

Welcome to The Troop!



A Guide for New and Prospective Parents



Welcome to Our Scouting America Troop

We are excited to welcome you and your Scout to our troop family. This manual is designed to help parents understand what Scouting America is, how it and our troop are structured, how advancement works, and what opportunities are available both in the troop and beyond the troop level. As you will learn below, scouting is a youth led organization, but it needs adult volunteers to support and thrive. Opportunities for involvement abound and are available for both kids (scouts) and parents!

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Troop 7 – Basics

Who we are: Port Washington's Troop 7 was chartered on February 14, 1914, and is the longest continually chartered Troop in Nassau County. Open to any youth boys, ages 11-17yrs, and part of the larger Scouting America organization.

What we do: Build leadership and responsibility through a youth-led model that teaches life skills, fosters civic engagement, and promotes the Scout Oath and Scout Law in everyday life.

Where we meet: United Methodist Church
35 Middle Neck Road
Port Washington, New York 11050

When we meet: 7:30pm SHARP to 9pm every Wednesday (Troop Meetings). Parents should arrive at 8:50 for pickup, and for announcements, but are also welcome to, and at times encouraged, to stay and see what the troop is up to.

When/Where we camp: Monthly (on average) day or overnight camping trips to scout reservations or local/state campsites, usually within 1-2hrs from Port. Yearly one week summer camp at Onteora Scout Reservation in upstate NY the first week of July. The weekly scouting meetings and camping trips (other than summer camp) largely follow the school calendar. All camping is optional, but strongly encouraged.

1. What Is Scouting America?

Scouting America (formerly known as the Boy Scouts of America) is one of the nation's largest and most respected youth development organizations. Founded in 1910, Scouting America prepares young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling the values found in the *Scout Oath and Scout Law*.



Scouts begin every meeting by reciting this scout oath and law

Scouting focuses on:

- Character development
- Leadership skills
- Citizenship
- Outdoor skills
- Service to others
- Personal fitness

The program is youth-led, meaning Scouts plan and lead meetings, outings, and activities under the guidance of trained adult leaders.

While many scouts start as cub scouts (younger division of Scouting America, K-5th grade) and progress into troops, any youth age 11–17yrs, can join scouting at any time. Boys will join Troop 7 and girls will join our sister troop, Troop 7G. Our troop is not co-ed at this time.

2. How Scouting America Is Structured

Understanding how the organization is structured helps families see how their troop fits into the larger Scouting movement.

National Level

At the top is the National Council of Scouting America, which:

- Develops program materials
- Establishes policies and safety standards
- Manages national high-adventure bases
- Oversees advancement requirements



Roger A. Krone
President & CEO
Scouting America

Local Council Level

Local councils serve specific geographic areas. Councils:

- Provide training for adult leaders
- Support units (troops, packs, crews)
- Operate local camps
- Organize district and council events



Christopher Coscia
Scout executive & CEO
Scouting Long Island



Troop 7's local council is the Theodore Roosevelt Council, soon to be renamed Scouting America Long Island after the merger of Nassau and Suffolk county councils.

❖ Council Office: Theodore Roosevelt Council/ Ducette Training Center
544 Broadway
Massapequa, NY 11758

District Level

Councils are divided into districts that:

- Provide direct support to local units
- Offer advancement guidance
- Conduct camporees and district activities



Troop 7 is part of the Shelter Rock District

Unit Level (Troop)

The troop is the heart of Scouting.

A troop is:

- Chartered by a local organization (church, civic group, school, etc.)
- Led by youth leaders (Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), Assistant SPL, and Patrol Leaders)
- Supported by adult volunteers (Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, Troop Committee)

The troop meets regularly and conducts monthly outings, service projects, and leadership activities.

➡ Troop 7 is officially chartered by the Theodore Roosevelt Council. (Troop meetings continue to be held at the United Methodist Church, who previously chartered the troop.)

