

# SCOUTS BSA TROOP GUIDE

*Guide to planning Scouts BSA troop meetings and outings*

## *In This Guide*

**Guidance to meeting virtually or in-person with social distancing.**

**Monthly meeting themes, agendas, and activities.**

**Suggestions for Troop outings and service with guidance on camping & travel.**

**And more!**



## **Adapt to the new normal, and still have FUN!**

The Scouts BSA program has never been more vital to the youth of our communities. The purpose of this guide is to help volunteers keep their Scouts engaged and provide a robust Scouting program under the limitations of a pandemic. By following these guidelines, your Troop can:

- Stay on track of rank advancements,
- Incorporate safe events and service opportunities into the Troop schedule, and
- Keep Scouts socially connected with each other and their leaders.

# In-Person Troop Meetings and Activities

For the most up-to-date information regarding unit operational guidance, please visit <https://stlbsa.org/covid-operational-guidance/>. Due to the time period this document covers, restrictions may be different than the general guidelines presented here.

## ALL IN-PERSON MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES MUST FOLLOW THESE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:

- All local and state governments, both where the unit is chartered and where the meeting or activity is to take place must clearly permit the activity in terms of gathering size and ability to maintain proper social distancing. All of their and the Federal CDC guidelines must be followed for all phases of the meeting or activity (such as feeding, housing/tents, swimming etc.). Find updated CDC information [here](#).
- Chartered organizations must approve in- person activities and/or meetings prior to restoring them. Units should also consult with their chartered organization to determine the best path forward for the unit's Scouting programs.
- Parents should be surveyed, and a majority of the parents in the Scouting unit must approve restoring in-person activities.

### *Additional Safety Precautions:*

- Require all adults and youth to wear masks.
- Provide hand-sanitizer and encourage frequent hand-washing.
- Plan activities that do not require close contact or shared materials (see pages 7 - 20 for ideas!)
- Ask Scouts to bring their own snacks or meals when applicable.



## Where should we meet?

The safest locations for face-to-face activities is outdoors. Scouting activities are to continue to take place outdoors until the change in seasons makes it necessary to meet indoors. At that time, Scouting meetings and activities may take place indoors. Local building capacity restrictions must be met, masks are required, and social distancing must be practiced at all times.

- A local park with a pavilion
- A scout camp property
- The parking lot of your chartered organization (with permission)
- We do not recommend meeting at family residences.



# Virtual Troop Meetings

All virtual meetings and activities **must** follow these Youth Protection requirements:

- Meetings and breakouts must have at least two adults present at all times.
- Get permission from each youth's parent/guardian before recording meetings.
- Do not post a link to your meeting on Facebook or other public internet sites; send out via email or other secure method.
- Require a security password to enter the meeting and only share with your Troop.



## *Additional considerations:*

- To protect youth privacy, don't require Scouts to have their videos on constantly.
  - Instead, encourage using virtual backgrounds or **fun filters** if possible or setting up a profile picture with their **bitmojis**.
- Check in with Scouts throughout the meeting with non-verbal tools like the chat box or "thumbs up"/"clapping" reactions.
- Use fun online assessment tools that "gamify" learning material.



## Technology Tools

Video Conferencing Applications:

- Zoom
- Google Meet
- UberConference

Collaboration and sharing:

(Communicate with the whole group, and share documents & links on desktop or mobile)

- Google Classrooms
- Slack
- GroupMe

Gamification and Polls:

(Unique ways to engage virtually with Scouts)

- Kahoot!
- Nearpod

# Camping & Transportation Guidelines

All Troop outings and camp-outs **must** follow the same guidelines as required for in-person meetings **as well as** the following:

- Camping outings are limited to no more than 72 hours.
- Campsite group size is only limited by the maximum gathering size according to State, Local, or Greater St. Louis Area Council regulations and policies.
- Tent camping is to be done one youth in each tent unless they are household members, the same gender, and less than two years apart in age. Adults are also one to each tent unless they are spouses that live together. Tents are to be spaced at least six feet apart. Follow all [Youth Protection Guidelines](#).
- Preparing and serving food is limited to the fewest number of adults practical who prepare and serve individual portions to the entire unit. The exception to this practice is an individual preparing food for only him or herself.
- The safest method for transportation is that only household members are in a vehicle. This may not always be practical. When necessary, people outside of a household may travel in a vehicle together. Unless the vehicle is a large van, (4 rows of seats) there should not be more than four people in a vehicle, and they are to sit as far apart as possible. Masks are to be worn at all times. If possible, carpool with people who interact together in other venues such as sports teams or schools.
- As always, all Boy Scouts of America policies are to be followed, including those in the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).



