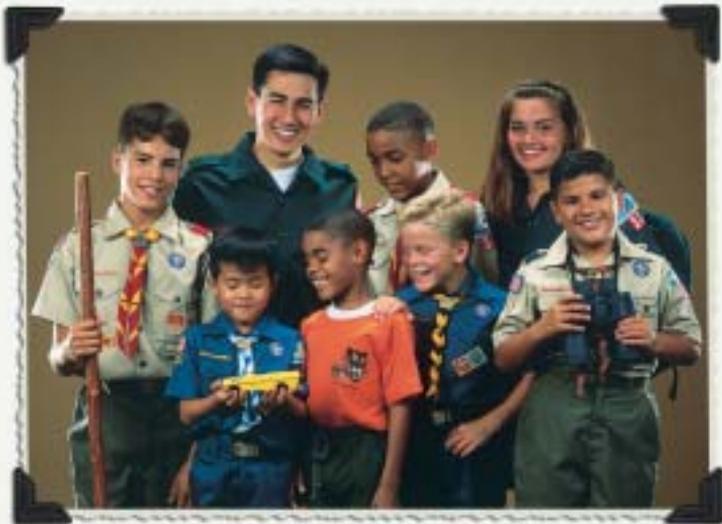


*A Year in the Life of a  
Cub Scout... Boy Scout... Venturer*



**Strengthening Youth, Families,  
and Neighborhoods**

**A National Program-Outcomes Study Conducted by  
Louis Harris & Associates**

BOY SCOUTS



OF AMERICA



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**Humphrey Taylor**  
Chairman

August 20, 1998

Dear Reader:

It is with pleasure that we offer you a look at the latest research conducted by Louis Harris & Associates on behalf of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). A few years ago, the BSA invited us to assist them in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the beliefs and attitudes held by men and boys in America. That study, entitled *The Values of Men and Boys in America* also revealed that men with strong Scouting backgrounds maintain higher ethical standards, attain higher educational levels -- and show less anti-social behavior -- than do those with no Scouting background.

The findings of *The Values of Men and Boys in America* study led to the question "What is it about BSA programs that leads to such positive outcomes?" The Boy Scouts asked us to accept the challenge of scientifically answering this question, and after two years of research, this document contains our response.

A few important overall findings from the study include:

*Cub Scouting meets or exceeds the expectations* of parents on a variety of factors, including teaching ethical and moral values and parent/son togetherness.

Boy Scouts agree that being a Scout *has increased their self-confidence* and taught them skills that they could not get elsewhere.

Venturers attribute *higher self-esteem and "readiness for the future"* to their experiences in the program.

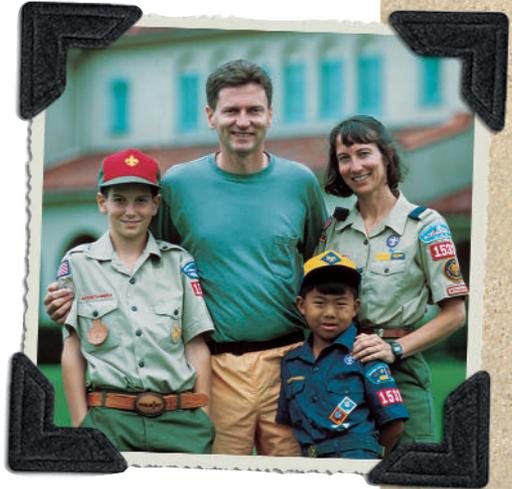
We believe that as you read the enclosed findings you will gain a keen insight into the practices, environments, and relationships that make BSA programs effective. As a result, you will better understand each program's positive outcomes and effectiveness in the lives of youth.

Sincerely,

Humphrey Taylor



The Boy Scouts of America has a history of almost 90 years of helping to shape and mold the values and character of youth. The movement continues to help strengthen youth, families, and communities through comprehensive programs for its members. The extensive nature of BSA's Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing programs allows the movement to address the six critical elements of healthy youth development.\*



## Six Critical Elements of Healthy Youth Development

1. Strong personal values and character
2. Positive sense of self-worth and usefulness
3. Caring and nurturing relationships with parents, other adults, and peers
4. A desire to learn
5. Productive/creative use of time
6. Social adeptness

\* Variables derived from work compiled by the Search Institute and Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development.

