Welcome to Troop 4

Welcome to the world of Scouting. The purpose of this family guidebook is to introduce the Scout and his family to Boy Scout Troop 4, Pasadena. The new Scout and his parents should go through this booklet together. The Scouts, parents and adult leaders of Troop 4 hope for a truly rewarding and exciting experience as the new Scout advances through the ranks of our program.

In the pages that follow, we will share with you Troop 4's traditions, as well as useful information on uniforms, gear and where to get it, schedules, rules on Scout outings, and other practical things that will get you and your family off to a fast start in Scouting.

Who is Troop 4?

Troop 4 is one of the oldest chartered Boy Scout Troops in the Western United States. In June 2013 we celebrated 100 years of continuous operation with our sponsor, Westminster Presbyterian Church. Our Troop Room and other facilities are located in the church building, at 1757 North Lake Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91104. With 80 to 100 Scouts enrolled throughout the year, we are also one of the largest Troops in the Greater Los Angeles Council.

OUTDOOR ADVENTURE is our Troop's emphasis. We basecamp and backpack in mountains and deserts, snow ski, hike with snowshoes, surf on sand dunes, go deep sea fishing, bicycle, swim, paddle canoes, rappel rock walls, and ride whitewater rapids. Many of our Scouts will achieve 15 to 25 nights of camping within the first two years of our program. Through our varied activities, boys learn Scouting skills and ideals that carry forward into everyday living. Most importantly, they have FUN!

Troop 4 is a "boy run" organization, which is one of the basic tenants of the Boy Scouts of America. This means that the Troop operates through the elected leadership of its boys under the guidance of the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders. Our Troop's Scouting program generally is offered through the "Patrol Method" whereby boys are organized into Patrols of 8 to 12 Scouts. According to the Patrol Method, the Troop's outdoor adventure activities are planned by the individual Patrols, and the Patrols hike, eat, and camp as a unit.

A Program with a Purpose

For nearly a century, the Boy Scouts of America has been dedicated to developing character, instilling duty to God, citizenship, and patriotism; and promoting physical, mental, and moral fitness in the youth of the United States. By learning new skills and forming lasting friendships thought the BSA program, generations of Boy Scouts have grown up to become some of our nation's most outstanding leaders.

An Overview of Scouting

Delivering the promise of Scouting doesn't happen by chance. Scouts are organized into patrols – grouped by age and skill level – and they meet periodically as a Troop to further their experience in the Scouting program. The Boy Scout Troop is structured so that it is led by the youth members themselves, with guidance from adult leaders behind the scenes. As a Scout develops the necessary skills through participation in weekly meetings and outdoor experiences, he advances in Rank within the Troop.

Nuts and Bolts of Rank Advancement

During his scouting years, the Scout will advance through the ranks of Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle. The requirements for these ranks are clearly spelled out in the *BSA Handbook*; each Scout must have his own personal copy of the *Handbook* where his achievements will be recorded. The requirements for the ranks of Scout through First Class concentrate mainly on developing basic skills that will enable the Scout to be comfortable in the outdoors. The ranks of Star through Eagle develop the Scout's service and leadership skills. While a Scout may work on requirements for any rank in any order, the ranks may only be earned in succession. In other words, a Scout may have First Class requirements signed off before earning the rank of Second Class; however, he may not earn the rank of First Class until after he has earned the Second Class rank.

The Leaders of the Troop are responsible for providing opportunities for Scouts to learn, practice and demonstrate the required skills of rank advancement. The best place to deliver these opportunities is in the outdoors at our many outings. Each outing is designed to emphasize the development of one or more skills. Leaders are not responsible for seeing that advancement requirements are signed off; That is the responsibility of the individual Scout. Once the Scout feels that he has satisfied a requirement and can demonstrate it proficiently, it is up to the Scout to find an appropriate leader to sign off the requirement. Any trained adult leader in the Troop, other than the Scout's own parent, guardian or sibling, may sign off requirements. In addition, Scouts holding a rank of Star or higher may be called upon by the adult leaders to help with signing off on requirements up to the rank of First Class.

The final requirements of all ranks are to participate in a Scoutmaster's Conference and a Board of Review. Again, the Scout is responsible for requesting and attending both of these events. Typically, the Scoutmaster and Rank Advancement Chair will request that the Scout send an e-mail as a formal request for the conference or review.

Nuts and Bolts of Merit Badges

The Merit Badge Program was developed to promote several goals. The most obvious is to expose Scouts to a variety of different subjects with the goal of spurring an interest in future hobbies or even occupations. However, the Merit Badge Program is also designed to encourage Scouts to Interact with adults (Merit Badge Counselors) outside of the Troop. While many of the leaders in the Troop are Merit Badge Counselors, and they will occasionally provide merit badge classes during Troop meetings, Scouts should seek out other Merit Badge Counselors. The Scoutmaster and several other leaders have a list of counselors from the Council.

Scouts can start working on merit badges at any time; but until he has achieved the Frist Class Rank, he should concentrate on the basic Scouting skills requirements. In order to begin working on a merit badge, a Scout must first get a "Blue Card" from his Scoutmaster. This time is an opportunity for the Scoutmaster to help the Scout find a counselor, counsel the Scout on the appropriateness of the merit badge, or just track the Scout's goals and progress.