# Sample Troop Meeting Agenda

*Template agenda for weekly meetings + tips for implementing virtually.*

## 1. Opening Ceremony

- Flag Ceremony
- Scout Oath
- Scout Law
- Outdoor Code



Use screen-sharing to show an image of the American flag, slides showing the Scout Oath & Law, or a virtual flyer or calendar of upcoming events.

## 2. Announcements

## 3. Skill instruction

- Basic skills for younger/newer scouts
- Advanced skills for older/higher level scouts
- Round robins for longer meetings

Change up which Scout leads the Scout Oath & Law, presents upcoming events, and demonstrates skills.



Utilize virtual breakout rooms to divide the Scouts by rank or by patrol throughout the meeting. (Click for instructions on setting up breakout rooms in [Zoom](#) or [Google Meet](#)).



## 4. Patrol meetings

## 5. Inter-patrol game

## 6. Closing ceremony

## 7. Scoutmaster minute

Using Zoom, the meeting host can name patrol breakout rooms, determine when the breakouts should end and return participants to the main meeting, and communicate to all breakouts at once to remind patrol leaders of their time limits.



*If meeting in person, be sure you have enough outdoor space for Scouts to stay 6 feet apart throughout the meeting.*

# Monthly Scouts BSA Meetings & Activities



The following monthly themes and activities are an optional format to help your Scouts stay on track of rank advancements and learn new skills. Each month includes 4 weeks of Troop meeting plans as well as safe, Council-provided activities and events. Find BSA-approved changes to rank requirements, merit badges, and the Eagle Scout extension process [here](#).

## January

Theme: Cold Weather Camping

- Week 1: Hypothermia & Clothing
- Week 2: Food is Fuel
- Week 3: Snow Shelters
- Week 4: Safety & Rescues

Council Activities:

- Outdoor Experience at all Council properties.
- University of Scouting training seminar
- Virtual Merit Badge Sessions

## February

Theme: Sustainability

- Week 1: The 3 R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Week 2: Sustainable Energy
- Week 3: The Triple Bottom Line
- Week 4: Stewardship of Our Natural Resources

Council Activities:

- Outdoor Experience at all Council properties.
- Virtual Merit Badge Sessions

## March

Theme: Fitness & Nutrition

- Week 1: Getting into Shape
- Week 2: Nutrition & Diet
- Week 3: Stress Management & Relaxation
- Week 4: Get Out & Play

Council Activities:

- Outdoor Experience at all Council properties.
- Virtual Merit Badge Sessions
- Certified Angling Instructor Training
- Taste of Venturing



# January Troop Guide: Cold Weather Camping



## *This month, Scouts will learn:*

- Teach youth the potential dangers of cold-weather camping.
- Show youth how to dress in the winter using the standards of wick, wind, and warmth.
- Explain how food is essential to keeping warm.
- Teach the essentials of cooking when it is cold.
- Teach youth how to build winter shelters.
- Help youth explore the activities winter has to offer, such as skiing, snowboarding, skating, and survival
- Demonstrate winter rescue methods

## Week 1: Hypothermia & Clothing

- Before the meeting, share this Boy's Life link with families and ask them to review together. Ask Scouts to bring one example of the type of clothing discussed in the article.
  - <https://boyslife.org/video-audio/34756/winter-camping-buying-guide/>
- Begin the meeting by having each Scout show what they brought and tell which "layer" of clothing it pertains to.
- Have your SPL lead a discussion on the basics of winter clothing, including the principles of wick, wind, and warmth.
  - Discuss why you should never sleep in the same clothes worn during the day.
  - Identify which materials are not appropriate for cold weather.
  - Discuss how synthetic materials work and compare them to wool and cotton.
  - Discuss how synthetics are best for multiday needs.
- Try on different cold-weather clothing.
- Have Scouts discuss overheating and the need to avoid perspiration.
- Instruct Scouts to put on multiple layers of winter clothing and then do a vigorous activity of their choosing. Guide them to adjust clothing as needed to prevent sweating.

