



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

QUIVIRA COUNCIL

October 22, 2012

Dear Scouting Families,

With the recent public release of the Boy Scouts of America's ineligible volunteer files and the extensive media coverage, it's a good time to remind ourselves and others that Scouting continues to be among the safest places in our community for kids.

BSA's contemporary youth protection program, strengthened over many decades, is focused on preventing, detecting and deterring abusive behavior. As we review these files from up to 50 years ago, there are reminders of how community expectations have changed from the days when the community participated in keeping some abusive behavior private. Today, we all want abuses to be immediately reported.

The BSA has continued to develop and enhance its efforts to protect youth by regularly consulting with experts from law enforcement, child safety, psychology, and other disciplines to ensure our efforts consistently improve with the ever-changing awareness of the dangers and challenges facing today's youth.

The key ingredients of our Youth Protection Plan include:

1. Rigorous screening of prospective volunteers, including a criminal background check and approval by each unit's chartering organization - such as a church, school, veterans' organization or police department. This ensures community input into the leader selection process.
2. Mandatory training for leaders, youth members and parents. A new volunteer is required to participate in youth protection training and that training must be updated every 24 months.
3. All new youth members are required to have a face-to-face discussion with their parents about abuse prevention. Youth members participate in age-appropriate training about abuse prevention, using video scenarios and role-playing to teach them the "three R's" of youth protection - recognizing, resisting and reporting abuse.
4. Mandatory barriers to prevent abuse. "Two deep" leadership is required at all times - meaning at least two leaders must be present at all activities with youth members, during or outside of Scouting activities for any Scout volunteer. Separate sleeping, changing and showering facilities for youth and leaders are required. Youth members, for example, are prohibited from sleeping in the same tent as a leader (except his or her parent.)

5. Any violation of Scouting's safety rules by a leader triggers an aggressive, three-part response:

- Notification of law enforcement authorities
- Immediate removal of the leader;
- Ongoing communication with families and other affected parties to enforce policies and accountability as well as provide support.

We have all become aware in recent years that there are potential predators almost everywhere in our society: in churches and schools and homes, and in a whole array of youth-serving organizations. Through our comprehensive youth protection program, Scouting reduces the risk of abuse. Many other youth-serving organizations do as well. I believe, that with our safeguards, the benefits to our kids from participating in youth development activities far outweigh the risk.

We can show that Scouting is a crucial deterrent for child abuse in our communities. We know that our 13,000 members and 4,000 leaders make a major impact on behalf of all children by initiating conversations on the subject of abuse between parents and their children, training leaders and youth members, and fostering overall awareness through communication with the broader Scouting family, siblings, and friends.

Please know that your children's safety is always our first concern. Please also see the links below for additional resources including the BSA Youth Protection Guidelines and Policies as well as online training.

Yours in Scouting,

Mike Johnson
Scout Executive

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/HealthandSafety/GSS/gss01.aspx>

www.scouting.org/bsayouthprotection

*Scouting is one of the safest places in our
community for all children, and the safety of our members
is always our first concern*

*This letter and a Q and A on the IV Files can be found on the Quivira Council website at
www.quivira.org*

*You are encouraged to share these communications with any parents, leaders or interested
persons*