With the Blue Card in hand, the Scout can contact the counselor and setup meeting times. When meeting with a counselor the Scout must be in uniform and must be accompanies by either another Scout or his parents. The Scout continues to work with the counselor until all the requirements are met. At this time, the counselor will sign the Blue Card indicating that the Scout has completed all requirements for the merit badge.

The Blue Card serves as the record of the Scout's progress on the particular merit badge. The Blue Card has three parts: the "Application for Merit Badge", the "Applicant's Record" and the "Counselor's Record." Once the merit badge is completed, the counselor must sign the "Application for Merit Badge" and "Applicant's Record" portions of the Blue Card. The counselor should sear off and keep the "Counselor's Record", the remaining sections are turned over to the Scout.

At this point, the Scout must turn both of the remaining sections of the Blue Card into the Scoutmaster. Due to the number of Blue Cards that pass through the Troop, it is recommended that you make a photocopy of both sides of the Blue Card before turning it in. The Scout will be presented with his merit badge, and his copy of the "Applicant's Record" at the next Court of Honor. The "Applicant's Record" should be kept in a safe place since it is the best record that the merit badge was earned. Do not count on the "Counselor's Record" or the "Application for Merit Badge" ever being found again!

Should a merit badge or Blue Card ever be lost, it can only be replaced if there is firm evidence that the merit badge was completed. Examples of firm evidence include a photocopy of the Blue Card, one of the other sections of the Blue Card and our Troop records.

Joining Troop 4: What to do First.

Here is a checklist that shows what the joining family must do right away.

Things to do for the new Scout:

- Read through this guidebook.
- Complete the application, health history, and consent to treat forms for the Scout, sign them and submit these to Troop 4 along with the annual registration and due. Annual dues are approximately $100 and an ASM or Committee member will have the exact figure. A portion of the dues will pay for your Scout's subscription to Boys Life Magazine.
- Obtain a copy of the Boy Scout Handbook for your Scout. Your son should WRITE HIS NAME IN THE BOOK AND ON THE OUTSIDE EDGE IN BOLD LETTERS. It is strongly recommended that you also acquire a cover for the book. This copy of the book is used to record your Scout's rank advancement and for his reference. The cover will help protect the book long enough from the elements and spills for most Scouts to reach First Class. It is expected that the Scout will bring his handbook to Troop meetings and many of the Outdoor Adventures. The book and cover may be purchased at the Scout Shop at Smiser Boy Scout Center, 3450 E. Sierra Madre Blvd., Pasadena. Call 626-351-8815 for shop hours.
- Buy your Scout a complete uniform. Look under the "Scout Uniform" section of this guide for a checklist of what is needed right away and where to find it.
- Obtain the appropriate uniform patches and sew these on the uniform shirt. Please note: Scouts in Troop 4 must wear full uniforms.
- Work with your Scout to complete his assembly of a daypack and the "Ten Essentials" for his first camping experience. It is your Scout's responsibility to collect the Ten Essentials and keep them ready for all outings, but he will need adult help for this task at first. Look under the "Ten Essentials and Other Gear" section in this guide for a checklist of what he needs. There is a more complete description of the Ten Essentials and other personal gear in the BSA Handbook.
- With your Scout, read the "Joining Requirements" section of the BSA Handbook and complete the exercises in the pamphlet titled "How to Protect your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide" that is attached to the BSA Handbook.

Things for the Parents To Do:

- Attend the MANDATORY new Parent's Troop 4 Orientation Program – Time and Date will be announced. This normally occurs in the fall. Attending this meeting is essential for getting your Scout off to a fun and safe start in Scouting.
- Check the Troop Calendar on our website (www.troop4.net) and add all of the remaining events for Troop 4 on your family's calendar. Our Troop Year extends from September to August. The Troop publishes its annual calendar and long range plans on its website and continually updates the calendar.
- Get a log in to the Troop 4 Website to be able to access the roster and other information. This is available through the committee – As an ASM or Committee member.

- Submit your own application to join Troop 4 as an adult volunteer. The success of our program depends upon the generous gift of your leadership for your son and the other boys. Troop 4 will pay the BSA membership fee for you. Each month you will receive Scouting, the magazine for adult leaders. Registered Cub Scout volunteers only need to transfer their memberships to Troop 4 for the remainder of the Troop Year. By the way, if you join as an adult volunteer, you are called a "Scouter."

MEETINGS

Monday Nights at the Scout Haus

For the past 100+ Years, Troop 4 has met every Monday evening from 7:15PM to 8:30PM. Scouts and Scouters begin gathering at Westminster Presbyterian Church at 7:00PM. Promptly at 7:15PM, the opening ceremony begins. Scouts and Scouters are expected to attend Monday meetings in full uniform. (CLASS A Uniforms from Labor Day to Memorial Day. Class B – Summer)

The only exceptions to the weekly meetings occur on national holidays, during the winter school holidays, after Courts of Honor and during a few weeks in August. The meeting schedule can be found in the Troop Calendar on the Troop Website (www.troop4.net).