# January Troop Guide: Cold Weather Camping



## Week 2: Food is Fuel

- Before the meeting, ask families to purchase one dehydrated backpacking meal. Instruct Scouts to read the preparation instructions on the packet and prepare the meal.
- Begin the meeting by having each Scout discuss what type of meal he/she purchased and how the preparation went.
- Ask them to discuss how preparation would be different on a campout. Ask Scouts to share ideas on types of high-calorie winter camping foods that can be eaten without cooking, such as homemade granola bars or gorp.
  - Lead Scouts in a demonstration of a homemade winter camping food.
- Review methods of gourmet cooking with Dutch ovens. Discuss the challenges that using a Dutch oven in colder temperatures and/or snow may present.

## Week 3: Snow Shelters

- Before the meeting, ask families to get a small amount of sand or a similar material, if available, to use for building miniature snow shelter models. Explain that Scouts will need an area where they can use sand and water.
- Begin the meeting by showing how trench shelters are made, using the information found at <https://www.instructables.com/Trench-Shelter/>. Discuss safety considerations.
- Show the video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOJQPz1s-1c> to show how snow caves are made. Discuss safety considerations.
- Show the videos found at the links below to show how igloos are made, and then discuss safety considerations.
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1aSL9La5ivo>.
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vdo840i922o>.
- Have Scouts practice building miniature shelters with wet sand.

# January Troop Guide: Cold Weather Camping

## Week 4: Safety & Rescues

- Using the Scouts BSA Handbook or Scouting.org, have Scouts discuss hypothermia and how to treat it.
  - Practice techniques as appropriate.
- Have Scouts discuss and learn how to perform ice rescues. Encourage families to practice using the method shown in this video - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plTSz7in\\_Xk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plTSz7in_Xk)
- Have Scouts discuss and learn what to do in case of an avalanche.
- Discuss when the risk of avalanche is greatest.

## NOW PLAN YOUR COLD WEATHER CAMPOUT!



Now that your troop has reviewed the basics of Cold Weather Camping, try planning a campout and see what additional considerations need to be made. Make sure to utilize the many Scouting resources available for planning a successful outing!

### *January Council Activities*

#### Outdoor Experience:

- At all GSLAC Camp properties.
- Overnight camping by family or unit or day passes available at some properties.
- Additional day activities such as STEM, horseback riding, & fishing at select properties.
- Register: <https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/>

#### University of Scouting

- Day-long event that offers the widest variety of training opportunities, in all program areas, all in one place!
- Learn more and register @ <https://stlbsa.org/training/university-of-scouting/>

#### Merit Badge Workshops:

- Outdoor sessions hosted with social distancing at various GSLAC Camp properties.
- Register and find the full schedule here:  
<https://stlbsa.org/achievement/advancement/merit-badge-skill-centers/>.

# February Troop Guide: Sustainability



## *This month, Scouts will learn:*

- Develop a vocabulary that allows Scouts to talk about and understand various aspects of sustainability.
- Teach Scouts about the triple bottom line of sustainability.
- Encourage Scouts to develop a personal sustainability mindset incorporating all aspects of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Encourage Scouts to look at developing a lifetime commitment to sustainability in their personal activities and lifestyles.
- Help Scouts discover how sustainable the products they use every day are.
- Inspire Scouts to get involved in making a difference in their communities.

## Week 1: The Three R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle)

- Have Scouts explore the basics of recycling and what types of materials can be recycled.
- Ask Scouts to brainstorm ways people can reduce, reuse, and recycle at home, at school, and in religious and community organizations. Ask them to think creatively with how the troop can reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- Have Scouts discuss how the three R's relate to philanthropy.
- Have Scouts discuss why it is important for the community as a whole to work together to incorporate the three R's into everyday activities.
- With their parent's permission, have Scouts use the internet to find local electronic recycling resources. Have Scouts discuss the uniqueness of the materials in some electronics and why care must be taken when recycling them.