3. The Scout-Led Model

Troops follows the patrol method:

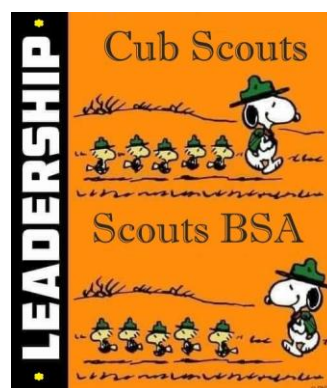
- **Scouts are grouped into patrols.** A patrol is a group of six to ten scouts who work together as a team. Each scout counts. Each patrol should have its own program of hikes, meetings, and other activities. Each boy must get involved, as each boy is a critical component of a team and has a role to play on that team.
- Each patrol elects a Patrol Leader.
- The troop (scouts) elects a Senior Patrol Leader (SPL).
- The patrol leaders, with the elected Senior Patrol Leader as their head, form the **Green Bar**. It is this Council's job to plan and run the Troop program. The Green Bar meets once per month under the direction of the Scoutmaster. The Green Bar is also know as the Patrol Leader's Meeting in some troops.
- Adult leaders serve as mentors, not directors.

Note those words: “votes”, “represents”, “elects”. This is the vocabulary of democracy, and the democratic way of doing things together. Every scout in the troop, through their elected patrol leader, has a voice in deciding what the troop does.

This is what we call the “Patrol Method.” - “TRAIN 'EM, TRUST 'EM, AND LET 'EM LEAD!”

**** This structure builds real leadership and responsibility****

Those coming from cub scouts will notice a shift from the adult led model to the scout led model



4. The Advancement Ladder

Advancement in Scouting, in Scout terms, is the “art of meeting a challenge.” It is designed to encourage growth — not competition. Scouts progress at their own pace. The advancement program invites Scouts to master a challenging series of skills that prepare them to enjoy the outdoor action Scouting promises. As they master these skills, they move up through the six ranks, each more demanding than the last.

Scouts BSA Rank Progression:

1. Scout
2. Tenderfoot
3. Second Class
4. First Class
5. Star
6. Life
7. Eagle

Early Ranks (Scout through First Class) build foundational skills. They focus on:

- Basic outdoor skills
- First aid
- Camping
- Citizenship
- Physical fitness

Star and Life Ranks focus on:

- Leadership positions
- Community service
- Merit badges

Eagle Scout

Eagle Scout is the highest rank in Scouts BSA. Requirements include:

- Earning at least 21 merit badges (including required ones)
- Serving in leadership roles
- Completing an Eagle Scout service project
- Passing a board of review



Eagle Scouts join a distinguished group of leaders in business, government, science, the military, and the arts.

A direct result of this program is that the boy gains self-confidence, learns new skills, and makes new friends.

There are four basic steps in Boy Scout Advancement, and they apply to all ranks. They are:

1. **The Scout learns.** He learns Scouting skills by taking an active hand in troop and patrol meetings. It is “on the job” training.
2. **The Scout is tested.** When his leaders see that he has mastered a given skill and satisfied a given requirement, they tell him so and record his achievement by getting his Scout handbook “signed off.”
3. **The Scout is reviewed.** When a Scout completes all requirements for a rank, he meets first with the Scoutmaster and then with a Board of Review comprised of members of the Troop committee. The purpose of these meetings is not to retest him, but to make sure he has met all requirements, to chat with him about how he feels he’s getting along with the Troop and its program, and to encourage him to keep advancing.
4. **The Scout is recognized.** When the Board of Review certifies a Scout, he is awarded his new badge of rank as soon as possible.

For newer Scouts, parents can help by staying aware of their son’s advancement progress, helping him with skills training if you can and encourage him to keep going. As a guideline, for Scouts that join the Troop in the Spring, we encourage them to achieve ranks as follows:

- Tenderfoot by June.
- Second Class by December.
- First Class by June of the next year.

Faster is not always better. While the pace for new Scouts outlined above is good for many Scouts, we want all Scouts to enjoy the Scouting program at their own speed.

Only select Scouts and Scouts that are First Class and above are allowed to “sign-off” advancement accomplishments. Each Scout is under the supervision of his Patrol Leader, whose role is to work closely with new Scouts and to teach them the skills required for First Class. The Patrol Leader and Senior Patrol members will then sign off on advancement once the Scout can demonstrate that he’s learned the skills. Note that parents cannot sign off on advancement requirements.

