



Venturing – Boy Scouts of America

PROMISING PRACTICES

The Results

The Venturing programme has been the fastest growing segment of the Boy Scouts of America, and arguably the most exciting programme offered through the BSA. By reforming the older programme a new spark of enthusiasm has been generated that is creating a fire that is burning across the nation.

The Reasons

In 1998 the Venturing programme was launched as part of a refocusing of the older youth programme. Since 1949 this segment was under the Exploring name. Through the course of the forty-nine previous years the programme had evolved such that it became necessary to spilt the more "traditional" Scouting programmes of arts and hobbies, outdoors, Sea Scouts, sports, and youth ministries, from the career awareness programmes that had also grown to be a part of the Exploring programme. Through refocusing on the more traditional programmes, it has been possible to create more support and catch a new wave of enthusiasm among the youth of America.



The Venturing programme focusses on more traditional programmes

The Methods

Venturing is a youth run and youth led programme that serves the 14-20 age range of young adults. The synergism of

the programme is based on a unique and dynamic relationship between youth, adult leaders (advisors), and organizations in their communities. Local community organizations establish (charter) a Venturing crew by matching their people and programme resources to the interests of young people in the community. The result is a programme of exciting and meaningful activities that helps youth pursue their special interests, to grow, to develop leadership skills, and to become good citizens. Venturing crews can specialize in a variety of avocation or hobby interests.



Venturing encourages its member to train others

Venturing encourages its members to set goals, and achieve more. This is evident in the advancement/recognition for Venturers. One common thread is the notion that not only should one learn and experience something, but they also must be able to teach it. Venturing activities are developed around 'six experience areas' – citizenship, leadership, fitness,



Strategic Priority 1

Youth involvement – revitalising the Scout Method



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social, outdoors, and service. This philosophy filters through the programme, and perhaps best seen in the Ranger Award.

The Ranger Award encourages

- Venturers to achieve a high level of outdoor skills proficiency;
- recognition of achievement of this high level of outdoor skills proficiency;
- provision of a path for outdoor/high adventure skills training;
- establishment of Rangers as a highly trained leadership resource for crews, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and the community.



The Ranger Award sets high levels of advancement in outdoor activities

The Ranger Award exemplifies a challenging high-level outdoor/high adventure skills advancement programme. Once earned, it will identify a Ranger as an elite outdoorsman who is skilled at a variety of outdoor sports and interest, trained in outdoor safety, and ready to lead or assist others in activities.

Venturing should be an exciting, advanced-level programme where you learn and use advanced skills for your own enjoyment and growth, as well as to benefit others.

Life is a series of experiences, and the Venturing Silver Award is similar. The Venturing Silver award marks the pinnacle of the programme and leads on a pathway of exciting life experiences that will guide one to become a skilled citizen.

Venturing achieves the mission of the BSA which is: *"To prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law"* through confronting issues about ethical choices and values by encouraging them to organize ethical forums and discuss ethical controversies.

The working methods of Venturing are: group activities, adult association, leadership, (Scouting) ideals, high adventure, recognition, teaching others.

Our Learning

Along the way youth move through a critical period in their personal development, from dependence to interdependence and finally to independence. Throughout this change Venturing is a safe place for explorations, and questions. When youth move through this part of their life and have the opportunities that Venturing provides them with, it helps them to learn valuable life skills in a non-formal educational environment. Among the lessons learned often include, working as a team, budgeting/ handling money, planning, management, and trust, and leadership, but the most important lessons learned are personal learning about one's self.

Venturing is about leadership. Youth take on real world positions of president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Throughout the programme, from unit to district to council to region and nationally there is a network of youth leaders that support the programme. Venturing affords one the opportunity to work with and give leadership at all levels and offers experiences that one would not be able to have otherwise.

Our Future Plans

The future of Venturing is bright, the rate of growth of the programme has been consistently been between 11-12% annually. Currently there are over a quarter of a million members and

Venturing celebrated its fourth birthday in August of 2002.

In celebration more support material has been prepared. This includes the release of a recruiting video and further support from a revised Venturing sales kit. Venturing sees the opportunity to make a positive impact on the choices teens make, and has released a CD-ROM training on safe driving. This supports the Venturing Safe Rides programme also. This CD was provided in sufficient quantity free of charge through various donations to every council nationwide.

In the future there will be a National Venturing Super Activity. To learn more about the programme visit: www.scouting.org/venturing or contact Charles Holmes at cholmes@snetbsa.org



Venturing develops leadership and management skills in young people



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