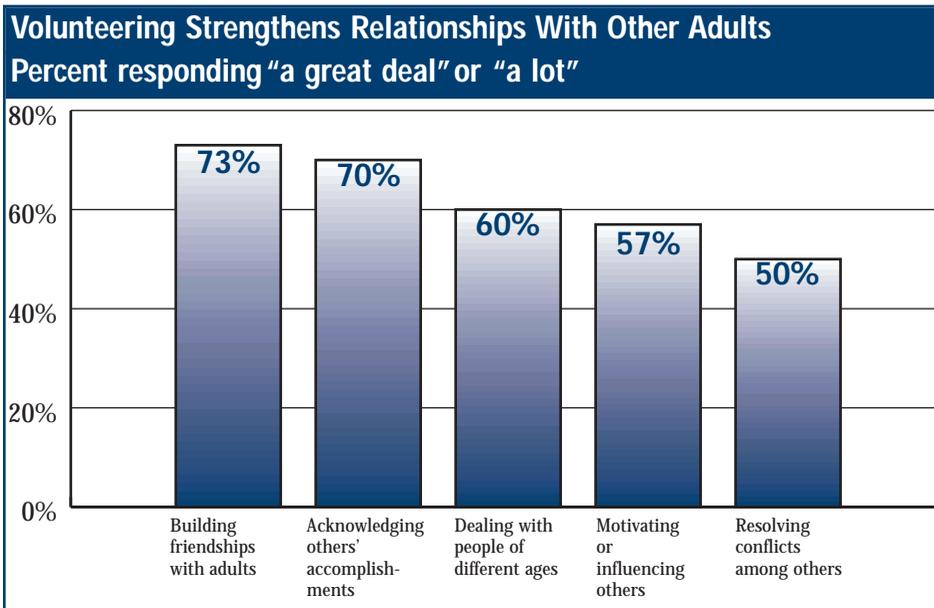
Scout volunteering also helps them develop closer connections with children in the community. Through leading youth, volunteers agree that they are helping to ensure a safe environment for all children. They also say that volunteering has helped them learn to relate to young people and inspire them.



“How to deal with the boys and get them motivated was part of our Wood Badge training.”

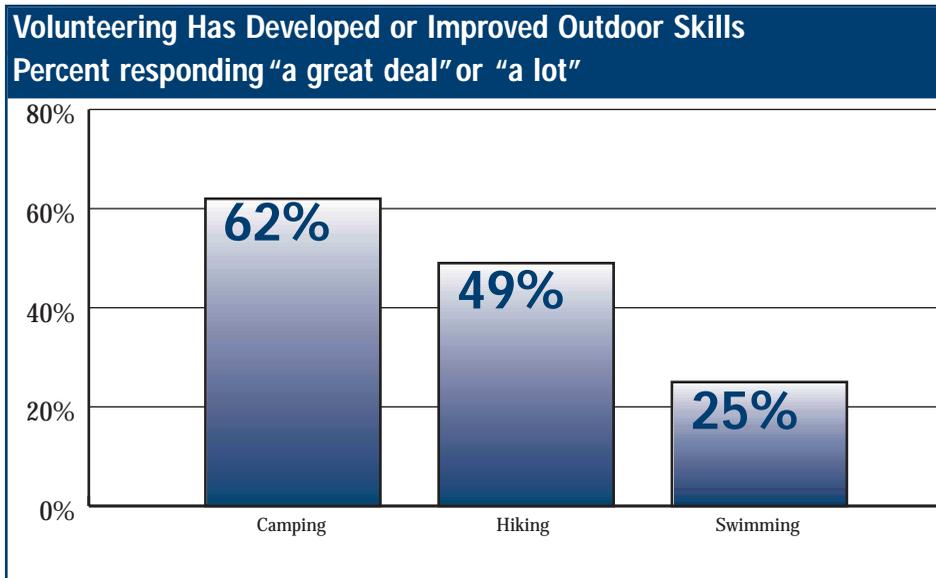
“I enjoy immensely the bonding that I’ve had with other adult leaders.”