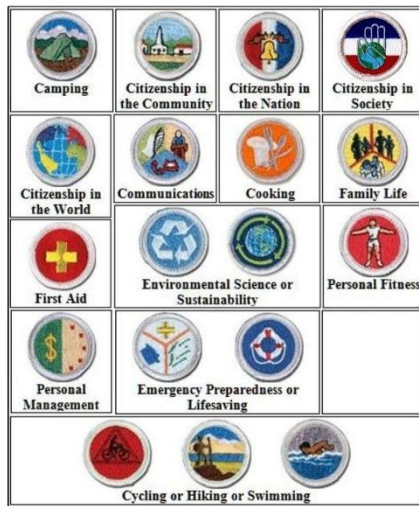
****** In order to advance, a boy must show “**Scout Spirit.**” Regular attendance at Troop meetings and attendance at other Troop functions is expected.

5. Merit Badges

The Merit badge program is designed to help Scouts to explore interests in various subjects, develop confidence, and gain exposure to potential career paths,

- Each badge involves working with a registered adult counselor to complete specific tasks.

As of 2026, there are 140 available merit badges, including topics like First Aid, Camping, Personal finance, Engineering, Medicine, Citizenship in the World, Robotics and Environmental Science.



- Merit badges are worn on a sash, and those required for Eagle Scout have a silver border, while elective badges have a green border.
- Scouts choose a subject, get a counselor's contact information, and follow a pamphlet to complete the requirements
- Required merit badges focus on life skills, citizenship, communication, and personal management.

Merit Badge Hub: <https://www.scouting.org/skills/merit-badges/>

6. Opportunities Beyond the Troop

Scouts have many opportunities outside regular troop meetings and activities.

- **District and Council Events** - These occur throughout the year and are run by council (various locations)
 - Camporees
 - Klondike derbies
 - Leadership training events
 - Merit badge days
- **Summer Camp** - A week-long immersive camping experience where Scouts:
 - Earn merit badges
 - Develop outdoor skills
 - Build independence

Troop 7 Summer Camp:



Our troop participates in summer camp each year as a troop. It takes place during the second week of July at **Onteora Scout Reservation** located in Livingston Manor, NY. Affectionately referred to as “The Land in the Sky”, Onteora is a special place and a favorite amongst many of the scouts who look forward to this week of the year. More advancements occur during this week than any other time of the year and is an unforgettable experience for most. Parents can and are encouraged to spend the week, (or part of it), with the troop, enjoying many of the activities that are offered to the scouts. See the Troop 7 website for packing list and check out <https://www.onteora.org/> for more info.

➤ **National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT)**

- An advanced leadership development course for youth leaders.
- Offered each summer by Long Island Councils.

➤ **High-Adventure Programs:**

These are national high-adventure bases operated by Scouting America that offer troop groups higher level outdoor adventures.

- **Philmont Scout Ranch** – Backpacking in the mountains of New Mexico
- **Northern Tier** – Wilderness canoe expeditions
- **Florida Sea Base** – Sailing, scuba, and ocean adventures
- **Summit Bechtel Reserve** – Located in West Virginia adjacent to the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve. A premier Scouting America adventure center, it serves as the permanent home of the National Scout Jamboree and the Paul R. Christen National High Adventure Base. Zip lines, climbing, whitewater rafting, and national jamborees

➤ **National Jamboree**

- Held periodically at Summit Bechtel Reserve, this large-scale event brings together Scouts from across the country for a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

➤ **Order of the Arrow**

- Order of the Arrow is Scouting’s national honor society, recognizing Scouts who demonstrate leadership, service, and commitment to camping.

7. Adult Leadership & Parent Involvement

Scouting is volunteer-led. Parents are encouraged to participate in ways that match their interests and availability. Opportunities include leadership or support roles. Scouts need adult guidance and support to achieve the goals they set for the troop and to become the leaders we know they can be. Whether you only have a little or a lot of time on your hands, or maybe somewhere in between, there is a role for every parent. No prior experience is needed. You can learn as you go... just get *involved*!

