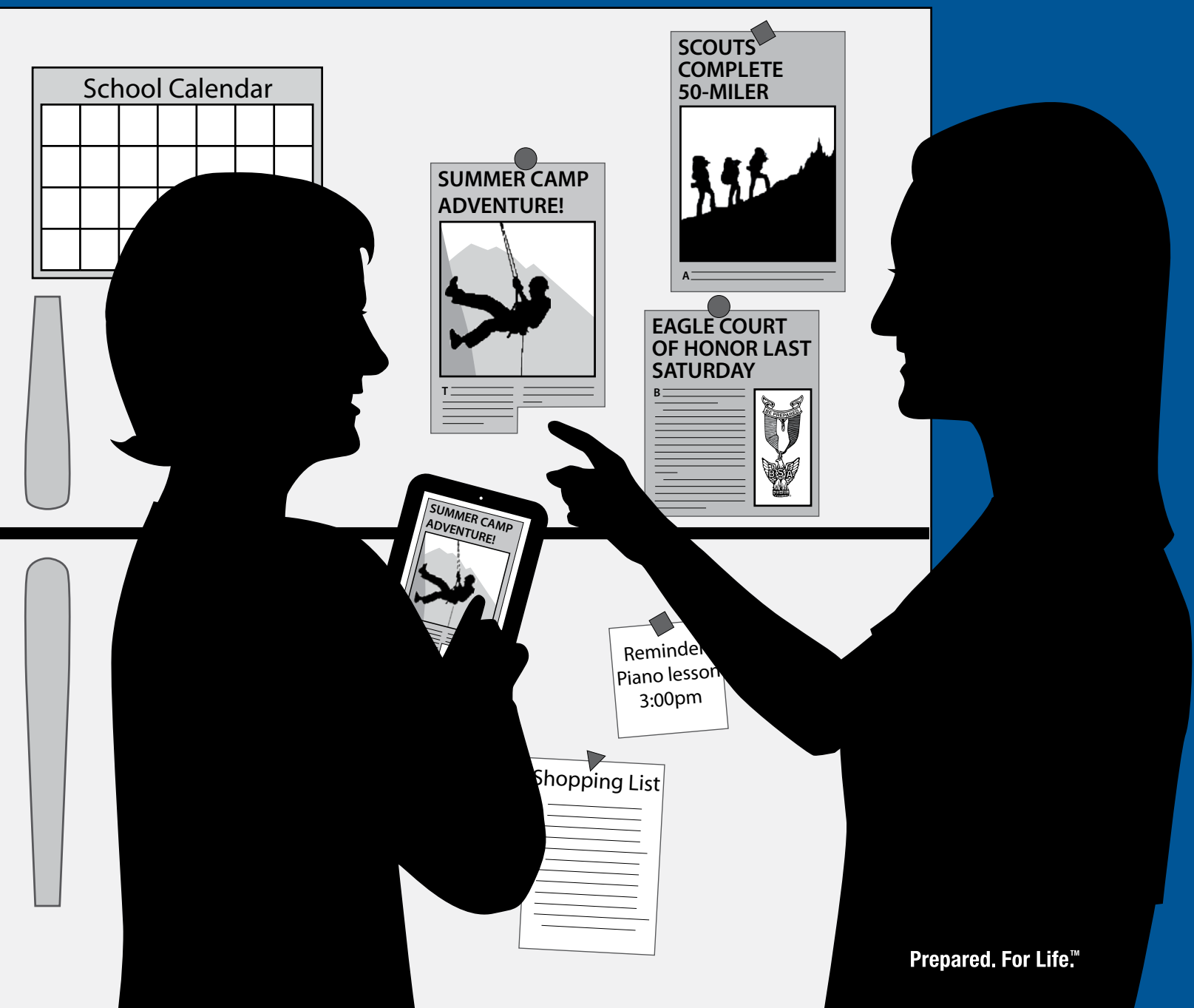




BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

UNIT PUBLIC RELATIONS

How to increase recognition and membership





Publicizing Your Unit

Use local public relations to ensure Scouting continues to grow in your community. This brochure will guide you in developing a simple, effective strategy to help tell your Scouting story to the communities you serve. Keep it simple.

The goal is to help each unit develop a basic, yet effective, public relations program. Keep it focused and manageable—less is more. Concentrate on community newspapers, which need and want your articles. Resist the urge to do more unless and until you have the time and experience to do so.

Why Publicize Your Unit?

To continue to be successful and keep growing, your unit must be visible in the community. Community newspapers want and need submissions. Most do not have large staffs, so a submitted article is a welcome assist. Scouting should not be a well-kept secret. Scouts in action should appear next to articles about athletic teams and other youth activities. Articles posted on refrigerator doors across the country help keep Scouting at the center of family activities.

The Value of Refrigerator Door Marketing

This kind of marketing raises awareness and directly impacts membership recruiting. Boys want to have fun in ways that are recognized by the community. Being recognized and accepted makes parents feel good about being involved. It also increases retention by confirming to parents that they made the right choice. It provides public recognition of success, and finally, it increases fundraising potential by demonstrating the value of Scouting to parents, chartered organizations, and communities.

It Really Works!

Units have experienced phenomenal growth when they follow these guidelines. Councils have excellent market penetration as well. Retention and recruiting improve! Try it!

Getting Started—Keep It Simple

1. **Recruit a unit public relations chair** who will report to the unit committee chair and/or Scoutmaster. If there is a PR Scout (e.g., troop historian), the unit PR chair should coach the PR Scout. Also engage Scouts working on the Journalism merit badge.
2. **In troops and crews, recruit a PR Scout or Venturer to take and/or collect photos at events, courts of honor, summer camp, and outings—** fun and recognition are key. The PR Scout can draft articles for the community newspaper under the guidance of

the unit PR chair. The PR Scout can also create and maintain unit binders to archive the unit's history. These can be used to market a unit at recruiting nights. The binders may also be used at chartered organization events as a thank-you, and to market the unit alongside the chartered organization.

3. Develop an annual plan.

Look for events or activities to share in your community. Set realistic, achievable goals—one submission per month, every other month, or quarterly.

4. Decide which media outlets to use.

Community newspapers are at the top of the list, but consider your chartered organization's newsletters, and other publications. Local council and unit newsletters, online-only publications, and calendar postings are also options.

5. Call your local community newspaper.

Get a contact name and the rules for submissions. Introduce yourself and explain what you would like to do. A good rapport with the media increases the chances your material will be used. Know submission deadlines and the format required. Follow their rules religiously . . . make their life easier, and they will use your material.

6. Use a press release.

The most common of all public relations tools is a press release submitted to local media, like community newspapers. A press release should communicate key information by including the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the story you are trying to tell. Be sure to include photos with your release. Supply your contact information along with the press release. A sample press release can be found in the Marketing Toolbox at www.scouting.org/marketing.

Thought starter

Looking for a way to get started? Provide support for each new Eagle Scout and his family by publicly recognizing his achievement. Publicize the service project and include pictures of the court of honor for each new Eagle Scout in your troop. Include PR forms and instructions in each Eagle package.

Resources

- Unit PR Guidebook—Looking for news release guidelines and general rules or alternate publicity ideas and examples to follow? Check out the Unit PR Guidebook on the Marketing Toolbox at www.scouting.org/marketing.
- Press release template—A customizable press release template is available on the Marketing Toolbox, www.scouting.org/marketing.
- Talent Release Form—Before publicizing photos or information about Scouts in your unit, be sure you have a Talent Release Form from each of them. Make it part of your annual registration process. A sample form is available on the Marketing Toolbox, www.scouting.org/marketing.