Monday meetings are devoted to Troop and Patrol event planning, rank advancement or merit badge activities, recognition ceremonies, and announcements. While attendance is not required, a Scout will be frustrated in achieving personal goals for rank advancement and his Patrol's activities will be diminished without his regular participation in weekly meetings. As the BSA Handbook states:

"Your Patrol is a strong, active unit. All of you win when every member pitches in and does his best. At Patrol meetings, on the trail, and in camp, you will share many of Scouting's finest times."

Of course, every parent is welcome at every Monday meeting of Troop 4.

Courts of Honor

Three or four times during the year, the troop holds a Court of Honor. These are typically held on a Sunday afternoon or another day, as announced in advance and scheduled on the Troop Calendar (see the website,) At this special event, Scouts advancing in rank are honored (along with their families) and Scouts earning merit badges and other awards are recognized. Courts of Honor may be held outdoors or at other sites to accommodate all of our guests.

Meetings of the PLC at the Scout Haus

Once each month or so, the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) meets either on a Monday night or Sunday afternoon under the leadership of the Senior Patrol Leader and the supervision of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters. The PLC is the elected leadership organization of the Scouts and is comprised of the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders (ASPL), Troop Scribe, Troop Quartermasters, and

the Patrol Leaders. The PLC plans troop events, coordinates activities among the Patrols, and provides the Scoutmaster with program recommendations and feedback. New Scouts send their own Patrol Leaders to the PLC.

Where is the Scout Haus?

Westminster Presbyterian Church is located at 1757 North Lake Avenue in Pasadena. Parking is in the large lot at the back of the church. Enter the Troop 4 Room at the back of the church by walking down the stairs to the basement. You'll know that you are in the Troop 4 Troop Room by observing the musty memorabilia hanging on the walls.

Scout Uniforms

There is only one official Boy Scout uniform. BSA does not distinguish between a "Class A" (Formal) uniform and a "Class B" (Informal) uniform. Nonetheless, a casual terminology is commonplace among Troop 4 Scouts and Scouters regarding "Class A" and "Class B" uniforms. This section describes the official BSA uniform worn by Scouts and Scouters in Troop 4 and the more informal Troop 4 attire that is worn on selected occasions. Scouts and Scouters must have the official Boy Scout uniform and appropriate patches. Some items must be acquired by the Scout and some items will be issued to the Scout by Troop 4 as described below.

Before You Buy, a Few Rules and Some Advice

- It is emphasized that all Scouts will be in uniform for Monday night Troop meetings and other functions. The uniform includes the BSA shirt, pants, socks, belt and buckle, with the Troop 4 neckerchief and BSA or Troop 4 slide. The neckerchief is rolled under the shirt collar with the slide pulled up to just below the collar button. All patches and insignia are current and fastened securely to the uniform in the appropriate places. The uniform should appear neat and clean.
- Don't delay purchasing the BSA shirt, pants, belt and buckle, and socks, since temporary shortages in local stores sometime occur in February to April.
- Short pants vs. long pants: There is no Troop 4 policy regarding which type of pants to wear, only that they are official BSA product. Personal preference generally prevails. Since Scouts wear their uniforms in all kinds of weather for OUTDOOR ADNVENTURES, some Scouts eventually acquire both types. Consider what type of weather your Scout probably will encounter outdoors for their first size months after joining. Also, note that if short pants are worn, official BSA Scout socks must also be worn.
- Evaluate your Scout's growth potential against the wear and tear factor when selecting uniform sizes. It won't matter that the uniform can accommodate his growth for the next four years if it is likely to be worn to shreds in 12 months. Often, 11 and 12 year old boys outgrow the pants before they outgrow the shirts, so you may need to budget for replacement pants in about 12 months or sooner.
- It is not necessary to buy an official BSA rain poncho, vest or jacket. Later your Scout may desire to have an official red vest or jacket to display hiking or event patches. This is, however, a personal preference. Our outdoor adventure instructors can advise you on practical raingear.