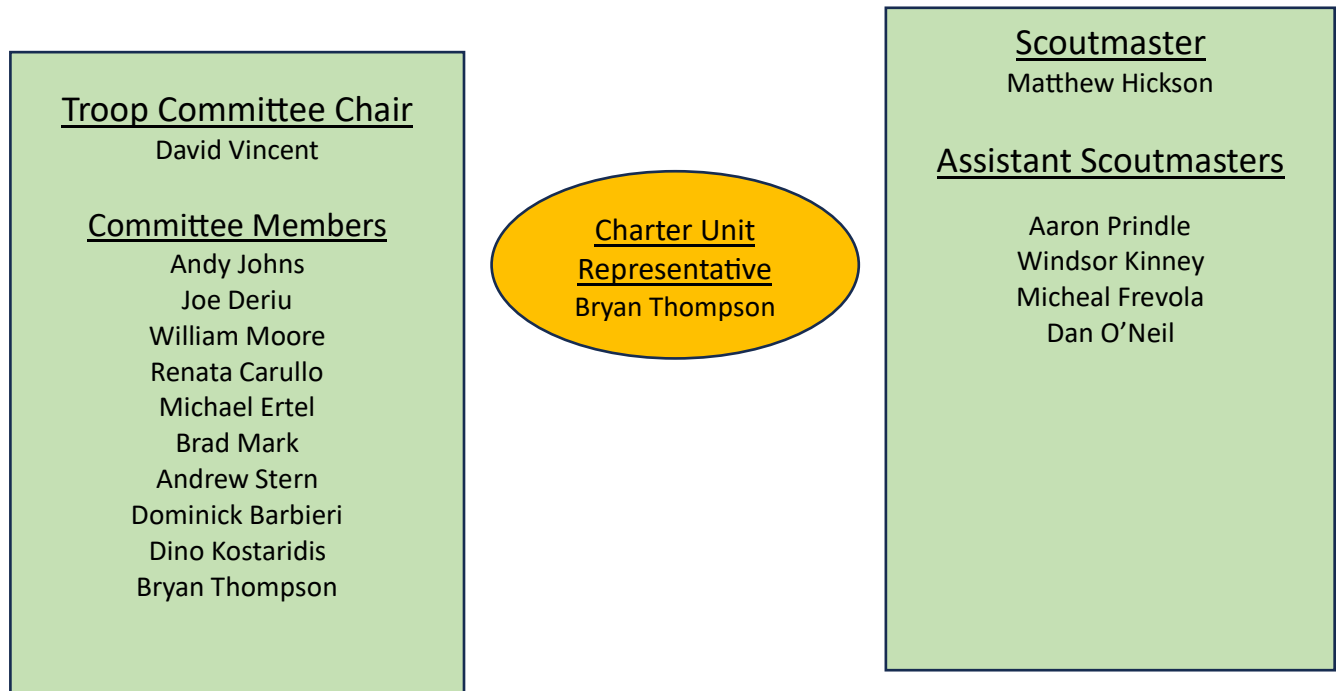
Adult Leadership:

- Troop Committee Chair
- Troop Committee Members
- Assistant Scoutmaster and Scoutmaster
- Chartered Organization Representative

** The "Key 3" in Scouting America refers to the three top adult leaders responsible for the success, safety, and operation of a unit. They consist of the Unit Leader (Scoutmaster/Cubmaster), the Committee Chair, and the Chartered Organization Representative (COR).

- The Unit Leader manages the program, the Committee Chair handles administration/volunteers, and the COR acts as a liaison with the chartered organization.
- They meet regularly to address challenges, set goals, and ensure the unit is operating in the best interest of the scouts.

Troop 7 Adult Leadership



Support roles:

- **Merit Badge Counselor**
- **Fundraising coordinator or Social Media Coordinator**
- **Treasurer, camping coordinator, adult meal prep, and more.**
- **Event volunteer (see below)**
- **Transportation.** This is one of the main areas where parents are required to pitch in and get involved. The Troop goes camping every month except during July & August. Parents must provide the rides for Scouts and their personal gear to and from these campouts. In addition, we have Rafting trips, hikes, and other outdoor activities where we need your help.

In addition to fulfilling Troop transportation needs, you can help your son maximize his Scouting experience by:

1. Making sure he has a copy of the Scout Handbook.
2. Encouraging him to attend all weekly Troop meetings.
3. Encouraging him to participate in the Patrol Method.
4. Encouraging him to participate in our Troop's monthly outdoor program.
5. Most importantly playing an active role in his Scouting experience. Scouting is a family affair.

