OUTCOMES STUDY

A STUDY CONDUCTED
BY HARRIS INTERACTIVE

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
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
“You learn how to work with people in Scouting—how to work as a team with other volunteers.”
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.

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

**Background and Methodology**
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”

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Increasing environmental awareness

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Developing or improving conservation skills
“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.

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**Volunteering Reinforces Ethical and/or Moral Character**

Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”

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<th></th>
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<th>10%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>30%</th>
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<th>50%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>70%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing ethical and/or moral decision making</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being a more honest/trustworthy person</td>
<td>58%</td>
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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.”

Volunteering Builds Tolerance, Patience, and Openness to New Ideas

Percent agreeing “strongly” or “somewhat”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Percent Agreement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging patience with people</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging tolerance of others</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing openness to new ideas</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respecting different opinions</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening my understanding of different cultures</td>
<td>49%</td>
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</table>
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.”

Volunteering Builds Self-Esteem and Reduces Stress
Percent agreeing “strongly” or “somewhat”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>100%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adds more fun to my life</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Builds my self-esteem</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reduces stress/anxiety in my life</td>
<td>28%</td>
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“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.”

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**Volunteering Helps Strengthen Communication Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public speaking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing skills</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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.

“Volunteering Improves Teaching Skills
Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching groups of people</td>
<td>52%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

“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.”

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**Volunteering Helps Reinforce Good Parenting**

Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping me become a better parent</td>
<td><strong>88%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a positive example to my own children</td>
<td><strong>71%</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Building a closer bond with my children</td>
<td><strong>67%</strong></td>
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</table>
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.

Volunteering Helps Develop Relationship Skills With Young People
Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring a safe environment</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing a connection with other children</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relating to young people</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inspiring young people</td>
<td>65%</td>
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“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.

Volunteering Strengthens Relationships With Other Adults
Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”

- Building friendships with adults: 73%
- Acknowledging others’ accomplishments: 70%
- Dealing with people of different ages: 60%
- Motivating or influencing others: 57%
- Resolving conflicts among others: 50%
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteering Has Developed or Improved Outdoor Skills</th>
<th>Percent responding “a great deal” or “a lot”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>49%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>25%</td>
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</table>

“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, fundraising, 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.

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<th>Years Spent Volunteering for Scouts</th>
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<td>35%</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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<td>Less than one year</td>
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<td>One to two years</td>
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<td>Three to five years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Six to 10 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
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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 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 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
- Occoneechee 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