

The Main Thing

By Kevin Nichols, Council Scout Executive

Now I would like to talk about The Main Thing.

While serving as an Assistant Scoutmaster for my son's troop in the Midwest, a young man joined our Troop. He was a 6th grader, never been in Scouts before and was looking for adventure. As a troop leader and a professional Scouter, I greeted him and his parents and asked him to join our Scouts in a gathering activity. He joined right in with his new patrol as if he'd been in the Troop for years.

His parents had some concerns, and what parent wouldn't be a bit apprehensive about sending their son off with strangers. In the course of our conversation, I asked them what they wanted their son to get out of Scouting. Fun, life lessons, adventures? What was it that they considered when they brought their son to our unit?

The first thing they talked about was their boy growing to be a bit more responsible and independent. Then they talked about life skills and fun. They understood that in Scouting their son would develop leadership and responsibility. They asked about service to others and character building. In short... they asked all the right questions.

They wanted their boy to one day earn his Eagle award, but that was not the main thing. They wanted him to have fun with a group of young men that have a common interest and shared values.

To keep this short, their main thing is our main thing. We all want what those parents wanted for their child, a place where a youth can be active, develop lifelong interests, and have fun with his friends. Our task is to support those units who are delivering the main thing to their communities.

As our new parents watched, the Scouts did a canoe relay in the parking lot that night. They commented on how friendly the Scouts were and how they all seemed to be a good group of kids. All I could do is to agree. As I reflect on that moment, I understand that that group of Scouts was benefiting from the tireless efforts of those leaders in that unit and across the Scouting movement to make sure they were the main thing.