



Key 3 Perspectives



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Preparing for the Game of Life

Lord Baden Powell, the founder of the Scouting movement, famously said, "Scouting is a game for boys under the leadership of boys under the direction of a man." That quote captures the essence of what Scouting is designed to accomplish.

Like a game, Scouting is supposed to be fun. It's the fun and adventure in Scouting activities that attracts boys, engages their mind and bodies, and keeps them coming back for more. Who doesn't want to fly down a zipline, conquer a mountain, or catch a fish? Even the "un-fun" activities are not always negative. Some of my best memories as a Scout involve torrential downpours, shivering nights in snow caves, and pulsing blisters. While I didn't think so at the time, those "grit-developing" activities actually became fun stories that my boyhood friends and I have returned to again and again.

One of the aims of the Scouting program is leadership development. In a proper-functioning Scouting unit, boys (and girls in Venturing and Exploring) run the program. They oversee the planning and execution of activities and help solve problems. They lead meetings and inspire those in their units to higher performance. They serve others. Probably in no other era has the world needed young people to prepare to lead in ethical and moral ways. Scouting prepares leaders.

In my view, one of the most important elements in the Scouting program is a young person's association with adult leaders who are concerned with his success. Studies show that once a youth reaches his teenage years, the influence of his parents decreases while the influence of his peers grows. In addition, he will begin to look outside his home for validation of the things he has been taught. At this crucial juncture, a Scoutmaster enters the picture and provides a non-parental example of responsibility, compassion, and morality. He listens. He gives advice. At a time when parents are less influential, adult Scouting leaders "pinch hit" and provide wise guidance during these formative teenage years.

This is why Scouting is the premiere youth-serving organization in the country. It isn't just a game. It is real life. And it's important. Thanks for all you are doing to bring the blessings of Scouting to the youth of the Mount Baker Council.