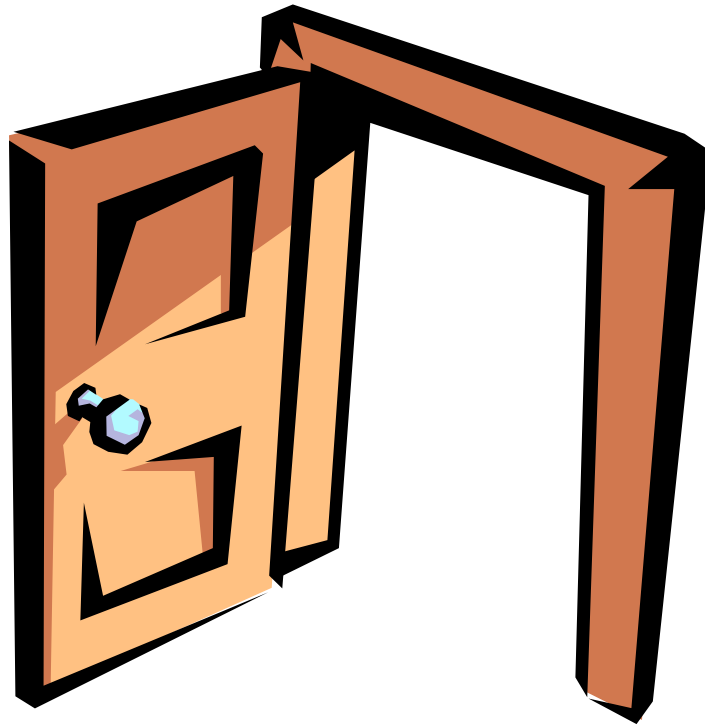


# TROOP OPEN HOUSE GUIDE



September, 2009

Dear Scoutmasters:

When our forefathers began their pioneering efforts in America, settlements frequently had a “House Warmin’” for all new folks. New folks in today’s communities don’t always get this type of welcome. Today’s families are still looking for ways to share in the “good things of life” – things like Boy Scouting! Why not have a “House Warmin’” for new boys!

Please, for all the boys who just became old enough, or just moved into your area – invite them to join your troop. This “House Warmin’ Guidebook is a good outline to help you plan a great way to invite newcomers to your troop.

Remember, a young man can’t receive the positive benefits of the Scouting program until he joins a Boy Scout Troop that is committed to providing a quality program for him. We are counting on you to recruit new youth to your Troop, and to give them the opportunity to experience the best that Scouting has to offer. If there is anything I can do to facilitate this process, let me know.

Yours in Scouting,

Charles Flowers  
Director of Field Service  
Greater Pittsburgh Council, B.S.A.

## HOW TO PLAN & CARRY OUT AN OPEN HOUSE IN YOUR TROOP

1. Set the time, date, and place.
2. Select the right leadership
3. Plan the program (see enclosed)
4. Order supplies
5. Promote the date and follow-up
6. Report results to council the day following your Open House

### **Step 1 SET TIME, DATE, and PLACE**

Open Houses are being set by Scout Troops throughout the Council in September or October. You pick the time that is convenient for your Troop and community. As soon as possible after the first of September is encouraged.

The place should be determined by the program you select to carry out (i.e. a model Troop meeting should be held at your normal meeting location, a skill-o-ree or scout rama would be best at a local park or some other open area.) A Saturday afternoon, for example, would allow for outdoor activities, then perhaps a move inside for the dinner and program.

Step 3 contains a suggested program outline you may want to consider. Ultimately, you decide what's best for your Troop Open House.

After you make the preliminary plans, begin promoting the event by requesting flyers from the Scout Service Center to deliver to the middle school aged boys in your local churches, Middle Schools, and Community Centers.

### **Step 2 SELECTION OF LEADERSHIP**

There is a person on your Troop Committee now, or among the parents of boys in your troop, who is "The Right Person" to give leadership to your troop's House Warmin' efforts.

That person is enthusiastic, vigorous, a natural "organizer", a "mover". It may be the mom of one of your scouts, who is a leader in other community affairs, or a man or woman who is a business leader, organizing and leading people every day.

Selecting the right chairman is perhaps the single most important decision to be made!!! The chairman needs to recruit and give leadership to whatever size committee he

or she feels necessary to carry out your Troop Open House in the style you wish. A minimum suggested might be:

- Chairman- recruit, plan and carry out the Open House.
- Program – responsible to line up all ceremonies and programs.
- Promotions – attendance of all troop families, new member families, radio and newspaper coverage.
- Dinner and Physical Arrangements – coordinate covered dish dinner, or whatever your troop decides, and arrange for place and facilities.

### **Step 3 and 4            PLAN PROGRAM & ORDER SUPPLIES**

PREOPENING            While the audience gathers, they may participate in activities such as: Scout Skills-knot tying, leaf identification, flint & steel, making rope, etc.

DINNER                 Covered dish, chicken barbecue, spaghetti or whatever you Decide on.

