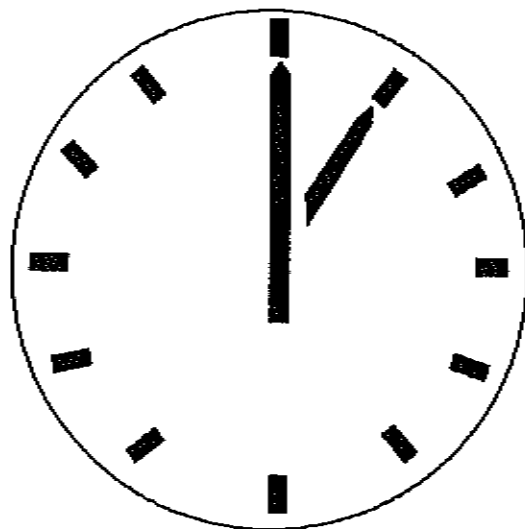


**Piedmont-Appalachian
College of Commissioner Science**



**Doctor
Commissioner Science**

**Why Volunteers Give of Their Time
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Sequoyah Council -- Unit Commissioner**

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PREFACE

Time is a way of giving a tithe as is mentioned in the Bible, and feeling and meeting a need in our relationship with others. Making the best use of the time we have in this world is one way of making the world a better place in which to live. Making the world a better place in which to live is the goal of Scouting and should be the goal of a Commissioner.

ABSTRACT

This is to verify the importance of giving time as a unit Commissioner to fulfill the goal of making the world a better place. This paper examines reasons that volunteers cite for giving of their time. A survey was mailed to 30 scouting volunteers who have served the organization for five years or more. The paper looks at a number of reasons given in the order of priority assigned by the volunteers.

APPROVAL OF READERS

This is to certify that I have read and approved the project entitled "Why Volunteers Give of Their Time."

submitted by W. Blair Keller Jr.
in partial fulfillment for the Ph.D. Degree
in Commissioner of Science
Piedmont-Appalachian College
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DATE SUBMITTED: 3-14-90

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WHY VOLUNTEERS GIVE OF THEIR TIME

When I am tired or just feeling down and don't feel like going to a meeting, I have often asked myself just why I keep going after 45 years of participation in Scouting. I have been a scout, assistant scout master, scout master and worked as activity chairman in my district for ten years. Recently I have served as District Commissioner and am now Unit Commissioner in addition to an assortment of other responsibilities over the years.

In wondering why I continue these efforts, it seems that there must be some reason for doing any job that we do in life. The reasons can be a great number of things. In determining why I give of my time, I would probably have to nail it down to a statement that I heard in Biloxie, Mississippi at the 4-H All Star Conference years ago. The speaker said, "You are where you are today because someone gave of their time. Therefore, you owe an obligation to society." I have never forgotten this and it is probably the first thing that comes to mind, but there are many more. One of my former scouts was stationed in Germany and wrote me to thank me for what scouting had meant to him and how it had gotten him in a position of leadership. Another scout wrote to tell me that he had a position in a medical center in Atlanta just because of the first aid training he had gotten in Scout Troop 70 at Green Spring Church. These thanks come very very

seldom, but they make it all worthwhile.

As I thought more about why we give time and to be more precise for the doctorate program, I decided to put out a questionnaire to see what other scout volunteers had to say about why we give time. I compiled 30 questions and asked each person to list the reasons in order as they best described their priorities in giving time. (See questionnaire in Appendix A) Following is an analysis of the top reasons the volunteers gave in what was important to them about giving of their time.

REASON NUMBER ONE TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

The number one reason respondents chose for why they give of their time is to help make the world a better place to live in. I think this goes back to the motto we use in camping: Always leave the camp site in better condition than you found it. The implication is that we should always leave the world in better condition than we found it.

This same principle is being declared on the level of national politics as our president calls for a thousand points of light, referring to the light given off by each individual who makes a contribution as a volunteer. The principle is ablaze in the Scout Commissioners as they work with their assigned units, hoping that their efforts will improve the lives of young boys

leading them to become better adults which will mean better citizens, a stronger nation, and hopefully a safer world.