## 1. Strong Personal Values and Character

Specific character-related values that parents see communicated through **Cub Scouting** to their sons include:

- **Respecting the environment, 97 percent**
- **Staying away from drugs, 89 percent**
- **Helping at home, 84 percent**



*"Scouting helps build self-esteem.  
It teaches the boys about community."  
—Mother of a Cub Scout*

Character may be defined as the "willingness to do what is right, regardless of circumstances." Cub Scouting teaches boys what is right, in part by encouraging them to reflect on lessons learned through Cub Scouting activities. (Almost half, 44 percent, do so at a typical den meeting.)

In **Boy Scouting**, parents cite the following as reasons for wanting their sons in the program:

- **To learn moral values, 94 percent**
- **To learn self-reliance, 95 percent**
- **To become involved in community service, 90 percent**

Scouting's core values of faith in God, personal integrity, and patriotism are conveyed to members. Boy Scouts pledge to uphold the Scout Oath and Law, which explicitly state the values to which members aspire. A majority of Scouts agree that Scouting does the following:

- **Encourages pride in America, 81 percent**
- **Helps me to tell the difference between right and wrong, 74 percent**
- **Strengthens my relationship with God, 60 percent**

**Venturing's** goals include developing skill in ethical decision making, instilling stable personal values, and encouraging the ability and desire to help other people.

The opportunity to practice ethical decision making arises in Venturing when crews face decisions about right or wrong. Almost eight of 10 Venturers (79 percent) indicate that their group deals with such a decision during a typical three-month period.

More than half of Venturers (56 percent) participate in a service project during a typical three-month period. The importance of service projects is threefold:



- 1. They help meet important physical and emotional needs;**
- 2. They communicate the value and importance of other people; and**
- 3. They allow young people to develop empathy with people who are in need.**

Venturing service projects most commonly include property cleanups, food drives, blood drives, and working with the elderly.

## 2. A Positive Sense of Self-Worth and Usefulness

**Cub Scouting** empowers boys by assuring them that they are valued, giving them useful roles in their communities, and encouraging them to serve others. At least 90 percent of parents agree that Cub Scouting provides boys with

- **A safe, friendly environment, 98 percent**
- **A sense of belonging, 96 percent**
- **Involvement in community service, 90 percent**

Feelings of self-worth are closely tied to achievement. At a typical weekly den meeting 54 percent of boys complete steps toward a specific achievement, and at a typical monthly pack meeting 31 percent receive an advancement award.

Self-confidence is an outcome of the **Boy Scout** experience. More than three of four (78 percent) Boy Scouts agree with the statement “being a Boy Scout makes me feel more confident in myself.” Scouts build self-esteem by setting goals and successfully achieving them. At a typical troop meeting,



*“I want him to grow up as a man with the Boy Scout values.”*

—Father of a Boy Scout

- **50 percent of Scouts indicate setting personal goals for the meeting**
- **51 percent of Scouts note that they have to rely on themselves to accomplish goals at the meeting**

**Venturing** provides an atmosphere of teamwork, learning, and accomplishment. Each of these components cultivates a sense of positive self-worth. Nine of 10 Venturers agree that Venturing has taught them to

- **Have more confidence, 89 percent**
- **Prepare for their futures, 89 percent**

Feelings of self-worth are closely tied to relationships with others. Nine of 10 Venturers agree that in the program they are

- **Asked to share opinions and ideas, 91 percent**
- **Encouraged by peers in the group, 89 percent**

### **3. Caring and Nurturing Relationships With Parents, Other Adults, and Peers**

The **Cub Scouting** program addresses this element by providing positive role models and encouraging family togetherness. Parents and their sons

- **Do projects together, 95 percent**
- **Go places together, 91 percent**
- **Talk together, 90 percent**
- **Read together, 75 percent**

Cub Scouting also gives boys a chance to form supportive relationships with people other than their parents. In almost eight of 10 pack meetings (79 percent), boys take part in an activity led by an adult other than their parent. Also, during an average den meeting, 59 percent of Cub Scouts receive verbal encouragement from other Cub Scouts.

**Boy Scouts** are encouraged and complimented for giving their best efforts, which instills a sense of value and belonging. At a typical troop meeting,

- **58 percent are encouraged to do their best by a leader/adult**
- **48 percent receive verbal encouragement from other Scouts**

Also, while doing activities and going on outings, 65 percent of Boy Scouts work together, receiving help from other Scouts, and 41 percent work together with adults. This type of interdependence fosters a sense of belonging.

