

Please feel free to share this with your unit commissioners.

Eric Anderson, Theodore Roosevelt Council Commissioner, finished attending a district commissioner's cabinet meeting. One of the agenda items was the need to make sure unit leaders have taken Youth Protection Training as they start the program year.

It was a lively discussion about enforcement and what the penalties are for non-compliance. Eric was asked - how do we get the Council to enforce this and not register unit leaders who have lapsed youth protection training. Many expressed the opinion that the professional staff is responsible to enforce this policy. Others asked what authority commissioners have to ensure unit leaders have training.

Our commissioner service is based on the premise that we are friends and mentors to units. Our authority is based upon our key responsibilities:

- ***Supporting unit growth in the Journey to Excellence criteria:*** JTE measures performance characteristics that unlock the door to a successful unit. We should analyze the unit's program and identify JTE areas where help is needed to move the unit to a higher level of JTE success.
- ***Linking district committee resources to the unit:*** We should support the district committee's delivery of a "catalog of services" to support the specific JTE elements needed for a particular unit's health and success.
- ***Visiting units and logging the visits into the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS):*** Our core task remains visiting the unit. UVTS input feeds critical information to the district committee to help link resources to the unit.
- ***Supporting on-time charter renewal:*** The commissioner's focus is the retention of the unit, though we should be especially mindful of supporting new youth membership efforts as we move more toward a volunteer-led, professionally guided approach to increasing membership.

Our authority to promote youth protection training with unit leaders is based upon the first and fourth responsibilities:

- Commissioner teams should be measuring performance characteristics that unlock the doors to a successful unit. Having leaders that acquire youth protection training keeps them protected - it is "adult protection training" and reduces the exposure of leaders in the performance of their responsibilities.
- Having the key leadership youth protection trained and recorded so that the charter can be submitted successfully for on-time charter renewal is based upon our staff taking consistent action to make sure our leaders have this training. Our moral authority as "mentors and coaches" should provide the framework to persuade and LEAD our unit leaders to protect themselves as they work with their youth.

District commissioners, assistant district commissioners, and unit commissioners have access to the unit training records through www.myscouting.org. In the past, this wasn't the case - the data was unavailable to use by front-line volunteers. **Data empowers US to provide leadership in identifying the deficiencies in this specific training**. There is no reason that a list of unit leaders - at least the key leader, the key assistant, and committee chair - cannot be tracked in a spreadsheet that can be used to start reminding them to get the training - why?

- To protect themselves
- To set an example for other unit leaders and volunteers in their units
- To honor the commitment that unit volunteers have to deliver the scouting program so it is a "safe place" for our youth and volunteers and reduce the potential for intentional or unintentional violations of the youth protection policy.

The knee-jerk response is "we need the tools to discharge unit leaders that will not comply". The real question is "how do volunteers provide leadership in this important policy to other volunteers without punitive measures".

Suggestions:

- Devote 5 minutes at every roundtable in September, October, and November to remind leaders to check their training on My Scouting.org - develop a one page cheat sheet to show them what their personal training record looks like.
- Meet with the unit key three as part of the pre-recharter process - have their unit training records available to discuss the general issues and identify where training is about to expire.
- Send a reminder in writing to the unit key-3 that youth protection is an important obligation in any unit, and leaders should set the example by making sure their training is current.
- At the district committee meeting, remind the district training chair that they should use the pulpit to make sure units are proactive in assessing and acquiring training to make sure leaders delivery a great program. Do the district training chairs download the unit training records to proactively seek out trainees - if not, why not?
- Recognize the units that achieve 100% training with a special recognition at district meetings, roundtables, dinners, or at a recognition ceremony. Perhaps this could be done at the Council Wide Roundtable in January, shortly after our rechartering is complete.

I heard loud and clear that unit commissioners do not want to alienate the unit leadership as they review this issue. They will certainly do that if the message is - we won't recharter you if you don't have the training. How do we change the message to "how can we help protect our volunteers and youth so they can have a great unit program"

Finally, this is a volunteer-driven, professionally guided program. Defaulting to "let the field staff deal with this" is NOT ACCEPTABLE.

The unit leaders are our neighbors and colleagues, and we have a better chance to make the case for proactive training. All have to work together to lead, persuade and guide using the positive

benefits that accrue from youth protection. It is not easy. One person at the meeting said "the Council should deal with this" WE ARE THE COUNCIL - all of us - the commissioners, the unit leaders, the district committees, and the youth we serve. So let's all address this together, and not default to the mythical enforcer of policies.

So, each commissioner staff should:

Define the problem - how many leaders have expired youth protection training - search the unit training list, make a list, quantify and prioritize - Packs - check the cubmaster, assistant cubmaster, Webelos leader, committee chair; Troops - Scoutmaster, committee chair, activities chair; Crews - Advisor, committee chair, crew president. Start at the top of the unit.

Make a plan - Describe the benefit of youth protection as "adult protection"; work with the ACC for Training Support to review strategies to make sure youth protection is a training priority.

Make it happen - In unit visits, calls, and roundtables.

Eric didn't volunteer to support Scouting by conducting unit leadership pogroms. It violates all the standards of the Scout Oath and Law I have experienced in over 40 years as a registered Scout and Scouter. **The challenge of leadership is to be proactive, positive, and persuasive.**

Regards,

Ron Hathaway