- Troop 4 does not have an official Troop hat. Your Scout does not have to have official BSA headgear. Since BSA policy does not permit Scouts to display commercial logos or advertising on outerwear clothing, however baseball caps and other hats with names or logos are not worn with the BSA uniform. Scouts in Troop 4 wear practical headgear and clothing for hiking and other outdoor activities. Occasionally, the Patrol may decide to adopt a hat for functions that require the uniform, which is determined by vote within the patrol. If the patrol adopts a hat, then all members are expected to adhere consistently to the Patrol's policy. See further discussion in the "Camping and Hiking Gear" section of this guide.
- There is no official Troop 4 policy on footwear. Since Troop 4 is dedicated to outdoor adventure, hiking boots are always appropriate footwear with the official BSA uniform. For meetings and indoor functions, footwear common sense prevails. Whenever Scouts are Outdoors, safety considerations are the first priority and any shoe requirements for the activity are enforced. Also refer to this guide's section on "Hiking Boots".
- Your old Cub Scout neckerchief slide needs to be replaced with a BSA slide.
- The BSA belt is one length. Cut off the excess length under the buckle. Remember that your Scout's waist measurement may change from 26 to 30 inches pretty quickly, so don't cut the length too closely. Adjust the belt so that the brass end matches up to the brass buckle. Scouts call this "brass on brass". Note that recent years have expanded the offerings for Scout belts. Leather, nylon and other options are available.
- Uniform standards for adults (Scouters) are similar to those for Scouts. Scouters may elect to purchase a BSA bolo or four-in-hand tie to supplement the Troop 4 blue neckerchief that will be provided to them.
- After a few months, new Scouts will begin to earn merit badges that are to be sewn onto an official sash in rows of three. The sash is worn on special occasions and at all Board of Reviews and Court of Honors. It is strongly recommended that you purchase the longer size (36 inches), even though for the first few years it may dangle about the Scout's knees. The sash is worn only 3 to 5 times per year and getting the long size (intended for Scouts 5'3" and taller) sure beats having to remove 20 merit badges from the shorter sash (30 inches) and re-sew them on the longer sash when your Scout decides to grow taller.
- Troop 4 supports a used uniform recycling program. If you have a need for a used uniform, or have used uniforms to donate, please contact the Troop Committee Chair.

What Uniform Items to Buy First (And What Not to Buy)?

Troop 4 will provide each Scout and Scouter with the following:

- Neckerchief with T4 Patch
- Quality Unit Patch (If owned by the troop)
- 100 Year Patch
- Troop 4 Class B T-shirt for informal wear (At cost)

The following is a checklist of official BSA uniform items that each Scout and Scouter should obtain:

_____ Khaki short-sleeved Scout Shirt

_____ BSA Scout belt and buckle

_____ Long or Short BSA Scout Pants

_____ Green shoulder tabs (epaulets)

_____ BSA socks

_____ BSA neckerchief slide

Patches:

_____ Numeral 4

_____ Arrow of Light (if earned)

_____ Patrol position (if needed)

_____ Los Angeles Area Council

_____ Patrol (when assigned)

_____ World Scouts Patch

Where to Get this Stuff

Smiser Boy Scout Center, 3400 E. Sierra Madre Blvd. Pasadena, CA 626-951-8815

Or

www.Scoutstuff.org

Fastening Patches and Insignia to the Shirt

If you are contemplating heat transfer for attaching patches and insignia to the shirt, rather than sewing, please consider that some patches need to be removed and or replaced periodically as Scouts advance in rank and change unit leadership positions. Removing heat-transferred patches may leave stains or tear shirt fabric. Also, some Scouts have experienced patches falling off with incomplete heat transfer. Patches fastened by pins are not permitted. Smiser also sells a kit of adhesive that works fairly well.

Location of Patches and Insignia

You will find guidance for the proper location of official BSA shirt insignia and patches inside the front and back covers of the BSA Scout Handbook that you have acquired for your Scout.

Informal Uniform

During the hot summer months, Troop 4 adopts a more informal uniform for Monday night's meetings and other Troop events. The informal uniform substitutes a Troop 4 T-shirt or other BSA shirt.

There are other times when the informal uniform is worn. For example, on summertime day hikes and backpacking, Scouts and Scouters often wear the Troop 4 T-shirt. It also is worn on Troop service projects that involve cleaning, carpentry, trail clearing, and similar labor.

If it is ever unclear as to which uniform to wear, please ask one of the unit leaders.

Uniforms are Not Just for Meetings

There are outdoor adventures that require Scouts to wear the full uniform. One of these is the San Gabriel Valley Camporee, which occurs in the spring of each year At Camporee, a competitive camping skills event for Scouts in the Rose Bowl District, Troop 4's Scouts will hike a short distance into the official campground by Patrols, receiving a uniform and daypack inspection at the entry to the camp as part of the event's competition.

Whenever Scouts and Scouters travel as a group, whether it is to a day hike, a weekend basecamp, or our weeklong summer camp at Camp Cherry Valley, the official BSA uniform (minus merit badge sash) is worn.

On other occasions, such as Scout Sunday, the first Sunday in February, our Scouts attend either their family churches or attend Westminster Presbyterian Church in full uniform, including merit badge sash.

Troop 4 Scouts are expected to wear the full Class A uniform with sash for the Court of Honor. Whenever representing Troop 4 or Boy Scouts of America at public events, such as flag ceremonies or other public service, Scouts will be attired in the full, official uniform. Finally, whenever a Scout from Troop 4 presents himself to a merit badge counselor, to the Scoutmaster for a Scoutmaster's Conference, or to the Troop Committee for a Board of Review, the Scout will be in full, official uniform

Uniform is not just for Uniformity

The Scout's uniform signifies that the Scout accepts the values and beliefs of his organization. He is developing a sense or personal responsibility and confidence by his association with and commitment to the Scouting Movement and to his Scout unit, as seen in his uniform's appearance.

We ask that all Scouters respect the significance of the Scout uniform and that they set good examples by wearing their uniform as is appropriate for the situation.

Troop 4's Rules

Troop 4's Scouts and Scouters abide by the finest assemblage of principles and rules of conduct ever devised for a your organization – The Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout Motto and the Scout Slogan. We also strive to honor the Outdoor Code. One of the first duties of a joining Scout is to understand and agree to live by these principles.