Unit meetings, roundtables, camporees, and other district and council events give volunteers opportunities to meet and network with other adult volunteers in their area and throughout the country. Through these Scouting activities, volunteers build friendships with other adults. Volunteering also gives them a forum in which they can acknowledge the accomplishments of other adults and helps them build skills in positively motivating or influencing the actions of others. Volunteers also indicate that because of their Scout leadership training, they are better able to resolve conflicts.



# Survival and Outdoor Skills

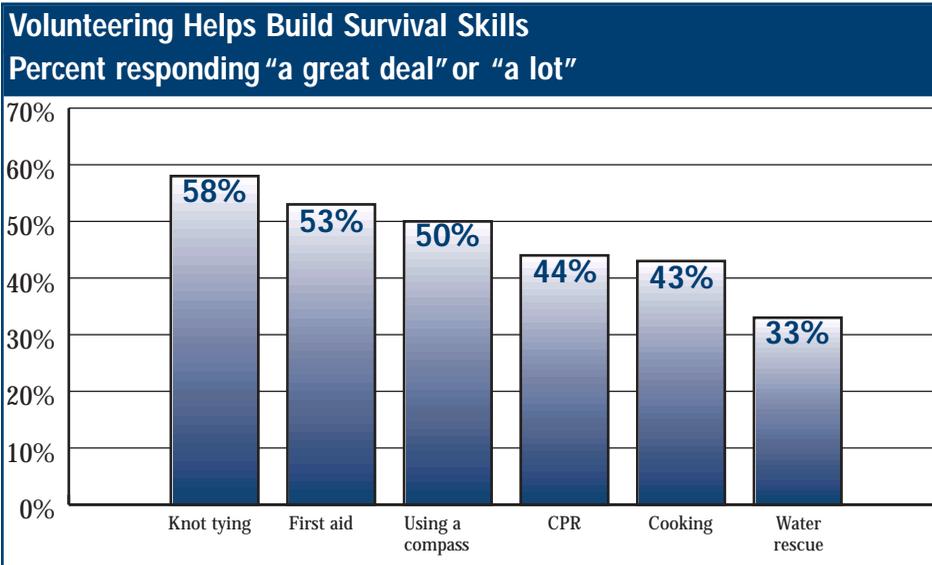
Being physically fit is also a goal of the Scouting program for both youth and adults. Scout volunteers believe that the activities they are involved in through Scouting have led to an improvement in their overall physical health. Volunteering gets them up out of their chair and outdoors doing physical activities. Volunteers report that they have developed or improved their camping, hiking, and swimming skills as a result of Scout volunteering.



“I camped every now and then before becoming a Scout volunteer. Now I camp at least once a month and really enjoy it.”



Scout volunteers also mention that volunteer activities and training have helped them improve their outdoor and survival skills such as knot tying, first aid, orienteering, CPR, cooking, and water rescue.



“I feel confident I could respond quickly and effectively in an emergency because of the training I’ve received.”