**Venturing** serves as a catalyst for interaction between members, their peers, their parents, and other adults. Almost all Venturers, 96 percent, have made friends in the program. Other indicators of such outcomes include the fact that a majority of Venturers feel they

- **Can talk to their Advisors about things that are important to them, 91 percent**
- **Can talk with peers about what they learn in the program, 89 percent**
- **Can talk to their parents about what they learn in Venturing, 85 percent**



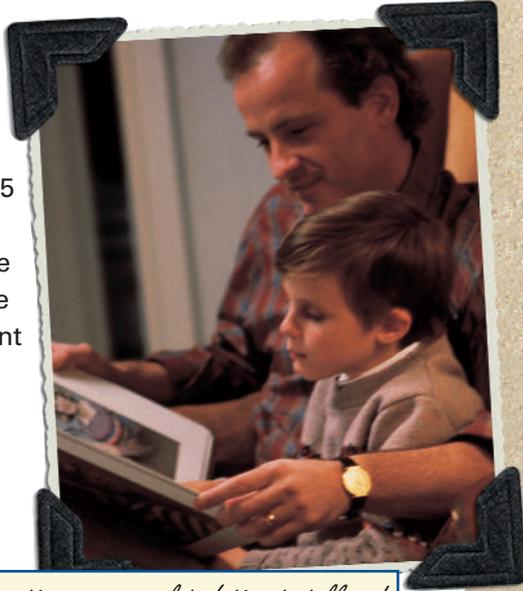
## 4. A Desire to Learn

Learning new skills is one of the most important reasons parents want their sons in **Cub Scouting**, and after a year of the program, almost all (93 percent) agree that the program helped their boys “develop new interests.” Also, two-thirds (65 percent) agree that the Cub Scouting experience gave their sons a “desire to learn new and different things.”

Cub Scouting helps build the reading skills that are the foundation for higher learning. Three-quarters (75 percent) of parents agree that the program encourages them to “read together” with their sons.

Boys and parents are drawn to **Boy Scouting** because of the opportunities it affords for learning and exploring new things. At a typical troop meeting, more than half of the boys (53 percent) learn new things.

The process of instructing others serves as its own teacher. At a typical Boy Scout meeting,



*“Scouting gave us a lot of time to talk and share with him stories about my childhood.”*

—Father of a Cub Scout

- **41 percent of Scouts teach another Scout**
- **39 percent of Scouts learn from another Scout**

For youth, true adventure is found in new experiences, and **Venturing** consistently challenges youth to experience and try new things. In a typical three-month period,

- **55 percent of Venturers do something they have never done before**
- **44 percent of Venturers go somewhere they have never been before**

## 5. Productive/Creative Use of Time

**Cub Scouting** allows boys to constructively use their time in child-centered learning activities. Cub Scouts are given opportunities in art, music, theater, and religion. To incorporate both individual creativity and the value of meeting team goals, a typical den meeting includes

- **A group activity, 83 percent**
- **An opening ceremony, such as the Pledge of Allegiance, 74 percent**
- **Making something, 54 percent**
- **Time for planning, 53 percent**

Cub Scouts also participate in many Scouting-related activities outside of meetings. On average, a Cub Scout

spends 3.9 hours per week on activities such as field trips, special events, activity badge work, and camping.

Special outings and activities at home, along with a wide variety of other enriching activities, draw youth to **Boy Scouting**.



Boys overwhelmingly cite the Scouting program activities as key reasons for joining Scouting

- **“I like the activities Scouts do,” 80 percent**
- **“I want to go on hikes/trips or outings,” 80 percent**

More than half of all Boy Scouts at a typical troop meeting participate in

- **A formal opening ceremony, 68 percent**
- **A formal closing ceremony, 58 percent**
- **Skills instruction, 54 percent**

These elements provide boys with a sense of structure and consistency that allow them to focus their energy on projects and activities that are important to them.

Each month, one of five Boy Scouts participates in meetings in which an expert or

professional makes a special presentation. These presentations offer boys exposure to skills and knowledge that expand their attitudes toward the opportunities in life.