**RECOMMENDATION: HAVE SCOUTS WORK WITH A SUSTAINABILITY MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR TO COMPLIMENT THE TOPICS COVERED IN THE WEEKLY MEETINGS.**



# February Troop Guide: Sustainability

## Week 2: Sustainable Energy

- In preparation for the meeting, ask Scouts to bring various household utility bills (electric, gas, etc.).
- Begin the meeting by having Scouts review their household's utility bills and see what is contained in each, including taxes, fees, and credits.
- If possible, compare usage levels on a month-by-month basis and discuss the reasons for the differences.
- Discuss ways to realistically reduce usage levels for each utility. See [Sustainability merit badge Energy requirement 2B](#).
- Discuss the term "miles per gallon" and how it affects energy consumption.
- Discuss the pros and cons of public transportation versus personal vehicles versus walking, biking, etc.
- Discuss the values of various fuels in use for transportation. If possible, compare the efficiency levels of several vehicles used by Scouts' families and discuss ways to improve these levels. See [Sustainability merit badge Energy requirement 2C](#).
- Introduce the term "carbon footprint."
- Discuss the sustainability of various energy sources, such as fossil fuels, solar, wind, geothermal, nuclear, hydro, etc.
- Discuss the pros and cons of different energy sources and how their usage may affect the environment and your personal lifestyle.
- Ask Scouts to come up with a list of five to 10 ways they can realistically reduce their carbon footprints. See [Sustainability merit badge Energy requirement 2A](#).



# February Troop Guide: Sustainability

## Week 3: The Triple Bottom Line

- Discuss the people aspect of the triple bottom line and how sustainable solutions must take into account opportunities in education, community development, and quality of life for the world's people.
- Discuss how sustainable practices can both benefit and harm people. Examine how that harm could be minimized.
- Discuss the prosperity aspect of the triple bottom line and how sustainable solutions must be economically feasible to implement and have a positive financial effect on all communities that they impact.
- Discuss how Scouts and their families can increase their own prosperity while living sustainably. Examine barriers to being prosperous and sustainable at the same time.
- Discuss the planet aspect of the triple bottom line and how sustainable solutions must promote stewardship of the earth's limited natural resources. Discuss how the BSA or your chartered organization can improve the management of the earth's natural resources. Explore how individual Scouts can take part in these efforts.

## ***Check out these Eagle Projects that used recycled materials!***



Recycled tires to create dog beds



Recycled thousands of plastic bags



Built bridge with recycled materials



Built replacement bridge for fish hatchery

# February Troop Guide: Sustainability

## Week 4: Stewardship of Our Natural Resources

- Discuss being a doer. Share the list found [here](#) with Scouts and have each recite the way the Scout law applies to Sustainability.
- Have each Scout write a personal definition of sustainability. Ask several to share with the group.
- Discuss ways each Scout can become a doer.
- Develop a list of 10 realistic ways to be a doer of sustainability as a young person.
- Plan a future activity where Scouts can truly do a multitude of good deeds.
- Discuss being a donor and how young people who have limited financial resources can be donors.
- Develop lists of ways individuals, Scout families, and businesses/governmental agencies can be donors.
- Discuss how each Scout can assist with a local sustainability fundraising event.
- Discuss being a practitioner.
- Discuss an ethical dilemma related to sustainability. Have the Scouts select one or two situations from the news and work through these steps: learn, present, discuss, reverse, and consensus.

## *February Council Activities*

### **Outdoor Experience:**

- At all GSLAC Camp properties.
- Overnight camping by family or unit or day passes available at some properties.
- Additional day activities such as STEM, horseback riding, & fishing at select properties.
- Register: <https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/>

### **Merit Badge Workshops:**

- Outdoor sessions hosted with social distancing at various GSLAC Camp properties.
- Register and find the full schedule here:  
<https://stlbsa.org/achievement/advancement/merit-badge-skill-centers/>.

# March Troop Guide: Fitness & Nutrition

## *This month, Scouts will:*

- Define the importance of fitness.
- Teach Scouts about good nutrition.
- Explain how wellness is related to fitness.
- Emphasize the dangers of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco.
- Teach positive ways to reduce stress.
- Show Scouts how to work toward lifetime fitness.