NUMBER TWO FELLOWSHIP

The second reason survey respondents chose for their willingness to volunteer is the fellowship they get from interacting with other people. It is basic human nature to want to be with other people. That satisfaction is improved when we have something in common, or work toward a common goal in our relationships with other. The relationship in scouting is more like a family relationship and makes us more willing to help wherever we can. The feeling of sharing becomes a bond among the Commissioners.

NUMBER THREE FRIENDSHIP

The third reason survey respondents cited for willingness to volunteer time is the friends they make. This reason is certainly similar to the second reason, but there is a difference. The fellowship is generally enjoyed while the work is being done and everyone feels united and close because of the shared effort. However, an extra bonus sometimes arises in the close, long-term friendships that develop. We all need to

cultivate friendships throughout our life, and Commissioners have the opportunity to be a friend in need and deed. This kind of friendship becomes the kind of relationship where one person can call on the other to help with his troop or even with personal matters. Friendships are necessary in this life for peace of mind and well being. As we work in scouting as a commissioner or in other areas, we have the feeling of working with friends whether we actually know the person well or not. This feeling of being part of the team is part of the benefit that makes us willing to give of our time.

NUMBER FOUR CIVIC OBLIGATION

The fourth reason given in the survey results was civic obligation. In this world we have an obligation to help or work with other people. We have all had help to get where we are whether we realize it or not. First, it is usually our parents who help and then our teachers. The boss or fellow employees may help along the way. As a Commissioner, we have the opportunity to return the kindness. As this type of volunteerism expands, we have an impact on our communities and help improve the standard of living.

NUMBER FIVE

PRIDE IN WHAT YOU DO

The fifth reasons respondents gave for volunteer work is the pride they feel in what they do. Pride is that inner feeling you get when you believe you are doing something that is really helping. It's that feeling of a job well done -- one that maybe no one knows but you. Seeing a young man grow to manhood and believing that somehow you helped a little to make him a better, stronger person is part of that feeling of pride. That feeling of pride applies when you see a troop that you began continue to grow and thrive even though you no longer have anything to do with it. The pride applies when you see a scoutmaster continue to work with young boys and help develop a troop and you know that he might not have stayed if it weren't for your encouragement. The pride grows in knowing that your effort in scouting has been going on for many years and you are still helping. You have pride in the friends you have made as you have volunteered and the pride in the accomplishments of all the young boys as they develop because you know that you made a contribution to their growth.

NUMBER SIX

TO INFLUENCE OTHERS

The sixth reason respondents gave for volunteering their time is the opportunity to influence others. As a Commissioner,

we have the chance to influence the people we are helping. In this category, it is extremely important that we use good judgment in how we conduct ourselves and that we have the knowledge to be an influence without appearing to take over when we are merely trying to help. Perhaps the opportunity to influence others is tied to the gratification we get from friendships through scouting. Often, young people we come in contact with become friends later in life.

NUMBER SEVEN

PRIDE IN BEING PART OF SCOUTING

The seventh reason given by survey respondents for helping is the pride of being part of scouting. Scouting is an extremely well respected organization. One of the respondents, Bobby Outlaw, put it well when he described the pride in scouting as developing dedication. "It is dedication to the scouting program." I don't know of any person in scouting who is not dedicated that has been in scouting five years or more. When we read of so many of the top people in business and government who have had scouting training as youth and they speak of their dedication to the program, you can't help but have pride in being a commissioner. Several presidents of our country have been in scouting and have all spoken proudly of their scouting experience. You can be very proud and sure that scouting

experience strengthens any resume that you would present with an application for a job.

NUMBER EIGHT

FOR FUN

Another reason cited often in the survey was that people give of their time in volunteering because it is fun. As one respondent, Ruth Hancock, stated, "Let's face it, if it is not fun, you won't stay in scouting." People who give of their time have to enjoy what they are doing or they won't be there long. As commissioners we should try to have fun and maintain a positive attitude, so that people around us will have fun. When we go to a troop meeting or visiting with a scoutmaster, it should be enjoyable. If not, there may be a reason that you shouldn't be there in the first place. Our attitude has a way of rubbing off on others, from the scoutmasters on down through the entire troop.