On my honor I will do my best

To do my duty to God and my country

And to obey the Scout Law;

To help other people at all times;

To keep myself physically strong,

Mentally awake, and morally straight.

This is the Oath that each Scout takes at the opening of every Troop 4 meeting, along with a recitation of the twelve elements of the Scout Law. As one of the aims of Boy Scouts is the development of moral character, these promises are taken seriously. In view of the broad scope, and solemnity inherent in the bedrock values of these promises, there has not been much point to creating a lot of local Troop 4 rules.

There are twelve local rules, however, that need to be discussed here in some detail. We write these down because there are rare occasions when someone needs to be reminded of a few applications of the Scout Oath and Law and of common sense.

These rules apply to Scouts and Scouters alike, and to everyone else affiliated with Troop 4's activities:

1. Horseplay, hazing, inappropriate language, or other activity that is potentially harmful to the wellbeing of a member of Troop 4 or the member's family is never tolerated.
2. Any adult or Scout may intervene immediately whenever an unsafe situation or condition exists in any Scout activity.
3. Possession, transportation or consumption of alcohol or marijuana is not permitted at any function involving Scouts.
4. The possession or use of illegal drugs is not tolerated in any activity associated with Troop 4.

5. Consistent with state law and BSA policy, smoking is not permitted inside any building that houses a Troop 4 activity or during any Troop 4 activity outdoors in the presence of Scouts. Adults will refrain from using smokeless tobacco products in the presence of Scouts. At all times, persons who smoke will strictly observe fire safety rules and the BSA Outdoor Code. Scouts will not smoke or use tobacco products at any time.
6. Policies promulgated by the Boy Scouts and by the San Gabriel Valley Council regarding Youth Protection, Scout safety on outings, Troop Permits, qualifications of adult leaders, "2-Deep" adult supervision, Scout physical exams and Consent to Treat forms and others are designed to promote safe and healthful Scouting activities. The term "2-deep" adult leadership means that at least two qualified adults are present at all times during Troop 4 or Patrol activities. These policies are strictly observed by Troop 4.
7. Parents will ensure that any medications that they have authorized to be given to their Scout during an outing will be submitted in the original container to the Scoutmaster or his delegate with signed, written instructions and permission for administration prior to the Troop embarking on the outing.
8. New Scouts must earn a Troop 4 Totin' Chip handy (it is about the size of a credit card) to show whenever a knife or axe is carried. Scouts are not permitted to carry a straight blade knife or a switchblade knife. Violations of knife and axe safety will result in a corner of the Totin' Chip to be clipped off. If two corners are clipped, the Scout's Totin' privileges are revoked and the Totin Chip must be re-earned.
9. Annual dues will pay for day hikes and weekend backpacking troops, unless there are campground feels or similar event-specific expenses. Otherwise, Troop 4's outings are conducted on a "pay as you go" basis for such costs as food. Scouts eat with their Patrols and Scouters do the same with their own Patrol, so the food purchase costs are shared by each Patrol. Generally, refunds are not available for Troop 4 activities that requires Pre-payment. The reason is that Troop 4 often incurs financial liabilities by making reservations requiring advance nonrefundable payments. With sufficient advance notice, it may be possible to transfer a reservation to another person on a waiting list, but this cannot be guaranteed.
10. All Scouts and others in attendance will observe the Scout (or Silent) Sign and give courteous attention when anyone is addressing the Troop or Patrol.
11. At Troop 4's Outdoor Adventures, Scouts and all other participants will pay heed to trail and camp discipline, safety and health rules, environmental protection, and equipment requirements. Troop 4 will not disturb the enjoyment of the outdoors for others by its own behaviors. Everyone will "pitch in" to complete chores and duties on outings without complaint ("A Scout is cheerful and helpful," we mean this.). All Scouts and participants will follow the directions of the Senior Patrol Leader and his subordinates and the directions of the Scoutmaster or other adult trip leader. Every person participating in Troop 4's Outdoor adventures must be familiar with the BSA Outdoor Code and agree to abide by its principles.
12. The Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee Chair are available if an individual conference with a Scout or family member regarding any aspect of Troop 4's programs is needed. Ordinarily, Scouts take their concerns to their Patrol leader, who are their elected representatives to the PLC, or directly to the Senior Patrol Leader if the matter is more urgent.

Parent Participation

We waited until the middle of the guidebook to slip this in. Parents…you must help make Troop 4's programs a success for your son.

Troop 4's parents participate under the principle that there are many small tasks that are "doable" by a large number of people and that there are very few people who have the time to do large tasks. This means that EVERY PARENT is expected to contribute to the activities of Troop 4 through service on the Troop Committee or as an Assistant Scoutmaster. Furthermore, every parent is expected to help when needed with chaperoning events and driving.