## Week 1: Getting into Shape

- Prior to the meeting, recruit a Scout or Scouts to review the points below and be prepared to give demonstrations on the proper techniques.
- Learn the proper techniques and advancement requirements for the following exercises:
  - Strength: push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, and squats
  - Flexibility: hurdler's stretch, sit and reach
  - Endurance: standing long jump, 1/4-mile run or walk, 9-minute or 1-mile run or walk
- For each of the exercises above, have Scouts explain which areas of the body are being used.
- instruct Scouts to Record their best in the following tests:
  - Pushups (Record the number done correctly in 60 seconds.)
  - Situps or curl-ups (Record the number done correctly in 60 seconds.)
  - Back-saver sit-and-reach (Record the distance stretched.)
  - 1-mile walk/run (Record the time.)
- Develop and describe a plan for improvement in each of the activities listed in Tenderfoot requirement 6a. Keep track of your activity for at least 30 days.



## *Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 1:*

- Tenderfoot 6a, b

# March Troop Guide: Fitness & Nutrition

## Week 2: Nutrition & Diet

- Have each Scout list what they ate for the last two days. Evaluate how that fits into the MyPlate concept and whether it represents a balanced diet.
- Have each Scout bring a food label and explain the information that is found on it.
- Compare the calories of similar products.
- Using the Scout Handbook and/or Personal Fitness merit badge pamphlet, discuss how to lose weight and what type of smartphone apps are available to assist with nutrition.
- Challenge Scouts to keep track of the foods they eat with an online diet tracker.
- Discuss how to set nutrition goals and have Scouts develop their own. Have Scouts track their goals for one month
- Help plan a menu for one of the above campouts that includes at least one breakfast, one lunch, and one dinner, and that requires cooking at least two of the meals. Tell how the menu includes the foods from MyPlate or the current USDA nutritional model and how it meets nutritional needs for the planned activity or campout.
- Using the menu planned in First Class requirement 2a, make a list showing a budget and the food amounts needed to feed three or more youth.



### *Requirements fully or partially covered during Week 2:*

- First Class 2a, b



# March Troop Guide: Fitness & Nutrition

## Week 3: Stress Management & Relaxation

- Begin the meeting by having Scouts do 2-3 stretches of their choice. Follow that with having Scouts take several deep breaths.
- Explain the concept of Psychological First Aid. Have Scouts give examples of times that they feel stressed.
- Have Scouts share the different ways they cope with stress. If not already shared, give some of these examples:
  - Breathing exercises
  - Meditation
  - Soothing music
  - Physical activity
  - More ideas - <https://scoutingmagazine.org/2013/08/keep-your-cool-using-these-stress-busting-techniques/>



## Week 4: Get Out & Play

- Review the requirements for the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge. Find out how your Scouts could take advantage of this opportunity to get more fit.
- Have Scouts give examples of sports they have played in the last nine months. What additional safety precautions were taken to minimize the risk of spreading disease?
- With their parent's permission, encourage Scouts to play a sport as a way to be active. This could be as simple as playing basketball with a family member, or joining a sanctioned team.
- Have Scouts give an update on their progress with their 30-day fitness plan developed during week 1. Ask them to share successes and challenges, and how they overcame these challenges.



# March Troop Guide: Fitness & Nutrition

## *March Council Activities*

### Outdoor Experience:

- At all GSLAC Camp properties.
- Overnight camping by family or unit or day passes available at some properties.
- Additional day activities such as STEM, horseback riding, & fishing at select properties.
- Register: <https://stlbsa.org/2020FallOutdoorExperiences/>

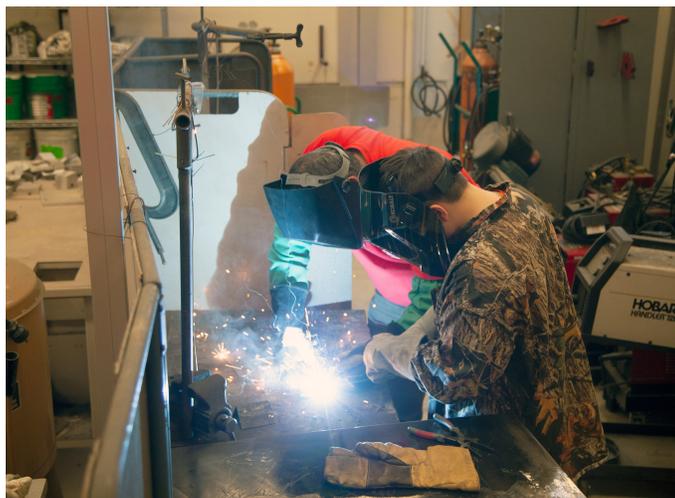
### Certified Angling Instructor Training

- Join us for a weekend workshop version of the new Fishing Camp School training and have the opportunity to earn the BSA Certified Angling Instructor recognition!
- Learn more and register @ <https://stlbsa.org/training/certified-angling-instructor/>

### Merit Badge Workshops:

- Outdoor sessions hosted with social distancing at various GSLAC Camp properties.
- Register and find the full schedule here:  
<https://stlbsa.org/achievement/advancement/merit-badge-skill-centers/>.

