

TROOP 877 PROGRAM POLICIES

Troop: There are three main aims of the scouting program. They consist of **Ideals**, the Scout Oath, Law, Motto (Be Prepared) and Slogan (Do a Good Turn Daily). **Patrols** were the boys are divided into groups consisting of about 7 boys each, were they will learn to work together using the Patrol Method, (teamwork), throughout the year. The last is the **Outdoor Programs** were the training provided during the troop meetings is put into practice. Our troop believes and follows to all of these aims. It is important for your son to attend as many of the troop meetings and campouts as he can. This will help in his rank advancement and enhance his knowledge of scout skills. We also encourage your son to read through his scout handbook and practice some of the skills demonstrated inside the book. This goes along with our Motto - BE PREPARED.

We try to aspire to the concept of a 'boy-run troop'. Although it may seem a little rough around the edges, this means most of the meetings activities are run by the boys, and many Troop decisions are decided by the boys. During regular Patrol Leader Conferences (PLC), the Patrol Leaders will develop ideas for the activities for the Troop. Our Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters provide the adult oversight; structure and control to allow the boys run their program. The Committee handles funding and other issues to help the Troop run efficiently. Our sponsoring organization is St. Stephen. Parents are key partners we depend upon to provide the family foundation and support to our Scouts.

Leadership Positions: In Boy Scouts self reliance and leadership are two things that resonate throughout the program. In all scout troops after you obtain the rank of First Class, you need a position of leadership in the troop to advance to the next rank. At our first meeting in September we'll be holding elections for Senior Patrol Leader and Patrol Leaders. We also have non elected positions open for Chaplain Aid, Scribe, Quartermaster, Librarian, Historian, Troop Guide and Den Chief. Please encourage your son to take one of these positions. It will not only help him in scouting but also in school. If your son does take a position, part of his job description is that he has to do the work. Parents as key partners a little nudge and asking how they're doing goes a long way. Thanks in advance!

Scout Handbooks: It is a challenge to maintain troop records when they originate from the boys scout handbooks. In the back of the handbook each rank requirement is signed off and when all of the requirements are

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signed, the boys attend a Board of Review in which they are asked questions by adult leaders of the troop. When the Board of Review is satisfied, the boys are promoted in rank and his handbook is signed again. It is very important that any boy that's working on their Tenderfoot, Second Class or First Class rank bring their handbooks to every troop meeting and campout. This way we can maintain up to date records of their progress and schedule Board of Reviews when they are needed. When Board of Reviews are scheduled and your son needs it for his next advancement, please have your son attend that meeting in his full uniform so he can advance in rank. **Also, it is required that a copy of the signed requirement pages for First Class, Star, Life and Eagle from your son's handbook accompany his Eagle Rank application. He must protect his handbook.**

Parent Volunteers: There are many ways you can help. By offering to be an Assistant Scoutmaster, by joining the Committee, or by helping your sons by providing the support to attend our activities – your help and support is very much appreciated.

Committee Meetings: Our Committee is composed of parents or grandparents of our Scouts. We meet monthly during the Scouting year - generally the 3rd Sunday of each month between Sept & May. All parents are welcome.

Uniforms: Unless otherwise announced, our dress code is full complete official BSA uniforms for all events – this includes Scout shirt, Scout pants, Scout belt, and Scout Neckerchief. We are purchasing a new style t shirt for the 2008 scouting year and will be available for purchase in the September – October time frame. The cost has not been determined. For our more casual events, our Class B uniform will include the Troop t-shirt & Scout pants or shorts. Also, Troop hats are available for \$10, worn during outdoor activities.

Travel Uniforms: When traveling to and from our camping trips our Class B uniform consisting of our Troop t-shirt & Scout pants or shorts should be worn. We arrive at summer camp every year with this uniform and we look marvelous. It's more casual and it makes our troop more distinguishable from others.

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Weekly Meetings: Between September and June, we have weekly Scout meetings on Sunday nights at the Scout hut – located in the woods to the left of the St. Stephen School Hall. Our meetings run from 7PM to 8:30PM, unless otherwise announced. Meetings that are on the same weekend of a campout will be conducted at the campout not at the scout hut. See our calendar at <http://www.ststephenscouts.org/BS/BSMain.htm>.