Parents do not need to have expert outdoor skills in order to make meaningful contributions to Troop 4's programming. There are worthwhile administrative tasks to be performed by the Troop Committee. We also need Assistant Scoutmasters for our outdoor programming and merit badge counselors in a wide variety of fields. In the first few weeks of your son's Scouting, you will be asked to complete a survey of your interests and skills that might be used to advance Troop 4's programs. You can also contact the Troop Committee Chair or the Scoutmaster to express interest in any aspect of our adult participation. Don't worry about needing prior Scouting experience to be an adult leader. No one from Troop 4 will drop a box of papers at your doorstep at midnight and expect you to be an instant expert. Troop 4 provides in-house support for new parent participation. Further, there are innumerable training courses for adult leaders that are offered through the Rose Bowl District, the Greater Los Angeles Area Council and other nearby councils. See the Google Calendar and Links Section of the Troop Website for more information.

Our frank message regarding parent participation: It is manifestly unfair to expect that a handful of other parents repeatedly must commit their resources to Scouting in your place.

Our very positive message is this: Participation in Troop 4's Scouting is meaningful parenting. Parent's participation realizes a precious opportunity for a moment or two of association with sons and son's comrades who are quickly developing into young men, growing increasingly confident, independent and competent in the skills of living that are learned through Scouting's adventures. Besides, the Outdoor Adventures are fun for parents too!

The Programs of Troop 4

The goals of Troop 4 are the same as those articulated by Boy Scout Troops everywhere in America. There are three basic developmental objectives:

- Character – Personal qualities of honesty and integrity, values, outlook and attitude
- Citizenship - Relationships with family and community, service to others, duty to country, understanding of other nations and societies.
- Fitness – Physical, mental, moral and emotional development

In order to accomplish these aims, Troop 4 uses the eight Scouting methods that incorporate:

1. Ideals – Achieved through living the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, Slogan, Outdoor Code; setting and achieving goals, seeing role models
2. Patrols -The base of Troop activity is the "natural gang" of 8 to 12 boys (as observed by Scouting's founder, Lord Baden-Powell), along with the Patrol's elected leaders during Troop activities
3. Outdoors – "The vigorous life" (as exemplified by such American heroes as Teddy Roosevelt, BSA's first Honorary Vice President), with such Outdoor Adventures as hiking, camping, swimming, study and conservation of the natural environment, sports.
4. Advancement – Accomplishment, ability to help others, challenges, surmountable obstacles
5. Personal Growth – Good turn, service projects, religious observance and emblems
6. Adult Association – Adults serving as guides, role models and resources
7. Leadership Development – Skill and practice in leadership, training, self-mastery and citizenship.
8. Uniform – Identity, practical and appropriate attire, commitment to aims of the group.

Implementing Scouting's Goals

A few of the features that characterize Scouting's programs are:

- See it…do it – This means that Scouts are taught or trained in skills and then are expected to perform the skills in order to prove proficiency and earn advancement.
- Hands-On and Practical – Our activities usually involve doing things rather than learning theories of how things work. The best classroom for much of these hands-on programming is the outdoors.

  A good example: We teach Scouts about the polluting microbes in streams, but our purpose and emphasis is ensuring that Scouts can purify their own drinking water on a long hike; this is best done on the trail.

- Boy-Led – Part of the development of character, citizenship and fitness is acquired through leadership responsibility for the welfare and teaching of others. Admittedly, this is one of the most difficult elements of the Scouting program to implement, for it is always tempting for adults to step forward to solve the problem, set the agenda, or teach the lesson. Boy-Led means that we offer appropriate and frequent opportunities for Scouts to practice leadership. This also means that, within reason, we allow boys to have an opportunity to learn from failure as well as from success.

  Example: A poorly planned or cooked meal on a backpacking trip can be mighty gosh-awful in the hands of a 12-year-old. On the second or third trip, that same boy will become an excellent outdoor chef, cooking tasty meals over a tiny backpacking stove.

- Outings with a purpose – One of the basic principles of BSA programming is that Troop activities are designed to accomplish the underlying goals of Scouting. Therefore, outings are planned with agendas that include rank advancement, competitions, and training, as well as unstructured time.
- Fun – Troop 4's activities are fun!

Troop 4's Tri-Level Programming

Troop 4 is a large organization whose Scouts have varied needs for rank advancement and social interaction. A wide personal development range and previous Scouting experience is represented among boys ages 11 to 17 years. In order for Troop 4's programing to be relevant and engaging for all Scouts, we divide the Patrols into three developmental levels:

- Scouts Skills Patrols – These are the "New Scout" patrols. The goal is to offer each new Scout the opportunities to acquire basic Scouting skills and advance to the rank of First Class over a period of about 12 to 18 months.
- Seasoned Scout Patrols – The members of these Patrols typically are First Class (or awaiting a Court of Honor) or higher in rank, with at least one year of Scouting experience, and are in sixth through eighth grade (12 to 15 years). We refer to these young men as "Middle Scouts." They are starting to hold Troop leadership positions and have skills for most outdoor adventures involving base camping and backpacking over limited distances.
- High Adventure Patrol – The oldest Scouts in the Troop are eligible for the Venture Patrol. Typically, these young men hold Star through Eagle rank, range in age from 14 to 17 years, and are in at least ninth grade. They are leaders in the Troop. They may participate in special programs restricted to Scouts with the highest levels of Scouting skills, knowledge, and/or fitness.