Parents should also support Troop activities like Courts of Honor, monthly parents' meetings, and Troop fundraisers.

How else can parents help?

Attend weekly meetings → Adult supervision supports the scoutmaster and assistant scoutmasters and ensures scouts are adhering to the scout law and principles. Keeps you in the know of what the scouts are doing and happenings in the troop. Come to as many as you can.

Attend Board of Review Conferences → Parents/registered adults are needed for board of review conferences when scouts are ready to advance to their next rank. A group of 3-4 parents reviews the requirements for the rank a scout is trying to achieve (you can have a book open or look at your phone), then meets with the scout, for an informal type of interview, to determine if he has sufficiently achieved those requirements. It's great interview practice for both the scouts and adults and very straightforward. You will always be paired with adults who have done this before to walk you through your first time. 😊

Lead or help out with a yearly Troop 7 event →

- **Bi-annual Court of Honors:** Help with setting up or running the event the night of. Space needs to be booked with the church, food and supplies planned and ordered, decorations and tables set-up. Great for any party and event planners out there!
- **Bi-annual car washes:** Similar to above in regards to planning and running (yes, we bbq lunch for everyone) or just come help wash cars. It's a popular community event and we need as many hands on deck as we can get!
- **Memorial day parade:** Come march and represent the troop.

- **Annual ski trip** (or another event scouts may want to do)
- **Annual Christmas toy-drive**
- **Harborfest and National night out recruiting events**

Don't see a role that fits here or think you can help in another way?..... Let us Know!!

****All adult leaders complete required training and background checks (see below)****

8. Safety & Youth Protection

Scouting America prioritizes youth safety through:

- Mandatory Youth Protection Training for adults
- Two-deep leadership policies
- No one-on-one adult/youth contact
- Strict reporting procedures

Safety guidelines are followed at all activities.

→ All adults participating in ANY troop activities are required to take the **Safeguarding Youth Training course**.

To access and complete course click here: <https://www.hoac-bsa.org/safeguarding-youth-training-2025-05-22>

9. Financial Expectations

- **Registration fees**

Dues must be paid every year to both National Scouting and the Troop. This includes:

- **Annual Scouting America registration fee - \$ 85** (Paid online to Scouting America)
- **Annual Troop Fee- ~ \$85** (Decided yearly. Paid directly to troop. Covers monthly camping fees, rank and merit badges, BBQ's, Holiday Chow Down, Courts of Honor, and use/purchase of assorted Troop Equipment.)

- **Uniforms** (required; prices in scout shop, online, or free through equipment exchange)
- **Camping fees** (Occasionally, certain camps/activities may require additional fees; optional)
- **Summer camp** (Optional; ~ \$700)
- **High-adventure trips** (Optional)

Our troop conducts fundraisers to help offset costs and provides assistance when needed.

** If your family is currently facing financial challenges that may prevent you from paying the annual dues, we want to help. Don't hesitate to reach out to our committee chair or scoutmaster directly; we are committed to working with every family to ensure every scout can fully participate in all our activities. Any requests will remain confidential.

10. Communication

Our Troop utilizes three primary means of communication:

- **Troop website** (www.troop7bsa.com). The website is continually evolving, and includes access to information and forms that parents and Scouts need, as well as a recap of trips and activities that the Troop has participated in. Put it in your favorites, and refer to it often.
- **Band app** (<https://band.us/n/aea1b01085J6O>). We have recently transitioned to using the BAND app and encourage all parents and scouts to join and use this as the primary source of communication with the troop. There are sub-groups for parents, scouts, patrols, leadership, and individual events/activities.
- **Troop Calendar.** The Troop maintains a Google calendar, that anyone can access. It is linked on both the troop website and the Band app.
- **Email updates.** The Troop operates a Google Group email distribution list, which is open to parents as well as Scouts (with the parent's permission). Many troop alumni remain on and stay in touch with troop happenings here. However, we encourage current active parents in the troop to make the Band app their primary source of communication. Make certain to provide all email addresses that you'd like to receive Troop communications.

Parents are encouraged to stay informed and ask questions.

