

Youth Programs in the Coast Guard Auxiliary

By Nick G. Tarlson - Branch Chief for Youth Partners

It is more important than ever for us to engage America's youth in our Coast Guard Auxiliary missions. This short tutorial will assist you in understanding and participating in our Youth Programs Initiative. For more information on any of these matters, see the Recreational Boating Safety (RBS) AuxBWiki at auxb-deptwiki.cgaux.org/. As with any Auxiliary program, be sure to work through your chain of leadership and management as local programs will vary based on the priorities and policies of each unit.

Two of the largest youth groups in the country are the Boy Scouting programs and the Sea Cadets. These organizations operate a little differently from one another. There are many other youth programs in the country, such as Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA, and others. Additionally, every school or college provides additional potential for the Auxiliary to serve youth and promote our programs. If you would like to assist in advancing our relationships with any of these organizations, contact Nick Tarlson at nick@tarlson.com or 415-956-5700.

To facilitate timely and targeted communication, we have established two email lists. "Aux-Scout" is a list specifically designed for communication among our members who are interested in programs we have developed for use with the Boy Scouts of America.

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"Aux-Sea-Cadet" is a list for our members involved with or interested in working with Sea Cadets. You can register with either list at bdept.cgaux.org/mailman/listinfo. You are encouraged to share your questions and successes in youth programs, within the bounds of email list etiquette, i.e., please take follow up discussions "off list" when appropriate.

Youth Protection

Working with youth provides special challenges. To ensure our success in this area, we have established simple guidelines for how youth programs should be implemented, including additional training for Auxiliar-

ists. Each member involved in Youth Programs should complete the online BSA Youth Protection training at myscouting.scouting.org. The online training takes less than an hour, and in the process you will establish a user name and password of which you should keep track. The unique user name you establish will allow organizers to verify that you have taken the training when organizing youth program events.

We are asking those involved in non-BSA youth programs to take the same training, for their and our own protection. Each level of youth has a different training, so you should take the training appropriate to the level of youth with whom you plan to work. If you plan to work with Sea Scouts and Sea Cadets in the shore side and underway training program, or if you are not certain which training to take, you should take the Venturing Leader Youth Protection Training.

Boy Scouts of America (BSA)

BSA serves youth from first grade to young adult age, starting with the familiar Cub Scout and Boy Scout learning and adventure programs for boys. Starting with 14 year olds (or 13 years of age and completed eighth grade), the BSA programs are co-educational, and include Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Exploring, a career interest program. In February 2009, the Coast Guard Auxiliary entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Boy Scouts of America. Based on this MOA our members are authorized to provide education, training, and other support to the Boy Scouts. This includes offering public education programs to Scout groups of all ages and performing vessel safety checks on Scout vessels.

If you know people who are involved in any of these programs, you can approach them directly with the ideas found on the wiki site. If not, you can contact the local BSA council: www.scouting.org/LocalCouncilLocator.aspx, which will be able to put you in touch with local Scout units. Each council or district (smaller unit of organization within a council) has a "roundtable," a monthly meeting which involves many of the unit leaders in the area.

The local district roundtable will probably welcome a short presentation by an Auxiliarist on ways we can support Scouts. A powerpoint presentation suitable for this purpose is at AuxBWiki

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at auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php/Boy_Scouts_of_America#About_the_BSA.

Depending on your level of involvement with BSA, you might want to consider registering as a Merit Badge Counselor, which provides you with additional liability protection under the BSA insurance "umbrella." Each council has a different system for registering, so consult with your local council for details.

Public Education

Most of the BSA programs emphasize safety and environmental concerns, making them likely candidates for our public education programs. Cub Scouts are excellent candidates for the Boating Fun and Sea Partners programs. Boy Scouts are good candidates for the more advanced Waypoints program. There are many aquatics programs with which we can provide assistance, detailed on the wiki site identified above.

One of particular interest is the Motorboating Merit Badge, which requires knowledge of boating safety, navigation rules, boat handling and other curriculum of our basic boating courses (Boating Skills and Seamanship, Sailing Skills and Seamanship (SS&S), and Boating Safely). SS&S would also be of interest to youth aspiring to earn their Small Boat Sailing Merit Badge.

Adult Scout Leaders also require boating safety education. Under the BSA's Safe Boating Standards, an adult operator of any non-exempt boat (rowboat, paddlecraft or open sailboat) must take a boating safety class from the Auxiliary or similar organization www.seascout.org/for_leaders/safe_boating_standards.html.

Consider asking your local council to include an announcement in their monthly newsletter concerning your next basic boating class, mentioning that our members can sign off the youth on portions of their Motorboating and Small Boat Sailing merit badges, and can assist adult leaders in qualifying as boat operators under the Safe Boating Standards.

