

**How to conduct
A successful**

OPEN HOUSE!



GREATER ST. LOUIS AREA COUNCIL
Boy Scouts of America

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Why do young people join your Post? Isn't it because they think that the unit offers them something unique? We think that this is true, but we also know that the young men and women who join your unit will do so because you or one of your youth members invited them to!

The next few pages will guide you to a successful recruiting effort. Read on ...

Open House Plan

August to October is the best time to invite young people to your program, although recruiting new members to your post can be successfully done any time. Tell your story to potential members before their activity calendar gets filled up. An **Open House** program is an ideal way to spread the word, but it takes advance planning to do a good job and make the most of this opportunity. Follow these steps to make sure you are covering all the bases for a good program.

Invite your area Executive to the planning session and Open House. He or she is an excellent resource to your post.

A) HAVE A OFFICERS' PLANNING SESSION

If officers aren't available, form an adult planning committee. Leave time for the new officers to give input on program items. Hold this meeting at least 30 days before the Open House.

- Make a commitment on the number of new members you will enroll. When determining the number, consider unit leadership, program equipment and meeting space.
- Decide who will be responsible for each duty. Making assignments will even the work load.
- Plan programs, or activities, for at least three months. Review and add to this calendar each month. Always stay three months ahead in program planning.
- Set the date for your Open House and an exciting activity to encourage youth to join the post. Plan the activity for at least two weeks from the open house date so that youth will be more likely to attend and join the post.

B) SEND OUT INVITATIONS

About *two weeks* before the Open House, a personalized invitation on company letterhead is sent to each prospective new member. Prospects could include the names of friends submitted by youth members or children of employees at your organization. Also, your area Executive will provide you with mailing labels of students from nearby high schools who are interested in your career specialty. **Note:** Use your imagination to spice up your invitation and Open House program – grab their attention and interest.

C) FOLLOW-UP PHONE CALLS

A telephone call to prospective members is made a day or two prior to the Open House in order to get a final count to give status to the invitation. *People respond to personal contact.* Set up a phone calling team to accomplish the task. Use a set script to guarantee everyone is relaying the same message. Use your resources. Make arrangements with a place that has a bank of phones to use for an evening from about 5:30p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Have refreshments and snacks – make phone-calling fun.

D) THE OPEN HOUSE

Have a well-planned program! Follow the suggested agenda.

- Make guests feel welcome! Review some of the techniques of making young people feel like they are really wanted as a member of your program.
- Serve refreshments.
- Engage existing youth members. Have them greet guests, offer refreshments, and talk about the program.
- Distribute a written schedule of activities for the next several months. Help them make the decision to want to join. Let them see what exciting activities you have to offer. Make sure that you have an activity planned shortly after the Open House. This could be the next meeting; however, this should include an exciting activity to entice youth to join the post.
- Distribute “Program Capability Inventories” out to parents to fill out. Express the need for parental help.
- Fill out membership rosters for people joining.
- Follow up with prospects who could not attend the Open House by sending a card, letter or email inviting them to the second activity.

E) SUBMIT APPLICATION ROSTERS

Turn in the rosters of new members as they join in the weeks to follow to the Exploring Division. The registration fee is individually calculated for your unit. Please note the fee is prorated by month. The fee is \$7.00 per youth to join for one year and includes accident insurance.

F) ROSTER CHECK

Around December 15, the Exploring Division will conduct a “Roster Check” with all units. Insurance concerns require us to register all youth who take part in activities and meetings.

Checklist Steps to a Successful Open House

Deadline Date	Task To Be Completed	Person(s) Responsible
<p>_____.</p> <p>(30- 45 Days in Advance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Set Open House date, time and location. ◆ Review Open House Plan at Officers’ Planning Session. ◆ Set Goal for new members at Open House. ◆ Develop a tentative three-month program. ◆ Obtain Student Interest Survey results from the Exploring Executive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____
<p>_____.</p> <p>(21 Days in Advance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Plan Open House Agenda – assign parts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ _____
<p>_____.</p> <p>(10-14 days in Advance)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Produce & Mail Open House Invitation Letters. ◆ Include Program Activity Calendar. ◆ Mail Invitation Letters to Last Year’s Members. ◆ Mail copy of Invitation to Exploring Executive. ◆ Mail Letter to School Guidance Counselor. ◆ Post in-House Employee Letter or email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____
<p>_____.</p> <p>(The Day Before)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Last Minute Phone Calls to Former Members. ◆ Using Survey List, make Reminder Calls to Prospective New Members. ◆ Confirm Youth & Adult Applications on hand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____