NUMBER NINE

TO FEEL PART OF SOMETHING

The ninth reason survey respondents gave for why they give of their time is to feel a part of something. We, as human beings, have a need to feel that we belong to something. This need has been proven time and again in numerous research

projects. Besides the formal research, anybody could tell you that it is true. The belonging may be to family, church, political organizations, a job or other situations. Scouting gives us an opportunity to be part of the greatest organization outside of the church that exists on this earth. There is no other training program that comes close to providing the learning opportunities for young people as scouting does. It is a worldwide program and the value is recognized on an international basis. A large percentage of scout troops are sponsored by churches. The program makes brothers and friends of all nations. This example from the scouting magazine "Boys Life" illustrates the international brotherhood idea. On one of the South Pacific islands during World War II, an American soldier was wounded and unable to defend himself when a Japanese soldier was about to put a bayonet through him. The American soldier gave the scout sign as he passed out. The next morning when his buddies found him, there was a note pinned to his shirt which said in Japanese, "I, too, was a scout." His life was saved by a fellow scout.

NUMBER TEN

KEEPS YOU YOUNG AT HEART

The tenth reason given by respondents was the volunteering keeps people young at heart. I have had it said to me many times when working with boys that I am "just one of them." I am sure we older boys have a lot of youth in us or we would not be in

scouting. Working with young people keeps us young. I hope that I never get to the place that I don't have some boy in me. As a commissioner, when we go to scout meetings, this is one way we have to impress the young boys in our actions. As the saying goes, age is a matter of mind. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter. So, scouting activities help us continue to think young.

NUMBER ELEVEN

IT IS A CHALLENGE

The eleventh reason given by respondents for giving of their time is because it is a challenge. First, it is a challenge to know our job and to know the best way to carry it out. It is a challenge to drive to the meeting and to help get a troop started off on the right foot, or get a leader to agree to go to summer camp for a week. The challenge may be that you have to go with him, and the challenge, if viewed in one respect, can be the opportunity. The challenge may result in showing you that you can do something you didn't know you could do, such as going through the COPE program at the age of 58. Challenges are what make life worth living.

NUMBER TWELVE

OPPORTUNITY TO WITNESS

The twelfth reason respondents gave for their willingness to

volunteer is the opportunity to witness. When working with young boys, we have a great opportunity to impress them with the right way to live. As Christians, we can be of great influence in their lives. Each person has somebody that he looks up to as an idol and this provides an opportunity to witness. As a scout master, I used to take boys out by themselves and ask them what they planned to be when they grew up. Most boys of scouting age have not given much thought to this and can't give you an answer to this question. However, it gets them thinking about the question when somebody outside of the family shows an interest in their future. By asking him about his church, and his membership in a church, and showing an interest in his friends and schoolwork, there opens an opportunity to witness. As a commissioner, you have the opportunity, if asked, to suggest what you would do and how you would handle a situation.

NUMBER THIRTEEN TO GET CLOSER TO NATURE

The thirteenth reason respondents gave for their volunteering in scouting was to get closer to nature. I know in my case, and have had others tell me the same thing, that I feel closer to my Maker in the great outdoors than I might be, even in church on Sunday morning. We always had some kind of church service on Sunday morning when I was Scoutmaster of Troop 70. I don't think you can have a more moving religious experience than

in stopping along a trail where few other people have been, to recognize our God. The thrill of spending a week on the trail and under the stars in the great outdoors is a rare opportunity for experiencing nature at its fullest.

FOURTEEN

HAVE A SON IN SCOUTING

Another reason cited by respondents to the questionnaire was that they had a son in scouting which started their interest in the organization. Often, they remain in scouting even after their son or sons have grown up and are out of scouting. They see how important it is in the development of young boys and want to help others, so they stay. In keeping with other items mentioned earlier, they have fun, make friends, want to share what they have learned, meet challenges and continue to be part of the program.