11. Uniforms

Scouts are expected to be in uniform for all meetings and troop functions unless told otherwise.

Class A uniforms include the tan scout shirt, troop neckerchief, green scout pants/shorts and belt, and green scout socks. These are worn for weekly meetings, court of honors, ceremonial occasions, and whenever representing the troop and community events.

Class B uniforms substitute the button down tan scout shirt and neckerchief for a less formal troop issued t-shirt. The rest of the uniform remains the same. These are worn during summer camp or during service projects that may involve more hands on work, getting a bit dirty, or heat.

Where to get uniforms:

- **The Scout Shop** at Theodore Roosevelt Council in Massapequa ([\(516\) 797-7600](tel:5167977600)).
- Online at <https://www.scoutshop.org>
- Through periodic (usually bi-annual) troop uniform and equipment exchanges

12. What Parents Can Expect

You can expect your Scout to:

- Develop leadership skills
- Build confidence
- Learn responsibility
- Form lifelong friendships
- Serve the community
- Gain practical life skills

Growth sometimes comes through challenge — learning to cook outdoors, lead peers, manage time, and solve problems.

You can also expect *YOURSELF* to do all those things too if you join in!

More questions? See if these help:

- 1) **Is scouting affiliated with any religious group?** No, it is not. A scout should be reverent (Scout law) to whatever faith or belief they practice. Optional non-denominational scout events, such as *Scout Sunday* or interfaith house of worship hikes (*The Ten Commandments Hike*) foster respect and help scouts fulfill duty to God requirements.
- 2) **Is scouting affiliated with or part of the US government?** No, it is not. Scouting America is a private youth development organization. It is not controlled by the government and there is no obligation for service to the country. (We just love sharp looking uniforms and respect our country
- 3) **Can kids join at anytime or only at the beginning of the year?** New members can join at any time of the year!
- 4) **What if you don't really like camping?** Camping trips are not mandatory and you don't need to camp if you don't want to. While you will be introduced to camping, and the outdoors is very much part of the scouting experience, scouting offers so many other opportunities, interests, and benefits.

5) What if a scout has never camped and doesn't have any camping equipment? That's totally fine! We can help! See the website for the Troop 7 Equipment and camping Guide. It will tell you everything you need to have and what to pack. The troop also arranges equipment swaps throughout the year where uniforms, boots, and all sorts of camping equipment that others have outgrown or no longer need, are available.

6) Can siblings and families be involved in scouting activities? Any siblings or youth who want to take part in troop meetings or scouting sponsored activities, including camping trips, must be registered scouts or registered adults with the troop. Many troops however, including Troop 7, have family events throughout the year where siblings and families are welcome to join in (such as Court of Honors and the annual car wash)

Final Thoughts

Scouting is a partnership between youth, leaders, and families. When parents support the program while allowing youth to lead, Scouts thrive.

We are honored to have your family as part of our troop and look forward to an exciting journey ahead!

Troop 7 Who's Who

Committee Chair: David Vincent (davidtvincent@gmail.com)

Scoutmaster: Matthew Hickson (mhickson@troop7bsa.com)

Scoutmaster Emeritus: Andy Johns

Assistant Scoutmasters:

Aaron Prindle (aprindle@troop7bsa.com)

Windsor Kinney (winnikinney@yahoo.com)

Micheal Frevola (michael.frevola@hklaw.com)

Dan O'Neil (Daniel.ONeill@nyulangone.org)

Scout and Advancement Coordinator: Dino Kostaridis

Den Chief Coordinator: Bill Moore

Adult Training Coordinator: Noah Rosen

Equipment Coordinator: Windsor Kinney

Community Service Coordinator: Andrew Stern

Registration Coordinator: Rebecca Moore

Safeguarding Youth Training Coordinator: Brad Mark

Parent Communications Coordinator: Renata Carullo (Renata.carullo@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Nita Ertel

Onteora (summer camp) Coordinator: Mike Ertel(onteora@troop7bsa.com)

Medical form and Transportation Coordinator: Heather Carlson

Court of Honor Coordinator: Pamela Shindler-Thompson

Car Wash Coordinator: Rob Tesio

Troop Apparel Coordinator: Michelle Vincent