

MAY –10 REASONS FOR DAY CAMP

Music Full then under

AARON: Welcome, everyone, to the May CubCast. I am Aaron Derr, Cubmaster and Senior Writer for *Boys' Life* Magazine.

AMY: And I am Amy Hutcherson, Webelos Den Leader and International Scouting Program Specialist. So, Aaron, what are we talking about this month?

AARON: Cub Scout Camp Director Jennifer Mooney joins us to talk about ten reasons why day camp strengthens the Cub Scout experience.

MUSIC FADES

AARON: Jennifer is the Camping Director for the Cascade-Pacific Council in Portland, Oregon. Our regular listeners may remember her from the December 2015 episode where she calmed our fear of taking our Cub Scouts overnight camping. Welcome back to CubCast, Jennifer!

JENNIFER: Thank you.

AARON: All right. So we've got 10 ways Day Camp helps strengthen the Cub Scout experience, Jennifer, and we're going to go over them with you one by one.

JENNIFER: Okay.

AARON: The first thing is a time to try new things. How does Cub Scout Day Camp a time to try new things?

JENNIFER: Day Camp gives a safe environment for boys to try things that they might not have in their everyday life. As Scouters we might take things for granted, simple skills to learn – handling a pocket knife safe, tying knots – some of those super-easy skills that they don't have a chance to learn maybe at school or at home. It's also a chance though to try some new silly games that they maybe have never heard of and just have some of that fun.

AMY: Okay, onto number two. I know the boys in my den love unstructured outdoor play. Tell us about how that fits into Day Camp.

JENNIFER: That's a super important part of Day Camp. I don't know how many kids maybe have never been outside before except for recess at school and, just being able to pick up the sticks and explore what's on the nature trail or play near the creek. Those things are unstructured and it gives them a chance to just be boys. You know, we hear on the news a lot about how many hours kids have on screen time, and this is a chance to be off screen time and just be a boy and have fun at camp.

AARON: My son has been to Cub Scout Day Camp three times, Jennifer, and every time he says one of his favorite things to do is chase after grasshoppers. *(Laughter)* So we have all the other things going on and he just loves chasing grasshoppers, so I can appreciate that. Now the other side is a time for advancement.

JENNIFER: I have a lot of requests from leaders that come to me asking, “What are the boys going to earn?” And I always say, this experience is all about fun, getting outside, playing and having fun. The bonus of it is, yes, they get some advancement, and sometimes that doesn’t necessarily persuade them to go to camp. What I’ve also found out though is that the leaders are looking for activities that they can’t do with boys in their normal setting of a den meeting. Maybe they don’t have the water facility that they need or like the shooting sports they can’t do at a den meeting. So those are the things that they’re looking for, those little carrots to help make their program stronger throughout the year.

AMY: Okay, Jennifer, can you explain to us how the power of peer pressure would fit into a Day Camp setting?

JENNIFER: In a Day Camp say setting it’s perfect. We have a safe environment, the boys are with their friends, and it’s a chance for them to experience something new. Maybe their friends are trying it first and they’re having a great time, they’re going to want to do it as well. It’s a chance for all of them to have fun together.

AARON: Now, another way that Day Camp is cool is that it provides an opportunity for parents to get involved.

JENNIFER: Yeah, that’s a great one. Parents sometimes are very shy to want to send their kids to something new, especially if they’re not campers themselves. They don’t know what they’re getting into. And in our pack we suggest that they go with them. It’s a chance to see it, know that they’re at a safe place. The other side of that too is that the more parents that you get to go to

camp with your pack, the more chance that you get to know them more as an individual, figure out their personality, what they like, what they don't like. And the benefit that I am seeing in my own pack is that we find out where people's strengths and weaknesses are, and long term our pack is going to be better because we can put them in a position where they can volunteer and have a really good time.

AMY: I will say as a parent, a lot of my favorite memories are just being the parent and being a den walker at Day Camp and getting to experience that and watch the boys in my den develop through all the Day Camp experience, so ...moving along and talking about youth leaders, what they bring to the Day Camp experience.

JENNIFER: Oh, yeah. The youth leaders are great. They usually run the stations. We usually are looking for those Boy Scouts that just want to give back or have personalities that are fun and kooky and crazy. *(Amy laughs)* That's what really makes the experience for those boys. They're just having this silly, craziness and learning stuff and having fun, and the young Cub Scouts really look up to those boys as their leaders, and people that they want to be someday. So it's really fun to watch that kind of peer-led leadership happening at camp.

AARON: And one of the cool things about Day Camp is it's an opportunity to spend so much time outdoors without actually spending the night outdoors. Talk about how Day Camp is kind of a nice entryway to overnight camping.

JENNIFER: You know, sometimes this is a first experience for a lot of new families in Cub Scouting and they've not been outdoors, and getting that chance to

see what camp is like, understanding the Cub Scout program a little bit more in general, gives them an opportunity so say, “Hey, I might want to try the overnight next year because now I see how much fun my son is having. Now I see what the program is kind of established or structured and I think I want to go that next step.” So, it’s a nice step into understanding what our program is and then where they want to go in the future.

AMY: Absolutely. Okay, one of my favorites is the community service aspect. How can we connect Day Camp to our community?

JENNIFER: A lot of my Day Camps will have, we call them daily specials, and we’ll bring in people from the community that want to showcase what they’re good at; the reptile man or the science guy or something like that. And what I like about that is that we’re working with that local community to support each other and create a relationship, and then if they ever have a need, I feel like we have a better relationship to be able to give back to them. The other side of that though is when the boys are participating in a service project they get to see a benefit out of it. One of my camps was at a park and the park needed all their picnic benches cleaned.

AMY: Wow.