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<p>_____</p> <p>(Day of Open House)</p>	<p>Finalize Last Minute Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Access to Meeting Room secured. ◆ Double-check Program Agenda Assignments. ◆ Refreshments secured. ◆ Last minute Phone Calls made. ◆ Hand out Program Calendar & Applications. ◆ Activity Displays are out. ◆ Guests are greeted and sign 3 x 5 cards or sign-in sheet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____
<p>_____</p> <p>(Day After Open House)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Thank you letters sent. ◆ Mail Reminder Letter to new members of next meeting. ◆ Forward Registration Forms & Fees to Council Service Center. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ _____ ➤ _____ ➤ _____

Helps On Your Prospect List

PROSPECT LIST

Your area Exploring Executive can provide information from Student Career Interest Surveys conducted in local high schools to determine youth that are interested in your career field. In addition, have each post member list three to five of his or her friends as prospective members.

YOUR LETTER OF INVITATION

Letters to youth must be personalized. “Dear Student” letters normally do not work and will not get teenagers to come and sample the Exploring Program. Follow the plan as outlined by the sample letters provided. It is recommended that posts use the chartering organization letterhead, which is signed by the head of the organization. Letters of invitation should be to the brief and should highlight specific exciting activities. Emphasize what teens can do if they get involved with Exploring and the impact participating in an Exploring Post can have on a resume.

Messages most likely to attract attention of teens are:

- “... financial success ...”
- “... hands-on learning approach ...”
- “... challenging experiences ...”
- “... college endorsement ...”
- “... increased opportunity to obtain a job in an exclusive field ...”
- “... fun and entertainment ...”

NOTE: The term “Scouting” or “a program of the Boy Scouts” is not used the letter. The relationship of Exploring to the Boy Scouts of America is explained at the Open House.

Open House Sample Agenda

- 1. Gathering**

Have displays, photo albums, etc. around the room showing past activities
Welcome them, and hand out name tags, sign-in on 3 x 5 cards.
Involve them in some "hands on" activity for early arrival.

Post Members
- 2. Introduction and Welcome to the Group**

Welcome everyone thanking them for coming. Youth officers and adult leadership introduce themselves.

Post President or Advisor
- 3. Greetings from the Head of the Organization**

This person provides the group with a brief background of the organization's interest in sponsoring an Explorer post and their commitment to the post. This brief talk should be motivational in tone.

(Be sure to help this person beforehand in the correct use of Exploring language so that they feel comfortable and appears knowledgeable.)

Organization Head
- 4. Description of Exploring & the Exploring Program**

You may wish to use a slide or film about Exploring. This selection should be interesting and not too long.

Consider creative ways to have youth officers explain the meaning of Exploring. For example: if this is an existing post, have the president share highlights of the past year. For a new post, have a president from another post introduce Exploring.

Post President
- 5. Description of Upcoming Program Activities**

Give out copies of your planned program, with dates and times, for the first three months. During the meeting, you should explain the election of youth officers and their responsibility to lead the program for the Explorer post.

Vice President of Program
- 6. Hands-On Activity**

Design a hands-on activity for everyone to participate in or a tour of the chartered organization's facilities.

All
- 7. Questions & Answer Session**

Post President and Advisor
- 8. Invitation to Join**

Explain the registration process. Explain the registration allows them to participate in local council and national Exploring activities. Have them fill out the application form and collect fees.

Advisor
- 9. Refreshments & Fellowship**

All

(*Company Letterhead*)

Sample Letter of Invitation

(Career Post)

Dear _____ :

I understand we have a mutual interest in the field of _____. I invite you to become a member of our Exploring program with other students in the area who have the same interest. The purpose of this program is to give you the best information we can about careers in _____ through hands-on projects, guest speakers, tours, and discussions. Our group will meet twice a month throughout the school year with qualified, successful men and women in this field.

Participation in the program has helped students in the past to obtain college endorsement and increased opportunity to secure a job in this field after graduation.

Our first meeting will be (day and date) beginning at _____ p.m., in our company's (building or room location - include address) . I will be a brief meeting to acquaint you with the program and the people from (company name) , and to answer any questions you may have. We will conclude with light refreshments. Your friends or guests and parents are welcome to attend the first meeting. Let us know you are interested in planning to attend; call _____ at _____ between _____ and _____ p.m., weekdays or e-mail me at (e-mail address) . The courtesy of a prompt reply is appreciated by (date) .

Registration in Exploring is \$_____ and should be brought to the meeting to expedite enrollment when you decide to join. For more information ask your school guidance counselor about Exploring, or check out our Web site at www.learning-for-life.org. Click on the Exploring icon. Your future is one of the best reasons to look into different careers now. I am looking forward to meeting you and sharing our "know-how" and facilities.