There is an overlap in the descriptions of our program's level, particularly between Seasoned and High Adventure Patrols. This is because some boys advance more quickly in rank that others, for a variety of reasons. A few younger boys will develop enough physical strength, height and weight to backpack successfully before they finish sixth grade, while others will not be ready for backpacking until later. Some of the "Middle Scouts" will be ready for High Adventure activities before others. Troop 4 does not require rank

advancement in order for a Scout to remain in the organization. The slight blurring of distinctions between the Seasoned and High Adventure Patrols will assist in age and interest appropriate placement of Scouts in the Patrols.

Scouts always will work across the age range in Troop 4. For example, High Adventure and Seasoned Scouts will service as Troop Guides to help to help the new Skills Scouts acquire basic skills. Troop activities such as service projects will involve Scouts of all ages and ranks. Major outings are planned at the Troop level. The difference is that the Venture and Seasoned Scouts occasionally will have challenging adventures suited specifically to their interests and maturity, as will the Scout Skills Patrols.

Camping and Hiking Gear

This section describes clothing and gear that the new Scout needs to acquire NOW for base camping (also called "car camping") and BSA summer camp. During the first year, the new Scout (and family) will learn about clothing and equipment for more challenging backpacking that occurs at the end of the first year. It is emphasized that parents should defer as much equipment acquisition as possible until their Scout reaches readiness and expresses interest in backpacking.

Why is Camping and Hiking Gear Important Right Now?

Troop 4 has outdoor adventures scheduled almost every month for all Scouts. New Scouts are expected to participate in these outings as soon as their membership forms and fees have been submitted.

New Scouts will need personal equipment and clothing appropriate to base camping in various settings.

> *Base camping means that personal gear, food, cooking equipment and tentage will be transported to the campsite by vehicle. Food is contained in boxes and ice chests. Coleman propane stoves are used for cooking. Each Patrol will be issued its own three-man tents, stove and lantern, propane bottles, ice chest and Patrol Box with cooking utensils.*

Scouting's Ten Essentials for Outdoor Adventure

Every hike or outing requires the Scout to bring his Ten Essentials. Refer to the *BSA Scout Handbook* for a more detailed description of this list. For the first basecamp experience and the first day hike, you will need to assist your Scout in assembling and packing these Ten Essentials:

1. Pocketknife – Approved, folding type only; must have Totin' Chip to use, but maybe carried.
2. First Aid Kit – Does not need to be official BSA kit; check the items shown in the BSA Scout Handbook and place them in a Ziploc bag.
3. Extra clothing – Don't overdo it; it's not likely your son is ever going to change clothing completely unless he falls into a stream. For a day hike, he needs dry socks; place these in a Ziploc bag. He may need a warm jacket or sweatshirt for evening and early morning.

4. Rain Gear – Poncho or water-resistant jacket and rain pants; water resistant hat. Troop 4 will not go home just because it starts to rain.
5. Water bottle – Plastic bottles with tightly fitting screw-on lids; typically, 1-2 quarts carried in the rucksack. Make sure that bottles are filled before embarking on the outing and check for leaks. Don't carry metal canteens or canteens slung from narrow shoulder straps.
6. Flashlight – The BSA policy is to carry an extra bulb and batteries. Some experienced Scouts simply carry a second small flashlight, because when a bulb or battery fails, you can't find the replacement pieces in the dark on an overnight hike. Flashlights should be small and lightweight.
7. Trail Food – Don't overdo it for a one-mile hike. Note: CANDY IS NOT TRAIL FOOD. Granola bars, dried fruit, nuts and beef jerky are examples of high-energy snacks that satisfy hunger between meals. Seal trail food in a Ziploc bag.
8. Matches – You don't need to buy the BSA waterproof match container. A small plastic aspirin bottle with a snap on lid works well. Use strike-anywhere type matches. A new Scout needs about 10 matches for weekend base camping. Carry a small piece of sandpaper in your shirt pocket for ease in striking matches in the field.
9. Sun Protection – Sun block lotion; a large-brimmed hat; sunglasses. Put the sun block lotion in a Ziploc bag; consider tying a string around the temples of the sunglasses so that they can hang around the Scout's neck.
10. Map and Compass – BSA compasses may be purchased at Smiser Boy Scout Center. You can also find them on-line or at REI, Big 5, etc. This is both a safety item for all hikes, as well as, a tool that the Scout will use for High Adventure outings later. Balance the future need with the possibility that the first compass will be lost or stepped on. Consider buying a compass that incorporates a lanyard. Fasten the lanyard around a pants belt loop or through a shirt buttonhole for security when carrying the compass in the field. Alternatively, tie the lanyard to something inside the rucksack. Consider buying a compass that incorporates an adjustment for magnetic deflection. Maps are ordinarily Troop issued items for the outing.

How are you going to carry this stuff?

A daypack, rucksack, or even a school bookbag will suffice for a day hike and for weekend base camping. The Ten Essentials should fit entirely inside and the opening of the bag should completely and securely close. The bag should be water resistant. The weight of the bag including the Ten Essentials should be only a few pounds, so that the Scout can walk comfortably for several hours carrying the load. The poncho should fit over the scout and bag when worn.