OPENING                \_\_\_\_\_ Patrol (to underscore our American Heritage maybe local frontier history, patriotic).

WELCOME                \_\_\_\_\_ (Head of Chartered Organization)

OUR TROOP             \_\_\_\_\_ (Scoutmaster)

- Purpose of Scouting
- How Scouting works (describe Troop and Patrol organization, the need for adult volunteer leadership, uniforms, registration fees, Boys/ Life magazine, etc.)
- Our Specific Troop Operations (Discuss the program calendar for the year, meeting times and places, budget)
- Camp next summer

COURT OF HONOR     Presentation of Badges and Awards

SLIDE SHOW            Pictorial history of Troop or of Summer Camp

INVITATION             Scoutmaster issues invitation to boys and parents to join your Troop. Gives applications to join and the opportunity to sign up and be assigned into a patrol.

CLOSING CEREMONY   \_\_\_\_\_ Patrol (same who did the opening)

#### **REFRESHMENTS AND NEW MEMBER SIGN-UP**

Note: See listing of materials and supplies in this guidebook and select the items you wish for your Troop Open House.

## **Step 5            PROMOTION PLANNING**

Here are some ideas to stimulate your creativity:

### **1. Who's a comin'??**

Your invitation list might include:

- Prospective new troop members and their families
- Webelos Scouts
- The Head of your charter organization and Charter Organization Rep.
- Your own troop leaders, committee and families
- Former troop members (alumni)
- Local guests of your choosing

Make an invitational list complete with names, addresses, and phone numbers to send out invitations and to use when following up.

### **2. Promotion Chairman selects and recruits, as many others to help as needed to carry out total plan.**

### **3. Send invitation letters (sample letter on following page)**

### **4. New Member Recruiting Plans**

- Survey available Scout-age boys in your area school (see enclosed "how to")
- Spread the word. Ask her to give you information on new families who have scout-age boys, so you can invite them. This could be a Year Round-UP recruiting technique for your troop.
- The Greater Pittsburgh Council's fall Round-Up recognition and incentives also apply to this program. Contact your commissioner or District Executive.
- Recruiting posters are available. They should be placed in area schools, churches, and other places where prospective new members and/or their families may see them.
- Invitation flyers are available per request from the Scout Service Center. Be prepared with the date, location, and time of your Open House, as well as the contact person's name and phone number.
- Local Newspapers-before your Open House deliver a news release to your communities local newspaper, announcing your Open House and what your program plans are. Follow-up with another story, after your Open House with pictures, etc.
- TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UP is very important. After all invitations and letters have been mailed, call everyone to confirm attendance and participation.

This is just the beginning – Now modify and/or add your committee's ideas to this list.

**Sample Invitation Letter** (Utilize letterhead of Chartered Organization or your Troop)

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

You and your family are cordially invited to participate in an old fashioned Open House Boy Scout style to be conducted by the Scouts and leaders of Troop \_\_\_\_\_, chartered to \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.

(Organization)

(City)

The fun and adventure will begin at \_\_\_\_\_ p.m. at \_\_\_\_\_.

(Location)

Our purpose (as in pioneer days) is to invite NEW FAMILIES in our community to join in the fun and fellowship of our Scout Troop, and we'd appreciate YOUR HELP by being there to help us say, "Howdy!"

Our dinner plans are \_\_\_\_\_ and will be followed by a fine Scouting program, concluding with refreshments and an invitation to join, extended to our new folks.

Please help out by filling in and mailing the enclosed reply card today.

Sincerely yours,

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Charter Organization

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scoutmaster

\_\_\_\_\_  
Open House Chairman

**SAMPLE REPLY POST CARD**

House Committee \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Troop \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ We will attend the Open House. There will be \_\_\_\_\_ persons in our group.

\_\_\_\_\_ Sorry, we can not attend.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

## **Step 6            How to conduct a Student Interest Survey**

Note: Some schools may already have this completed information. Contact your unit's commissioner or your District Executive to see if completed surveys are available.

1. The promotion chairman (or assigned adult) calls the local School principal to confirm that they will in fact allow you to collect student surveys. Simply say, "May I see you for about 10 minutes at your earliest convenience to get your thought on an important community matter? Don't try to explain the whole thing over the phone.
2. Make the visit with the Principal and Briefly:
  - Tell about your Boy Scout Troop
  - Tell when, where, why, etc. of the Open House program
  - Explain that the sole purpose is to invite eligible Scout age-boys and their families to join your troop.
  - Ask permission to (personally) conduct the suggested survey in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes.
3. Conduct the Survey-just distribute forms and ask that they complete and pass in after they are done:
  - Don't ask how many would like to join Boy Scouts
  - Do ask how many like to hike, camp, fish, swim, etc.
  - Then say, "Well, that is what we do in Boy Scout Troop \_\_\_\_\_. Issue their invitation to adventure flyer.
  - Tell them about your troop Open House and give all boys a flyer to take home and show their parents (don't discriminate among those who showed interest and those that don't)