NUMBER FIFTEEN

BECAUSE SOMEBODY ASKED

Another reason which was mentioned a number of times regarding why people give of their time in scouting was just because somebody asked me. When I was sixteen years old, two boys came to me and asked me if I knew of anyone who would serve as a scoutmaster. I had wanted to be a scout, but we had no troop in our area. I talked to my neighbor, Jake Minnick, who

told me he didn't feel that he could do it because he didn't know anything about scouting. I told him that I didn't know anything about it either, but if he was willing to try, we would learn together. That is how I became involved in scouting and how Troop 70 came into existence in 1945. There are probably lots of people who need something extra to add fulfillment to their lives and would be willing to help, but they're just not sure where to look or how to begin. So, when someone takes the time to ask, they are not only helping the organization that gets the volunteer, but they add something to the life of the person who agrees to help. So, ask a friend.

SIXTEEN

THE CHURCH ASKED THEM TO HELP

Another reason volunteers gave was because their church asked them to help. This happens at times when the church is the sponsoring institution and they don't have a volunteer. This can be good or bad. It can be good if the person has the time and wants to help others. He can become very involved. On the other hand, it can destroy a troop if the volunteer isn't trained and encouraged. This is where a good Commissioner can be utilized in getting the volunteer leader started off on the right foot. Sometimes people are more willing to be involved when they see

the work as part of the church activity. The church provides a good support for the scout troop.

CONCLUSION

The results of the survey on why people volunteer their time in scouting showed the following primary reasons: (1) To Make the World A Better Place to Live, (2) Fellowship, (3) Friendship, (4) Civic Obligation, (5) Pride in what you do, (6) The chance to influence others, (7) Pride in Scouting, (8) Fun, (9) Being part of something, (10) Staying Young at Heart, (11) Challenge, (12) An Opportunity to Witness, (13) To Get Closer to Nature, (14) Having a son in scouting, (15) Because Someone Asked, and (16) My Church asked me.

In addition, there is an added benefit in strengthening a person's professional resume. It is well known that scouting experience plays a very important part in some jobs. For example, when Admiral Byrd picked his men to go to the South Pole, he required them to be Eagle Scouts. The military often picks men for jobs based on their scouting experience. By looking at the rank of Eagle, it is obvious that the individual has staying power because it is not easy to become an Eagle scout. Attaining the rank of Eagle proves that the person is dedicated and willing to follow through on what they are doing.

There is no doubt that some people volunteer in scouting for reasons that are not as admirable as the ones that showed up in

reasons that are not as admirable as the ones that showed up in my survey. Some people volunteer because they want to impress others or appear to be very important. Sometimes they just want to see their names in print, or maybe just want an excuse to avoid responsibilities at home. However, 98 percent of those who stay in scouting are there for admirable reasons and truly want to help others. The survey supports this idea and is an encouraging picture of the people serving as scouting commissioners today.

APPENDIX A

Dear Volunteer Scouter:

I am working on my Doctor of Commissioner of Science Thesis and I need your help.

Would you please take a few minutes to read this questionnaire and pick the ten that apply to you? Put Number 1 by your first choice and Number 2 by your second choice and so forth to Number 10.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fellowship | <input type="checkbox"/> Feel obligated to society |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends I make | <input type="checkbox"/> To wear uniform |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Civic obligation | <input type="checkbox"/> To see your name in print |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To get new ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> To add to your resume with intent of a job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To Know your area | <input type="checkbox"/> To have people come to you for help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pride in what you do | <input type="checkbox"/> To get away from the phone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help build a better place to live | <input type="checkbox"/> To feel apart of something |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Challenge | <input type="checkbox"/> Because I have a son in scouting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Influence others | <input type="checkbox"/> Just because somebody ask me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An opportunity to witness | <input type="checkbox"/> I can't say no |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To get closer to nature | <input type="checkbox"/> I am expected to |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To impress others | <input type="checkbox"/> My church ask me to |
| <input type="checkbox"/> For the pride of being a part of scouting | <input type="checkbox"/> Enhances performance on the job |
| <input type="checkbox"/> To just get away from home or spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Keeps me young at heart |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How the other person does things | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Place to go | |

I appreciate your time in filling this out.