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The Magic of Empowered Volunteer and Professional Relationships

Our ability to provide Scouting to an ever-increasing number of youth depends on our ability to combine the efforts of passionate, empowered volunteers with talented professionals. In the past quarter, I have witnessed some amazing accomplishments by volunteer/professional teams. These bold initiatives demanded strong execution skills and a fervent desire to get it done “yesterday.” By way of example, one council is celebrating 29 years of membership growth. Another major metropolitan council scrapped its history of holding multiple Friends of Scouting dinners in favor of one large event, garnering more than \$1.2 million. A common denominator in both councils is that the volunteers and professionals refuse to accept anything less and they hold each other accountable to create and drive change.

On the national front, a special thanks to another change agent—the volunteer and professional/National Council team that has been at the forefront of the design of the new Commissioner Tools. We are moving quickly on the promise of technology to make our roles easier and more effective. Unit commissioners will have new, intuitive tools to record unit visits and to identify and communicate unit needs to the district committee leadership. Tico Perez, our national commissioner, has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to keep commissioner technology items on the front burner, and Dave Campbell, the BSA’s chief information officer, and his team have been with us all the way. A large group of volunteers, frustrated by the old system, came together to demand that we provide better solutions. The group has been holding conference calls multiple times a week for the last quarter in order to chart the new course.

Something tells me that you may not miss the Unit Visit Tracking System. I think you will appreciate the “simple and unified” approach to the tools that concentrates on eliminating steps and forms, all in the interest of making your role in Scouting more rewarding. We also realize that we need to support those volunteers who are not able to access a technology-based system, so these tools will accommodate data entry from multiple persons and sources. We’ll work together to support our unit commissioners. The toolbox may not have everything on day one, but it will be a living, developing



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support tool that will evolve in response to volunteer feedback. Let us know what you think.

In closing, a special shoutout to our volunteer and professional/National Council tools team, particularly Darlene Sprague and Larry Chase, from the National Commissioner Support Team; Area Commissioners Rick Hillenbrand, Ron Hathaway, and Marty Kasman; Assistant Council Commissioners Larry Tuell, Scott Hoopes, and Dom Bee; District Commissioner Bill Yoder; Assistant Area Commissioners/Unit Commissioners Bob Hoffmeyer and Garry Lewis; Steve Sawyer, National Commissioner Service professional advisor; and our information technology team, Dave Campbell, Debra Kendrew, Daphne Brizendine, Tom Ritchey, and Chaz Forester. Thank you, one and all.



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