

To: Parents of T11 Scouts
From: Mark Dukas
Date: 8/20/08
Re: My Top 11 Reasons Why You Should Become an ASM

I have been asked to quickly convey to you my personalized Top 11 reasons why you should consider becoming an ASM (Assistant Scoutmaster) in Troop 11. Primarily I am going to address WHY you should do it, at the end of this message I will provide some info on HOW to do it also.

1. **GREAT TRAINING**. The Boy Scouts of America has a terrific training program that covers a wide variety of topics from the most basic outdoor skills to snow camping, from basics of the scouting program to advanced leadership skills. Even if you are not Davy Crockett or Paul Bunyan (yet) you can be trained to be comfortable and productive as an adult leader in the Scouting program.

2. **GREAT BUDDIES**. The other adults in the Scouting program are terrific. We have a great group in Troop 11, plus scouting is a very active program in Piedmont, with many terrific Piedmonters involved in various aspects of the program. And we interact with Scouters from neighboring councils, other parts of the U.S. and internationally too (i.e. World Jamboree for example). As you get to know them and make friends you will find that your network of scouting buddies is an important addition to your life and the enjoyment of living in our community.

3. **GRASS ROOTS GIVING**. Many worthwhile organizations may want you to write them a check, but I find that giving my time is more satisfying and rewarding. Getting involved at the grass roots level (literally grass-roots!) means you are part of the scouting program where the scouts are directly involved in learning, growing, experiencing and benefiting directly from the program.

4. **TIMELESS VALUES**. Scouting is not just a camping program. It is explicitly a character-building program for our local youth. To me that is about as important and worthwhile an undertaking as there can be. It is also something that the schools and many other programs do not consider to be part of their charter. And scouting is structured as a grass-roots, local, volunteer program, as mentioned above, which, in my view, maximizes its impact and relevance to its participants and the local community.

5. **GREAT OUTDOORS**. If you enjoy spending time in the Great Outdoors, we are fortunate to live among some of the "Greatest" outdoors and some of the most beautiful natural areas in the United States. Every month our troop is planning a trip to some interesting and beautiful place, such as Yosemite, the Sierras, Pt. Reyes, the Pinnacles and so forth.

6. **GET TO KNOW OUR SCOUTS**. Being in the scouting program may not make you an expert in human psychology, but it will introduce you to a range of boys and give you a broader sense of what is normal, how they function, how they go about tasks and challenges. It may help you put your own kid(s) into a broader context. The seven years from 6th grade through 12th grade are an amazing period of change, growth and development and, of course, adolescence is often challenging. If scouting can help you understand this even a little better, it will be to your benefit. In addition, you will get to know not just your son's friends and peers, but also a broader cross-section of young men in our community, of different ages, personalities and backgrounds.

7. **SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES**. Adults in the Scouting program ("Scouters") get to go to some cool places that scouting owns and operates, such as backpacking at Philmont in New Mexico, sailing and

snorkeling at SeaBase in Florida, camping at Camp Cherry Valley on Catalina Island and so on. These places are only open to scouts. Also there are special opportunities that Scouters can be part of, such as the upcoming National Jamboree (in 2010, it is the 100th anniversary of Scouting!), or the next World Jamboree (in Sweden!).

8. **ITS FUN**. Scouting is "Fun with a Purpose", but it is all about the fun. Camping, hiking, making new friends, learning skills, having new experiences, involvement in your community is truly fun.

9. **ITS FLEXIBLE**. The time commitment is flexible. Everyone is busy and has many other time commitments. Some people can't do weekends; some people can't do the Fall; that is OK. In our troop we try to have deep leadership so that different people can contribute how and when it best works for them.

10. **IT HELPS YOUR OWN SCOUT**. On the one hand, being a Scouter does not mean you are doing things specifically with your own son. But it is an opportunity to share experiences with you son, to go places and do things sort of together (even if you are in a bigger group). And prior experience shows that many of the scouts who stay in the program longest and get the most out of it, also have parents who are somehow involved in the program as well.

11. **WE NEED YOU**. Each year a crop of scouts graduates from the program and usually their parents move on to other roles in Scouting. We love to have their continuing involvement and participation, but as they move on to other roles, we need to replenish the ranks with young, enthusiastic, fit and fresh new Scouters. This last year we had 12 seniors in Troop 11 graduate and more than half of them have parents who have contributed actively as ASMs for Troop 11 and/or volunteers for Scouting in Piedmont. So, we need parents of younger scouts to step up to replace the 6 Scouters who are graduating. And don't wait too long to decide to get involved. The seven years of your son's scouting career go by very quickly, we recommend that you take a year or two to get trained, dip your toe into scouting and then a couple of years of increased participation and then, before you know it, you scout will be graduating high school. When to begin? Consider the age old question, "If not now, when?"

So that is WHY you should become an ASM, here then is HOW to do the ASM TRAINING. There are 3 parts to the training:

1. On-Line Training: Youth Protection & Fast Start. You can do these modules online at your own pace and your own time. Each takes less than 1 hour.
2. Scoutmaster Training Part 1, ("the classroom phase"). It is a one day classroom program with a series of different modules. It will be offered on Sunday Sept. 21 in the Piedmont Council office.
3. Introduction to Outdoor Skills for Adult Leaders ("the outdoor phase"). This is a one weekend overnight campout (all day Saturday and half of Sunday). It will be offered at Chabot Regional Park Oct. 25-26.

You need to complete all 3 "classes" to be a trained ASM.

We have posting information about ASM training on the T11 website (www.piedmonttroop11.org) on a page called "Becoming an Adult Leader". These Fall training dates are coming up very soon. So if you are ready to jump into the water, let me know or let Mary Carter know ASAP. Thanks!