Other Personal Gear for Overnight Camping

Refer to the BSA Scout Handbook for guidance on personal overnight camping gear. Remember, the first several overnight outings are base camping so that the additional sleeping gear is not going to be carried on the Scout's back. <u>It is not advisable to purchase expensive backpacking gear until initial Scouting skills are acquired.</u> Therefore, personal overnight gear should first focus on adding sleeping, and personal hygiene equipment to the Ten Essentials, along with a few comfort extras.

Except for summertime, however, that inexpensive, flannel-lined sleeping bag that works well for recreation room sleepovers at home will not be warm enough for three of the four seasons of Boy Scout camping. Also, that old sleeping bag may not roll up small enough to fit on a backpack frame or be light enough when the time comes for High Adventure outings. If the weather is mild enough by late March, it may not be necessary yet to replace that old relic with either a good Down-filled, or artificial fiber mummy bag and water resistant stuff sack. Certainly, by the time the new Scout is ready for backpacking (about 12 months after joining), a good quality sleeping bag and pad will be needed. One interim option is to rent a backpacking sleeping bag from an outlet like REI in order to learn more about various types of sleeping bags. Our more experienced Scouts and adult leaders are also a great resource for advice on sleeping bags and other camping equipment.

In addition to the sleeping bag, the Scout must have a sleeping pad. Most of the body heat is lost to the ground when sleeping. The personal sleeping pad adds essential insulation as well as a little cushioning for comfort. When drawing the Patrol's tents from the Troop supply room, Scouts also will be issued ground cloths to place under the tent floors for further insulation, so these do not have to be purchased. REI and on-line retailers have a variety of sleeping pad products. Select a pad that is light in weight and can be rolled up. For carrying, hold it in a roll with a bungee cord or lashing, and secure it tightly to the backpack.

Another component of a camp bed is an air mattress. For base camping, this is optional (most experienced Scouts just use a sleeping pad). When backpacking, it is regarded as unnecessary weight. In the cool and cold seasons, an air mattress can increase the insulation and always adds more comfort. It should be packable with the sleeping bag for base camping.

Clothing for sleeping is added to the Ten Essentials for camp outings. These vary from shorts and t-shirt to sweats or long johns, depending upon the season. Sleep clothing can double as the change of clothing for the second or third day of an outdoor adventure. In cold and cool weather, a knit cap for sleeping will significantly conserve body heat. Also, add a change of underwear to the Ziploc bag that has the extra socks that already are part of the Ten Essentials. Any extra clothing for the overnight outing should follow the principle of layering. Something close to the skin that wicks away moisture; a layer for warmth; and, a layer for wind and rain protection. For base camping, sleeping and additional clothing or personal gear may be carried into camp in a duffle bag or sports bag by vehicle. Only the Ten Essentials are carried on the Scouts' back in a rucksack for a basecamp, or day hike.

Personal hygiene for overnight outings is added to the Ten Essentials and includes:

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss
- Small facial cloth, small towel, "wash and dry' towelettes, and soap
- Folded sections of toilet paper – each long enough for one use
- All of these Personal Hygiene items should be stored in a Ziplock bag!

Comfort and extra items for overnight outings may include:

- Watch
- Camera (Note that we do not allow Smart Phones or Cameras on most trips)
- Bug Repellent

- Paper and pencil

Be aware that you are getting to the danger level by adding more and more comfort and extra items since these have to be looked after by the Scout. Also, the load is getting heavier and bulkier for carrying. Skip the pillow and extra blanket (if the Scout must have an extra blanket for a Spring night, rent or buy a better sleeping bag instead, and make sure that he has a sleeping pad; His folded extra clothing can be used as a pillow).

Hiking Boots

Nothing is more miserable and even disabling as hot, tender blisters on the feet when hiking. Furthermore, inappropriate footwear increases the risk of sprain, stress fracture, or worse. It can place the ill-prepared hiker in danger. A lot has changed and there are varying arguments as to what makes proper foot wear for T4's hikes and backpacks. While some prefer sturdy hiking boots and trail socks, others prefer a quality pair of trail hiking, or running shoes. Especially with T4's emphasis on ultralight backpacking, heavy boots may be harder to wear and cause more foot issues. This is something that is addressed in T4's Backpacking 101 Presentation.

Backpacks

Backpacks are another camping item that can be deferred. Just like boots, backpacks need to be fitted to the size of the Scout and for that reason alone, acquisition can wait for many months.

Most common today are internal frame backpacks. This is covered in T4's Backpacking 101

What is Not Needed Now?

You can skip buying any of the following camping gear, at least for now:

Tent, cooking stove, packable shovel, cooking pots, alpine sleeping bag, Multi-function knife, Nesting Mess kit, Foldable Plastic cup, rope gas lantern, expensive boots, hand axe, dehydrated food, specialized raingear, and water purification kit.

In fact, many of the items on the list above are supplied by the Troop when it is needed.

We are very happy that you have chosen to join T4 with your son. We look forward to getting to know him, AND YOU, as we give our boys experiences and learning as they grow from young men to adults.