Summer Camp: Each summer, all Scouts are invited to join the Troop at summer camp. Information packets are sent to each parent during the Spring with all the details, including cost. Depending on the financial state of the Troop (see Fruit Fundraiser below ☺), the Troop helps offset this cost for each attending Scout.

Monthly Camp: Each month we try to do at least one main event, usually a weekend camping trip. Several weeks prior to each trip, the Troop will post on our web site (<http://www.ststephenscouts.org/BS/BSMain.htm>) the information about the upcoming event, along with Permission Forms and due dates for signing up. If your son will attend, please submit the Permission Forms and any monies due by the date indicated. **The meeting before the camping trip is the absolute due date for camping money. Following that meeting the money will be distributed for the purchase of the food. If you son decides after that date he will have to purchase his own food.**

Scout Mass: Due to the low attendance at the Scout Masses each month, we have reduced the number of masses to four this year. They represent a theme for the particular month they are being held. The scheduled Scout Mass dates and associated themes are as follows: September 21 (Beginning of Scouting Season), November 2 (Veterans Day Observance), February 8 (Scouting's Birthday) and May 10 (Mothers Day). We meet 15 minutes prior to mass in the Church basement. The dates for Scout Mass are on our schedule at <http://www.ststephenscouts.org/BS/BSMain.htm>. Parents, please help us make a good showing in front of the parish that spiritually and financially support our efforts. THANKS.

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Food Money: The Troop generally pays for camping fees for our monthly campouts. But each Scout is responsible for paying for their food. We generally collect money for each trip (\$10-15 – PLEASE – Send Cash Only for Food Money), and then ask one Scout from each patrol to purchase the food (he will have a shopping list and an allowance). We ask parents to assist the Scout with the shopping, but don't do it for him. Any leftover money, along with receipts, should be turned back in to the Scoutmaster (or the trip coordinator).

Overnighter: Each year, we will usually have a sleepover in the St. Stephen School hall. Not much sleeping gets accomplished, but the Scouts have a blast.

Court of Awards: To recognize advancement and the hard work of the Scouts, the Troop holds Court of Awards during the Scouting year. They are held in October, January and May. We encourage all parents to attend. Look to the schedule for dates and times at <http://www.ststephenscouts.org/BS/BSMain.htm>.

Snow Policy: We follow the Harford County School system snow cancellation policy. On the day of an activity (such as our weekly meeting), if Harford County schools are closed, close early, or cancel evening activities, we follow this guidance.

Registration Dues: We collect registration and Troop dues in October, prior to the first Court of Awards. In September, each family will receive a letter letting them know how much this amount is. These dues, along with money from our fundraisers, are used to offset the cost of the program. The dues are used specifically to: register the Troop and each Scout with National BSA, pay for accident insurance, pay for camping fees (including Icicle and Camporee). We also allocate funds for Troop gear and awards.

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Fruit Fundraiser: Registration dues cover about one half the cost of the program. The rest is raised by fundraising. In the recent year the cost of scouting adventures, equipment, etc has sky rocketed. The Fruit Fundraiser has been an important money making event of our year usually conducted just prior to Christmas but more funds are needed to upkeep the quality program in Troop 877. An auction and Bull & Oyster Roast have been proposed to answer the cost we incur during the scouting year. We ask that you continue your support of the Fruit Fundraiser and your new support of our newest fund raising efforts.

Popcorn / Easter Candy: Here is an opportunity for your Scout to earn money to pay for his Scouting activities. Each year the Troop offers the Scouts an opportunity to sell Popcorn in the fall, and Easter Candy in the spring. We have had Scouts earn hundreds of dollars for Scouting this way.

St Stephen Pancake Breakfast: As a sign of thanks from the Troop to our sponsoring organization, St. Stephen, each year we run the Pancake Breakfast on Sunday during the Christmas bazaar. This is our big volunteer event - all proceeds go to the Church. All Scouts are expected to participate – and parents can help out too, especially with the cleanup.