# Management and Leadership Skills

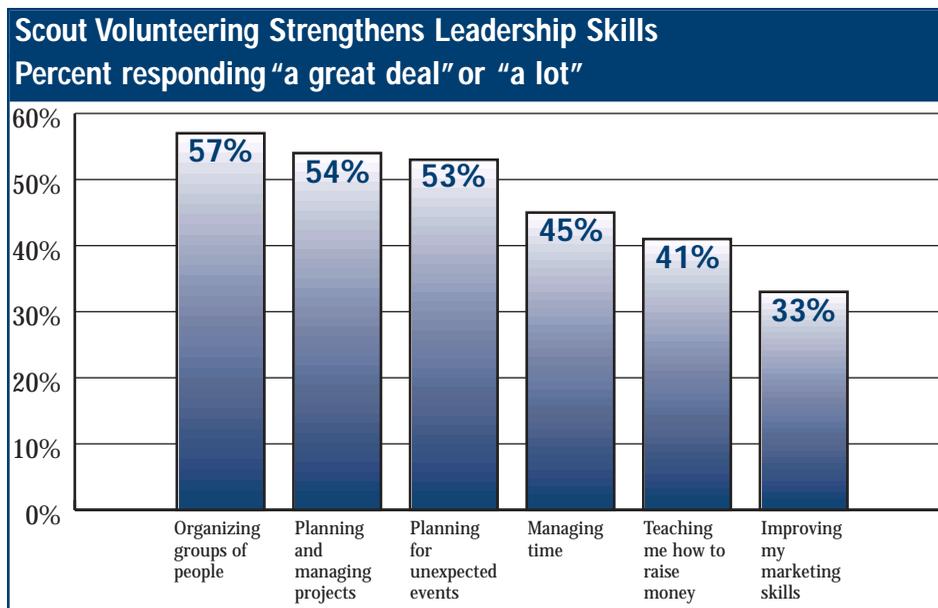
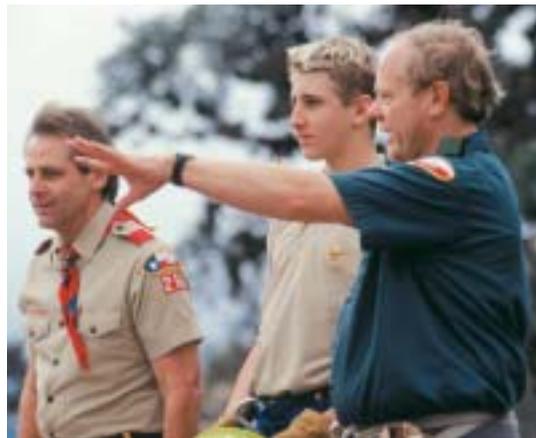
Volunteering for the Boy Scouts of America provides adult volunteers with a sense of personal fulfillment and accomplishment. Through membership recruitment, fund-raising, leadership recruitment, and program planning, volunteers are provided with opportunities to set and achieve goals. Volunteers indicate that these experiences carry over into their work life, making them better managers and employees.



“I learned some great leadership skills that I have been able to take from Scouting to work.”

Skills that adult volunteers build or strengthen through their volunteer efforts and training that help them in their home and work lives include organizing groups of people, planning and managing projects, planning for unexpected events, time management, fund-raising, and marketing.

Scout volunteering provides enjoyment and personal fulfillment while helping youth develop positive traits and skills. Through training opportunities and Scout activities, volunteers build lifelong skills and values that also benefit the workplace and the volunteer's personal life.



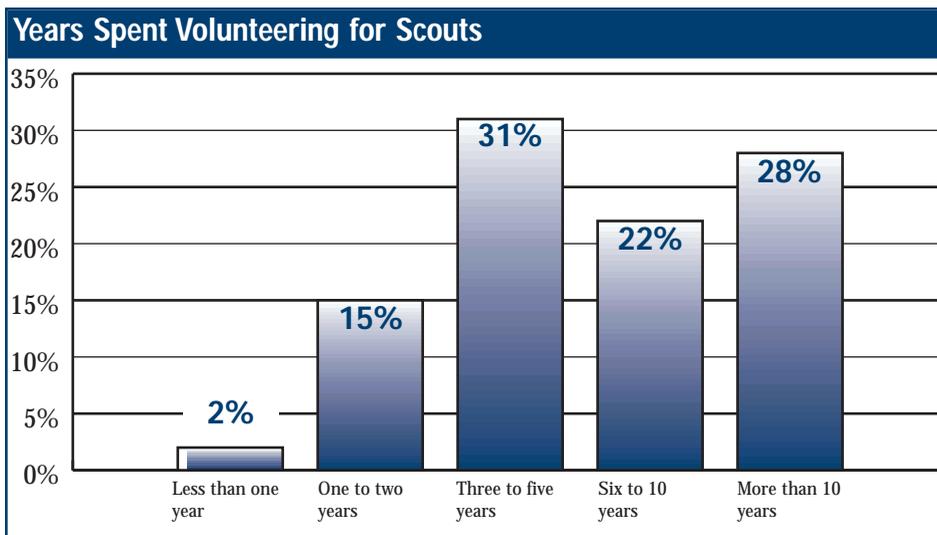
“Whether you’re fund-raising or organizing a campout, you have to pull together the resources and people and make it all work.”