## **HAVE YOU REGISTERED FOR** **SUMMER CAMP???**





# Service Opportunities & Eagle Projects

In a time where people need more help than ever, finding safe opportunities to serve the community is challenging. Many organizations will need to make special arrangements for your group or may not be accepting volunteers at all. Consider the safe service opportunities below to keep your Scouts engaged with their communities.

## *Safe ways to serve your community:*

- Write letters to healthcare workers or nursing home residents.
- Clean up litter at a park, stream, or public property.
- Partner with a school to provide virtual tutoring to younger kids.
- Provide a virtual outdoor experience for nursing home residents.
- Make and donate face masks to your local hospital.
- Work with your local Meals on Wheels to deliver food to vulnerable seniors.
- Partner with your school to deliver meals to youth in need.
- Participate in Scouting For Food (register [here](#)).
- Connect with organizations to volunteer from home (search by zip code [here](#)).

## Eagle Project Guidance:

Need an idea for an Eagle Scout project? The [Eagle Project Idea Generator](#) offers a decision-tree approach for giving you a few project ideas to help you develop your own project. It is not intended to take the work out of identifying a project for you; instead, these are only **ideas of what might be done**.

Plus, checkout this [cool article](#) about a Scout that developed his project to provide face coverings to a local senior center.

Click [here](#) for information on the COVID-19 extension for earning Eagle.



# Additional Resources

Utilize the links below to stay up-to-date on safety guidelines, National BSA policies, and additional ideas for safe Scouting activities.



## Safety & Policy Guidance

### CDC Guidance for Parents:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/children.html>

### CDC General COVID-19 Prevention Guidance:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

### Missouri COVID-19 Regulations:

<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthconditions/diseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/statewide-orders.php>

### Illinois COVID-19 Policies:

<https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/>

### St. Louis City & County Regulations:

[https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/health/communicable-disease/covid-19/index.cfm#CP\\_JUMP\\_808128](https://www.stlouis-mo.gov/government/departments/health/communicable-disease/covid-19/index.cfm#CP_JUMP_808128)

### National BSA COVID-19 Policies and Advancement Revisions:

<https://www.scouting.org/coronavirus/covid-19-faq/>

## Additional Scouting Ideas

### ScoutShare Remote Scouting Ideas:

<http://scoutshare.org/Resources/Articles/category/remote-scouting>

### General Troop Resources:

<https://troopresources.scouting.org/>

### Additional Service Ideas:

<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2020/03/18/good-turns-during-the-coronavirus-acts-of-scouting-service-you-can-do-from-home/>

<https://scoutermom.com/21913/service-projects-while-social-distancing/>



# Greater St. Louis Area Council, BSA

*Scouting. Get ready for the adventure of your lifetime.*

For over one hundred years, the Boy Scouts of America has prepared young people for life through some of the most outstanding leadership and growth programs available nationally. Whether it's camping, hiking, community outreach or building remote controlled robots, Scouting offers exciting programs designed to inspire, build character and instill the values that boys and girls need to succeed today.

We offer programs for girls and boys ages 6-21. Scouting programs foster and strengthen self-confidence, ethics, respect for others, academic skills, and leadership abilities that stay with them their entire lives.

The Greater St. Louis Area Council, one of the largest in the Boy Scouts of America, has more than 66,000 members and nearly 15,000 adult volunteers. They come from 51 different counties in the Southeast Missouri, Southern Illinois and St. Louis Metropolitan areas.

The council, headquartered in St. Louis, serves these areas with offices located in St. Louis, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, Belleville, Illinois, Decatur Illinois, and Herrin, Illinois.

Scouting units in the Greater St. Louis area Council are chartered by over 1,000 different community groups that include civic, non-profit, religious, educational and business organizations throughout the region.

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[Give](#)