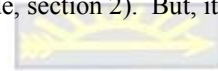


# Cubmaster Advancement Newsletter

Issue 4, February 2004

In previous issues, I have offered suggestions for the Cubmaster to help lead your Packs advancement program. This newsletter is targeted to both the Cubmaster and the Den Leaders. Please share this with your entire unit.

Advancement is just one of the seven methods of Cub Scouting (see your Leaders Guide, section 2). But, it brings with it a number of the purposes of Cub Scouting.



Having had the privilege of sitting on a recent Eagle Board of Review, I had a chance to see the results of a boy that started Scouting as a Tiger and progressed to Boy Scouting's highest rank. In talking with this young man, I saw the realization of the important life skill of setting and achieving goals. This is the foundation that the Cub Scout advancement program tries to build. As Den Leader and Cubmaster you play a vital part in this.

So, for this month's topic, let us tackle

## The Purposes of Cub Scouting & Goals

As we present the Cub Scout program to our boys, it is very easy to get focussed on short-term goals and to loose sight of the longer-term advancement program goals.

For the boys, the short-term goal is "how can I have fun today/tonight?" The medium term goals are the Cub Scout advancement activities towards earning the next rank or recognition.

For the Den Leader, the short-term goals are planning fun activities that take the boys through the rank programs, present them in an engaging way, and keep the boys' behavior in-check so that you can make it through your night's plans. If you've met your goal of presenting the material and had some real help from the parents, your Scouts will earn their rank each year. If you have been successful with the fun aspect, the boys will be enthused about staying with the program and tackling the next challenge you have planned.

But, what about the longer term goals? In general, Cub age boys do not set long term goals. This requires the teamwork of the boys and the Akela's in their lives.

### Purposes of Cub Scouting

The longer-term goals in Cub Scouting advancement are the 10 Purposes of Cub Scouting.

1. Character Development
2. Spiritual Goals
3. Good Citizenship
4. Sportsmanship and Fitness
5. Family Understanding
6. Respectful Relationships
7. Personal Advancement
8. Friendly Service
9. Fun and Adventure
10. Preparation for Boy Scouts

These are the goals that BSA has woven into the fiber of the programs. And they are the goals that need to be emphasized by your Den activities, year-in and year-out.

Many of these are self-evident within the programs

- With the latest revision to the Wolf, Bear, and Webelos programs, Character Development has come front-and-center. Work with your parents to emphasize the character values as a foundation for self-respect and personal value.
- Each rank program has a spiritual component. Deliver the message to your boys that this is an important part of each Scouts life. Provide an extra and public recognition to the boys in your den that earn their religious knot.
- Sportsmanship and Fitness is front-and-center in achievements from each rank.
- Fun and Adventure are part of the short-term goals faced each week.
- Model respectful relationships and make sure that your boys know that it is part of your basic expectations of them.

Good Citizenship and Friendly Service need your support to plan community service and community involvement activities. Look for opportunities to explore your community within on context of rank activities.

Each program has achievements tied to Family Understanding. The October newsletter offered strategies for engaging and communicating with your den parents. Involving the parents is the best strategy promoting Scouting within families.

Preparation for Boy Scouts, can be the easiest purpose to take for granted. Just having your boys earn each rank is the minimum required. I would challenge you to over-achieve by, in your Den activities, putting an emphasis on the skills that lay a good foundation for Boy Scouts. Bill Smith (found at [www.wtsmith.com/rt/pbs.html](http://www.wtsmith.com/rt/pbs.html)) has put together a superior presentation, looking at the Cub Scout program activities that most significantly benefit the boys as Boy Scouts. Rather than restate many of his points, I strongly encourage you to visit his site. Do not confuse preparing the boys for Boy Scouts with incorporating Boy Scout level skills into your den activities. Keep your program age appropriate.

### **Goal Setting**

And, coming full circle back to the topic. One of the best life skills is that ability for an individual to set and achieve their own goals. This is where the Personal Advancement Purpose comes in.

Step back and look at the programs, from Tiger through Webelos. This is a very good opportunity to encourage a progressive maturing of goal setting practices.

The adult leadership sets the rank program for Tiger through Bear. In addition to the basic rank program, each of the programs have extra credit elective components. These are recognized with totem beads for Tigers and Arrow Points for Wolves and Bears. The electives are a good tool to start planting the seeds for goal-setting skills.

If you have good parent support, here is one approach that you can suggest to your parents to start building goal setting:

Tiger: The parent should sit down with their Cub and go through and verbally select electives.

Wolf: The parent can read through the electives with their Scout. Then, encourage the boy to work on his own to make a list of fun electives. Be sure to review the list, recognize and praise the initiative shown in creating the list.

Bear: Encourage the Scout to independently read through his book and choose those electives that are of interest. Again, review his list and be sure to provide positive feedback for the initiative shown.

If you are not sure of your parents' support, you can still encourage the boys to read through the electives and to share with you the activities that sound like the most fun.

Be sure to recognize initiative shown when a boy expresses an interest in part of the program and do your best to reward the Scouts by incorporating their requests into your Den plans. Make sure they receive their Arrow Points!

The Scout Shop offers poster-sized progress charts for each year. Use these, or invent your own, to help motivate the boys towards their goals of rank and Arrow Points. This is something tangible that the boys can see. They can also compare their progress against their den mates and encourage some competition.

Webelos has much greater flexibility and provides greater options for customizing your den's program. This is the 18 months (12 months for LDS units) where you can really start the transition into giving each boy the initiative for his own achievement. Between the Bear year and the start of the Webelos year,

- a) Meet with your boys and get their input on how they would like to build their program.
- b) Incorporate as much of their input into your program as you can.
- c) Maintain an individual advancement-tracking sheet for each boy.
- d) Every month or-so, meet with your boys individually (remember to use a Guide to Safe Scouting approach) to discuss their progress and how they are doing with their goals.
- e) Encourage the boys to earn all 20 achievements and, thus, the Webelos Super Achiever award.

As Den leader, you are still responsible for the program. But, try to give the boys a genuine feeling of ownership.

Your goal is to plant the initial seeds of this important life skill that will grow and hopefully blossom as your Cubs progress through Boy Scouts. I would challenge you to be an over-achiever in this area.

The ability to successfully set goals is directly tied to a boy's maturity. Your success will vary greatly with each boy. As a Cub, the end result is not important. It is the journey.

**Newsletters**

If you are interested in getting back-copies of the newsletters or would like electronic versions to share, you can find them at [http://webpages.charter.net/chadc/html/cub\\_scouting.html](http://webpages.charter.net/chadc/html/cub_scouting.html)

Till next month, yours in Scouting,  
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*My thanks go to Bill Smith for contributing to this month's edition.*

