

National BSA Commissioner Charles Dahlquist on the BSA-LDS Relationship

May 12, 2017

The Boy Scouts of America and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) share a deep commitment to developing young boys into strong, moral, ethical men. I believe the bond between the BSA and the LDS Church is as strong today as it began back in 1913 when the Church became the first sponsor of a local Scouting unit.



This week, the Church announced it will no longer offer Venturing and Varsity programs to older boys, rather refocusing its programming for young men around local Church activities that promote spiritual and personal growth and development. As we all know, we offer a variety of programs from Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts to STEM Scouts, Venturing and Sea Scouting, and our chartered partners are in the best position to decide which programs most appropriately meet the needs of the youth they serve. We recognize that not all programs are a perfect fit for all partners. As we continue to work closely with all of our partners, the BSA ensure that no boy who wishes to join the Scouting movement will miss out on the positive life opportunities of being a Scout.

The Church will continue Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting. In nearly all cases, Varsity and Venturing participants **registered** at local Church wards are also registered in Boy Scouts. I know Church families and young men are thrilled to see this important partnership continue. Those of us in the Scouting community who also belong to the LDS Church understand the mutual respect and passion we share for developing young men as we see it firsthand every day. Our relationship dates back to the very beginning of the Scouting movement and in 2013 the Church proudly celebrated 100 years of Scouting. We look forward to another century of partnering with an institution so deeply committed to values and the development of young men.

Scouting Works

Today's relationship between Scouting and the Church is strong because we know our programs work well together. We see the results of young men who have gone through Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and the impact these programs have on their families and communities.

A Tufts University study of kids ages 6-12 found that youth who participate in Scouting for even a short period of time exhibit strong moral values and positive character attributes, allowing them to embrace new opportunities, overcome obstacles and become better prepared for future success.

I have always appreciated the BSA's commitment to supporting the Church, and all of its religious partners, in every way possible. The Church has always been able to run its Scouting programs according to its beliefs and standards, and at a core level, the Church's goals to shape young men matches the BSA's own moral and ethical mission. That commitment has not changed, and we continue to view Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts as programs that effectively serve the young men and families in the LDS Church.

The Value of Service through Scouting

Over the past century, the LDS Church has made Scouting an integral tool in shaping young men's outlook on community. In 2016, Scouts commitment to community service nationwide surpassed 15 million hours. What an amazing accomplishment for our Scouting community and for our youth. I can't help but be moved by the countless instances where a Boy Scout's selfless service made a big impact on a neighbor's life or helped improve his community in a very real and personal way.

Scouting Continues to Shape Tomorrow's Leaders

In addition to service, it is clear that young LDS men who participate in Scouting gain valuable lessons in leadership that begin in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts that ultimately shape their path to adulthood. Countless Boy Scouts and Eagle Scouts are currently serving their Church mission in locations across the globe and I know each are putting the values and lessons learned at their local Boy Scouts Troop, or on a Scouting camping trip or outing, to good use. Those of us active in the Scouting community recognize, and I believe the LDS Church agrees, that Boy Scout programs set up our youth participants for success.

Former LDS Church President Gordon Hinckley once said, *“If every boy in America knew and observed the Scout Oath, we would do away with most of the jails and prisons in this country. This program builds boys, builds their futures, leads them on the right path so they can make something of their lives. Every man or woman who helps a boy along the road of life not only does a great thing for him but does a great thing for society as a whole.”*

I know President Hinckley's message rings true today. I look forward to working with you, the larger Scouting community, and the LDS Church to offer programs that serve our young men and their families.

— Charles