

# Family Program Questions and Answers

## DECISION AND RATIONALE

### Q. What decision did the BSA make regarding girls' involvement in the organization?

The Boy Scouts of America's Board of Directors unanimously approved to welcome girls into its iconic Cub Scout program and to deliver a Scouting program for older girls that will enable them to advance and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

It is important to note that the BSA did not decide to make the Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting programs co-ed; instead, the organization has introduced a unique model that builds on the benefits of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Starting in 2018 (exact start date yet to be confirmed), families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts. Chartered partner organizations may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens or remain an all-boy pack. Cub Scout dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls.

Using the same curriculum as the Boy Scouts program, the organization will also deliver a new program for older girls, which will be announced in 2018 and projected to be available in 2019 (with a more specific start date to be determined soon), that will enable them to earn the Eagle Scout rank. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

### Q. What do we know about the changing needs of today's families?

The BSA is not only listening to our Scouting families, but also to those that haven't joined the program. We understand that families today are busier and more diverse than ever.

- Most are dual-earners.
- There are more single-parent households than in previous decades.
- Many underserved communities, including fastest-growing Hispanic and Asian communities, prefer to participate in activities as a family.
- And, all families have less free time. More than one-third of parents feel they spend too little free time with their kids, and millennial parents are desperate to spend more time interacting with their kids.

### Q. Is this change a result of the BSA's declining membership numbers?

No. The BSA has experienced renewed interest in Scouting, and we believe that is largely in response to program innovation and a more thorough understanding of what families want and need when it comes to extracurricular activities. In fact, recent surveys of parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

Following an evaluation of what families and young people want and need when it comes to extracurricular activities and Scouting, the BSA welcomes girls into expanded programs from Cub Scouts to the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

### Q. Is this change a departure from the BSA's core mission and values?

No. In fact, this aligns with our mission and values. After all, the values of Scouting as detailed in the 12 points of the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – are relevant and important for both young men and women.

Our mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. To achieve our mission, we create innovative programs and evolve existing ones that respond to the needs of today's families and deliver them through dedicated volunteers in communities across the nation.

### Q. What research did the BSA conduct that informed this decision?

To inform this decision, the Boy Scouts of America conducted extensive research. The BSA also evaluated input from thousands of volunteers who participated in the nationwide family listening sessions.

The results were overwhelmingly positive and supported the decision to welcome girls into Cub Scouts and provide a path to earn the Eagle Scout rank. The research found that parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

The BSA also surveyed young girls and found that 90 percent of girls age 11-18 are interested in joining the BSA's programs.

Education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed the relevance of the program for young women.

#### Q. Are BSA programs relevant for girls?

Yes. On average, more than 90 percent of Scouting families and leaders believe the BSA programs are relevant to both boys and girls. What's more, education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed the relevance of the program for young women.

#### Q. Why didn't the BSA partner with the Girl Scouts or another organization to serve girls?

The BSA had several conversations with other youth-serving organizations, but found through extensive research and conversations with parents that there is a need and an interest to welcome girls to our existing programs. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose the program that is best for their family.

What's more, the BSA has been providing programs to girls since 1971 when we extended our Exploring program to young women. Girls also participate in our Venturing, Sea Scouts and STEM Scouts programs.

#### Q. How are the BSA programs different from what girls would experience with Girl Scouts?

BSA programs provide character-and leadership-building experiences that give young people a solid foundation for their futures. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose what program is best for their family.

#### Q. Why are you just now allowing girls into the Boy Scouts?

The BSA's decision to welcome girls into the Cub Scout program and to offer a program for older girls comes from input we have received from our Scouting families, as well as prospective Scouting families. We understand that families today are busier and more diverse than ever. The BSA believes we owe it to families to structure our program offerings in a way that fits into their busy lives to deliver character development and values-based leadership training that Scouting promises.

It is important to underscore that the BSA has provided programming to young women and young men for many years through Sea Scouts, STEM Scouts, Exploring and Venturing.

- STEM Scouts: 45% of participants are girls/young women, 55% are boys/young men
- Exploring: 39% of participants are girls/young women, 61% are boys/young men
- Venturing: 23% of participants are girls/young women, 77% are boys/young men
- Sea Scouts: 40% of participants are girls/young women, 60% are boys/young men

#### Q. Why is the BSA recommending single-gender units instead of a co-ed model?

The leadership of the BSA determined that the best way to welcome girls to serve today's families was to offer a unique model that builds on the proven benefits of our single-gender program, while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.