Vessel Safety Checks

Most BSA councils own and operate boats in connection with their summer camp programs. VSCs are an excellent way to provide the Council with additional assurance that these vessels are equipped and operated in a safe and legal manner. Camps usually have rangers who are responsible for the upkeep of the camps, including in some cases the watercraft. Camp staff will often have one or more work weekends, pre-



Ensign Cale Cooper (left) and Lt. J.g. Zach Brown, both from the Coast Guard Cutter Sherman, race cub scout created sail boats during the annual cub scout rain gutter regatta held aboard the Sherman Saturday, Feb. 12, 2011. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Levi Read

paring the camps for the busy summer season.

Sea Scouts have Sea Bases with similar facilities. Consider volunteering to augment the staff by assisting in organizing and providing VSCs for the watercraft. If the watercraft are registered, this may require some work in the council office in advance of visiting the camp.

Under the Safe Boating Standards (referenced above), each non-exempt vessel must have a vessel safety check each year. This includes most of the vessels operated by Sea Scouts. Consider assisting your local council or district in ensuring compliance with this important standard by offering VSCs. Sea Scouts often meet in groups at events called "regattas," that may provide you with an opportunity to perform VSCs on a number of boats on a given day.

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Paddlecraft

Scouts use a variety of Paddlecraft and other small boats, including canoes, kayaks, rowboats and sailboards. Consider offering the Paddlesports America class to a group of Scouts and Scouters from a local Scout unit, district or council. You could combine this with VSCs and issuance of "If Lost - Contact" stickers at a single event, using Scout watercraft as an instructional tool.

Public Affairs

Scouts have a number of activities where our members can perform effective outreach in the area of boating safety, marine environmental protection, and our youth programs. These include council or district roundtables, council recognition dinners, Scout-o-ramas, Scout Shows, Camporees, First Aid meets, and Jamborees.

Ask your council or district Scouters about opportunities in connection with these events. Consider inviting and/or partnering with local Scouts in connection with a local boat show, public safety booth, or National Safe Boating Week activity.

Sea Scouts

Sea Scouts is a BSA program that focuses on seamanship and boating, making it ideal for partnership with the Auxiliary. You can identify local Sea Scout Ships with whom you can partner at www.seascout.org/ships/. Sea Scouts has a traditional advancement program modeled on the Merchant Marine and Sea Services with four ranks: Apprentice, Ordinary (seaman), Able (bodied seaman), and Quartermaster. Each rank has a number of requirements that include skills in which our member training and operations personnel are proficient.

See the Guide to Shore Side and Underway Training for more information:

auxbdeptwiki.cgaux.org/index.php/Providing_Shoreside_and_Underway_Training_Opportunities_to_Sea_Cadets_%26_Sea_Scouts

US Naval Sea Cadets

In November, 2009, the Coast Guard Auxiliary entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

with the U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps, under which we agreed to provide similar kinds of support. Sea Cadets are trained in nautical skills such as knot tying and splicing, signaling, water safety and swimming, first aid, and even fire fighting. Cadets are instructed in military drill and discipline and are taught from a syllabus covering naval history to ship nomenclature. Our members are authorized to provide classroom, shore side, and underway training to Sea Cadets in each of these areas, as appropriate. See the Guide to Shore Side and Underway Training, referenced above, for more information.

Sea Cadets also tour ships and bases and participate in community events such as parades and fairs. They are encouraged to work with us in public safety booths at boat shows and other events. Consider inviting the local unit to assist in your next public affairs and/or National Safe Boating Week activity.

Identify local Sea Cadet units at: dolphin.seacadets.org/US_units/index_public.asp. For more information and support on our programs with Sea Cadets, contact Mike Fulgham at mofulgham@san.rn.com.

Community Service

Both Scouts and Sea Cadets have a long history and ongoing emphasis on community service activities. Consider partnering with a local unit for a local service project like a coastal cleanup, Veteran's hospital support, clothing or food drive or National Safe Boating Week activity. For more information, see the wiki site, referenced above.

Membership and Coast Guard Recruiting Potential

As you work with the young people, remember that when they turn 17 they are eligible for Coast Guard Auxiliary membership. This provides our members with the opportunity of enrolling members who are already fully trained and all but boat crew qualified. There is also an outstanding potential for these young people to develop an interest in joining the Coast Guard active duty, reserve, or Academy. Don't neglect the opportunity to provide an Academy Associate/Academy Introduction Mission presentation to each group regularly. In an era where our average membership age is advancing rapidly, youth programs provide an outstanding opportunity for us to revitalize our membership and increase our effectiveness in Coast Guard mission augmentation and support. •