Sincerely,

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

NOTE: This letter should be typed with the blanks filled appropriately, on company letterhead.

Each letter should be signed personally, in blue ink.

Mail the letters seven to ten days before the Open House date. Do not send earlier or later.

Enclose your post program outline.

Sample Letter or Email to In-House Employees

To: All Employees
Subject: Exploring Program

The (company name) is about to establish an *Explorer Post* for high school students. Studies have shown that the teenagers of today are very concerned about the career decisions they face tomorrow. Our Explorer program will give interested high school students an opportunity to gain knowledge and insight into the (career field) through guest speakers, presentations, and firsthand experience.

This Explorer post will meet twice monthly throughout the school year. Should you or any of your family or friends be aware of a high school teenager who would be interested in this program, please convey the information that there will be a "Open House" meeting to fully explain the program potential to the student and their parents on (date and time) , in the (location) . It will be a short meeting concluding with light refreshments.

Anyone interested in attending should contact (person and phone number) between and p.m., weekdays or send an e-mail at (e-mail address) . The courtesy of a prompt reply is appreciated. Registration in Exploring is \$, and should be brought to the meeting to expedite enrollment should he or she decide to join.

All of us are proud of our company and this is an opportunity to share our pride while helping the youth in our community.

Sincerely,

Signed by Chief Executive Officer

(Company Letterhead)

Letter to School Principals, Guidance Counselors and Career Related Classroom Teachers

This is a sample letter to high school faculty informing them of students from their high school have been invited to an Open House.

Dear (*name of faculty member*) :

We have written to a number of your students inviting them to attend a meeting conducted by our company. (See attached letter of invitation).

The purpose of the meeting is to establish an Exploring Post (career club) for those students who have expressed an interest in our field. It is intended that this group will meet approximately twice a month. The specific directions that the program will take depend almost entirely upon the interest of the group, the expertise of our staff, and the facilities of our company.

We learned of the students' career interests from the Exploring Division of the Boy Scouts of America local council. We understand that last spring the Exploring Division conducted a "career interest survey" for all students, through the help of your career education/guidance department. The students invited to this meeting are interested in careers of _____ , _____ and _____ . The names are indicated on your school's copy of the career interest survey. If there are other students not listed, but would be interested in becoming involved, please pass along a copy of this letter to them or have them e-mail me at ____(e-mail address)____.

We and the Exploring Division of the local Boy Scouts of America council, most cordially invite you and any of your associates to this meeting.

Sincerely,

Signed by the Chief Executive Officer or Post Advisor
(*signed personally if possible in blue ink*)

(*Company Letterhead*)

Invitation Letter to Former Explorers

Dear _____ :

I hope you had a great summer, and all is going well for you at the beginning of a new school year. As (*Advisor / President*) of Explorer Post (number) , sponsored by _____ (*chartered organization*) . I would like to invite you to again be a member of our Post. We will be having our Open House meeting on _____ (*day, date, time and location*) .

Feel free to come and bring any of your friends. The cost to join as a former Explorer is \$7.00. Please bring the amount with you.

We are planning to have a super year in Exploring. We are looking forward to seeing you again!

Sincerely,

Signed by Post President or Advisor
(*each signed personally if possible in blue ink*)

The Student Interest Survey

Each year, the Exploring Division of the Greater St. Louis Area Council, BSA, conducts a career and recreational interest survey in public and private high schools. This is possible because of the support and cooperation of school administrators and guidance counselors. Approximately 40,000 male and female high school students complete this survey each year. Choices are made by the students from a list of career, recreational or special interest areas.

The survey data is compiled and printed, providing the following information to the schools and the Exploring and Venturing programs:

- ◆ Student's top three Career choices
- ◆ Student's top two Recreational/Hobby choices
- ◆ Student's after graduation plans
- ◆ Complete listing of careers and recreational choices by order of preference

Each high school participating in the survey receives, at no cost, a copy of their students' survey results. This information greatly assists the school with their counseling responsibilities.

From the survey data, addresses are printed for each student and grouped by career and recreational interest area. These addresses, grouped by interest area, are then grouped by zip code area. The next step is to match these interests of the youth with a company or organization from their area of the city, suburb or outlying area that deals in the same career/recreational field of interest. Once an organization or company agrees to sponsor an Explorer Post or Venture Crew, a letter of invitation is written on their letterhead and signed by the company or organization head. The letter of invitation is then mailed to those students, from the area, who have expressed an interest in the given interest topic. The letter invites the students to attend the "Open House" to find out more about the Exploring program.