JENNIFER: Another one of my Day Camps, one of their special guests was a K-9 unit and they decided to raise money to buy a new vest for the canine, so it’s quite a rewarding event for them, to see that in action.

AARON: Very cool. Jennifer, we've talked on CubCast before about the importance of delivering on the promises that we make at recruiting nights. We always get this Cub Scouts together in August or September to talk about all the great things we're going to do in Cub Scouting. And then it's not as easy as it sounds to set up a shooting sport event or something like that. So it seems like maybe Day Camp would be a great way to make sure we deliver on those promises. Do you agree?

JENNIFER: Absolutely. Yes. I just had this realization come to me in my own life with my child who is almost 10, and he reminded me of a promise I made about three years ago of something that he gets on his tenth birthday. So in this age group, promises are really important and it's that trust, a sense of trust in us as adults. So, if we follow through on that promise of going outside, having fun, shooting BB guns and archery and all that fun stuff that we have at camp, we're going to keep those boys long term. They're going to enjoy it. They're going to tell stories about all the things that they did at camp and want to keep going on and find other things in Scouting to do.

AMY: Hey, Jennifer, as a mom of a 10-year-old myself, I'd be interested to know later what that promise was? *(Laughter)* So, okay, we've talked about so many really great things here. The big picture – how does Day Camp tie it all together and really help parents understand the big picture of Cub Scouting?

JENNIFER: Yeah. I have talked to so many families that go, "Wow, I didn't realize that. The school down the street had a group too. I know that family from baseball," or something like that. It's amazing to see the energy at a camp

when you have 100 to 200 campers and families coming together, singing crazy songs, and just there's kind of this contagious energy there that helps spur them on to want to know more and during the week of camp when you see the same people over and over, you start to get to know them a little bit, you might find out what their pack is doing and get great ideas, and other opportunities throughout the year. Hey, did you know that our council also puts on these events and these service projects? So, it shows them much more available for them to do in their Scouting world if they choose to do it.

AMY: Nice.

AARON: Jennifer, is there anything else that we haven't talked about that you think our listeners should know about Cub Scout Day Camp?

JENNIFER: Last time we talked a little bit about getting over the fear of going to camp. I have a list of resources that would be important for parents to know where they can get more information about camp and feel prepared to go. A lot of councils will have either what they call a program guide or a pre-camp guide and that is really essential not just the leaders that are going to camp but any new parents that are going to camp usually has the list of what to bring, where to meet, medical form to bring, an idea of the schedules for the week so they know if there is a special barbecue at the end of the week or a special day that want to come and be there with their kids. There's usually also contact information for the camp director or the program director because some people have special requests or want some special information from them. The council website is huge. (It) as all the forms that might need to be filled out from financial aid, medical

forms, any special needs, to just registering for camp. One of the biggest resources though are other parents in the pack. If you're intimidated by the whole thing of camping, a lot of parents just use their network there and say, "Hey, what should I expect here? I've never been to camp before," and the other parents in the pack could be a great resource and promotion for that camp. And just getting those parents to, to go, "Yeah, we'll be there with you. We're going to kind of hold your hand and we're going to have fun together." That's a great resource for those that are maybe on the fence about going. Of course, there's always your Scouting professional or your Council Office Staff that could help you with other resources. The best thing for parents to do is just find out as much information as possible before they go. They'll feel much better when they get there.

AARON: Everybody who's listening right now, I think after you hear our Reminders and Tips you need to go check out the article in *Scouting Magazine* in the May/June issue about Cub Scout Day Camp. Jennifer, thanks so much for coming on CubCast and letting us explore the joys of Day Camp.

JENNIFER: You're welcome.

AMY: And before we get to Reminders and Tips, let's check out the May Safety Moment.

(May Safety Moment – Water Bottle Rockets)

AMY: Okay, let's get to Reminders and Tips. This is a busy time of year for outings, and since the BSA has discontinued the Tour and Activity Plan, be sure your unit has adopted the Risk Assessment Strategy.

AARON: The Risk Assessment Plan helps ensure the unit is properly prepared, that qualified and trained leaders are in place, and that the right equipment is available. Checklists and other resources to assess risk are available at [Scouting.org/HealthandSafety](https://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety).

AMY: As a bonus tip, it's recommended that Cub Scouts obtain permission slips from parents before going on any outing.

AARON: That's an excellent point. Finally – in our Ask CubCast segment – Jason Bowles wrote to us and wanted to know if there was an award or knot for members of the pack committee. Apparently he has a very active pack committee and believes they may qualify for such an award or knot. So Amy, what can we tell Jason?

AMY: Sure, Jason, there absolutely is an award for your pack committee members! It is called the Scouter's Training Award for Cub Scouting. To earn this award, your committee members must be registered adult leaders in your pack for at least two years. Now, this doesn't mean they have to be "den leaders." The term "adult leader" could be any registered position within the pack committee. They must also complete the basic training for their particular registered position as well as attend a university of Scouting or at least four roundtables during each year of their tenure.

AARON: That is great information, Amy. I bet there's a lot of committee members out there who qualify for these awards and don't even realize it. So, for more information, Jason and everybody else, go to scouting.org/awards_central.

Begin Music Under

AARON But now our May CubCast comes to an end. Thanks to our guest, Jennifer Mooney, for joining us.

AMY: And thank you for listening. Now can we ask you one small favor? If you have a Twitter account, or if you don't have one, create one, and tweet us your Scouting leadership positions at @cubcast. This way, we can tailor these podcasts specifically for *your* needs. Until then, I'm Amy Hutcherson.

AARON: And I'm Aaron Derr. We've got a special episode coming June 1st that you won't want to miss, so we'll see you then.

Music Full to Finish