Boy Scouts agree that Scouting is preparing them for a successful future. Most say that their Scouting experience:

*“The experience has taught him to try things he may not have tried, to test his skills, to develop self-confidence and persistence.”*

—Mother of a Boy Scout

- **“Has taught me skills I wouldn’t have learned anywhere else,” 88 percent**
- **“Will help me get a good job,” 85 percent**
- **“Will help me get into college,” 83 percent**

A clear majority of parents of Boy Scouts say that Scouting is

- **A positive alternative to watching TV, 79 percent**
- **A positive alternative to video games, 74 percent**

*"It's a wonderful organization that gives youth self-worth and independence."*

—Mother of a Venturer



An important element of the **Venturing** program is that it encourages young people to meet and fulfill personal developmental needs while meeting the needs of others. A majority of Venturers participate in

- **Outdoor activities, 68 percent**
- **Sports, 58 percent**
- **Service projects, 56 percent**

In a typical three-month period, more than four of 10 Venturers talk with professionals or experts in a specialized field (42 percent) or learn about a potential career field (41 percent).

## 6. Social Adeptness

**Cub Scouting** helps boys develop social skills and competencies by providing opportunities for them to plan and lead activities, work in groups, and interact with boys of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. In more than

half of pack meeting activities (53 percent), boys work and plan in groups that include different races.

In a year's time, a majority of parents report that the program helped their sons

- **Learn to get along with others, 96 percent**
- **Respect the feelings of others, 95 percent**
- **Learn social skills, 95 percent**
- **Become better organized/tidy, 77 percent**

### **Boy Scouting**

fosters the development of social skills needed for success in life. Life skills acquired include working in groups, accepting leadership responsibility, setting and accomplishing goals, and preparing for a job or college.

During a typical troop meeting, Boy Scouts cooperate with others as they practice such life skills as



*"A very positive experience, it has helped him to mature and become a leader."*

—Mother of a Boy Scout

- **Learning to be a team player, 51 percent**
- **Democratic decision making, 43 percent**
- **Planning activities, 41 percent**
- **Taking responsibility for needed supplies/equipment, 31 percent**



*"I think it's a great experience  
and good way to have fun."*

—Mother of a Venturer

Leadership skills are a primary product of the Boy Scouting experience. Fifty-five percent of all Boy Scouts hold a leadership position in a troop or patrol.

Three of four Boy Scouts (74 percent) agree with the statement "In Scouting, I

learn to get along with people who are different from me."

**Venturers** practice social skills and conflict resolution in meetings and outings. During a typical three months,

- **87 percent participate in a group vote or decision**
- **83 percent resolve conflicts with peers**

American youth today face challenges and opportunities that have never been seen before in history. Yet, the basic needs for healthy development remain constant.

Without a doubt, the programs of the Boy Scouts of America foster the healthy development of its youth members. This study identifies the distinct and comprehensive aspects of the program and how they benefit youth. Now is the opportunity for ensuring that the young people in your life are receiving the values, support, nurturing, and challenges they need to meet their full potential. Take time to learn more about the BSA programs in your local community by calling your local Boy Scout council office.

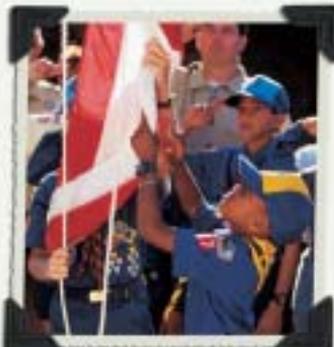


Boys in first through fifth grades (or ages 7, 8, 9, or 10) may join a **Cub Scout** pack and be assigned to a den, which is usually made up of boys in a neighborhood who form a natural play group. Tiger Cub dens usually meet twice a month, and Cub Scout and Webelos Scout den meetings are usually held once a week. Cub Scouting emphasizes involvement between boys and their parents, adult leaders, and friends.

**Boy Scouting** is available to boys who have completed the fifth grade or who are 11 through 17 years old. The program achieves the BSA's objectives of developing character, citizenship, and personal fitness qualities among youth by focusing on a vigorous program of outdoor activities.



**Venturing** is a program for young men and women ages 14 (who have completed the eighth grade) through 20. The program emphasizes team leadership, life-skills development, outdoor and high-adventure activity, and other areas of interest to the crew members.



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