# Volunteer Commitment

The Boy Scouts of America has more than 1.2 million registered adult volunteers who provide leadership and support for the Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews in their local communities. Most of these volunteers have made a long-term commitment to Scouting. Fifty percent of Scout volunteers have provided service as an adult leader for six or more years, with more than one-fourth (28 percent) having volunteered for Scouting for more than 10 years.

that help them learn the goals of the program and skills needed to provide an effective, safe, and fun program to youth. Eighty-three percent of volunteers have participated in at least one training opportunity.

An overwhelming majority (96 percent) of volunteers say they would recommend volunteering for the Boy Scouts of America to other adults. Scout volunteers form this commitment to Scouting for a variety of reasons. Scout volunteers come to Scouting



Volunteers spend a significant amount of their personal time to ensure the success of Scouting in their communities. On average, Scout volunteers give 20 hours of service each month to their unit, district, and council. Over a year's time, volunteers for the Boy Scout of America give approximately 288 million hours of service to the youth of America.

Volunteers show their commitment to improving themselves and the Scouting program by participating in training activities

from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. They bring the strength of their experiences and skills to Scouting, but they also find that volunteering gives them the opportunity to hone their skills and provides an environment where they can learn new skills and build lifelong friendships while having fun. They are committed to the positive, healthy development of youth. And Scouting provides opportunities to learn and grow as volunteers become more involved in adult leadership.

# Thanks

Thanks to each of the following councils for their participation in the Volunteer Outcomes study.

## Northeast Region

Boston Minuteman Council  
Central New Jersey Council  
Chester County Council  
Cradle of Liberty Council  
Daniel Webster Council  
Del-Mar-Va Council  
Greater New York Council  
Greater Niagara Frontier Council  
Greater Pittsburgh Council  
Green Mountain Council  
Jersey Shore Council  
Mohegan Council  
National Capital Area Council  
Southern New Jersey Council  
Westchester-Putnam Council  
York-Adams Area Council

## Southern Region

Alamo Area Council  
Atlanta Area Council  
Blue Ridge Council  
Blue Ridge Mountains Council  
Buffalo Trail Council  
Cape Fear Area Council  
Capitol Area Council  
Central Georgia Council  
Chickasaw Council  
Circle Ten Council  
Coastal Carolina Council  
Colonial Virginia Council  
East Carolina Council  
Greater Alabama Council  
Gulf Stream Council  
Lincoln Heritage Council  
Oconeechee Council  
South Florida Council  
Three Rivers Council  
West Central Florida Council

## Central Region

Bay Lakes Council  
Black Swamp Area Council  
Blackhawk Area Council  
Buckeye Council  
Calumet Council

Chicago Area Council  
Cornhusker Council  
Crossroads of America Council  
Detroit Area Council  
Four Lakes Council  
Gateway Area Council  
Gerald R. Ford Council  
Greater Cleveland Council  
Greater St. Louis Area Council  
Greater Western Reserve Council  
Heart of America Council  
Hoosier Trails Council  
Mid-Iowa Council  
Northeast Illinois Council  
Northern Lights Council  
Overland Trails Council  
Ozark Trails Council  
Potawatomi Area Council  
Quivira Council  
Sagamore Council  
Santa Fe Trail Council  
Tall Pine Council  
Three Fires Council  
Viking Council  
Winnebago Council

## Western Region

Boulder Dam Area Council  
Cascade Pacific Council  
Chief Seattle Council  
Denver Area Council  
Grand Columbia Council  
Grand Teton Council  
Long Beach Area Council  
Marin Council  
Midnight Sun Council  
Montana Council  
Mount Diablo Silverado Council  
Mount Baker Council  
Nevada Area Council  
Pacific Skyline Council  
Pikes Peak Council  
Utah National Parks Council  
Ventura County Council  
Yucca Council

