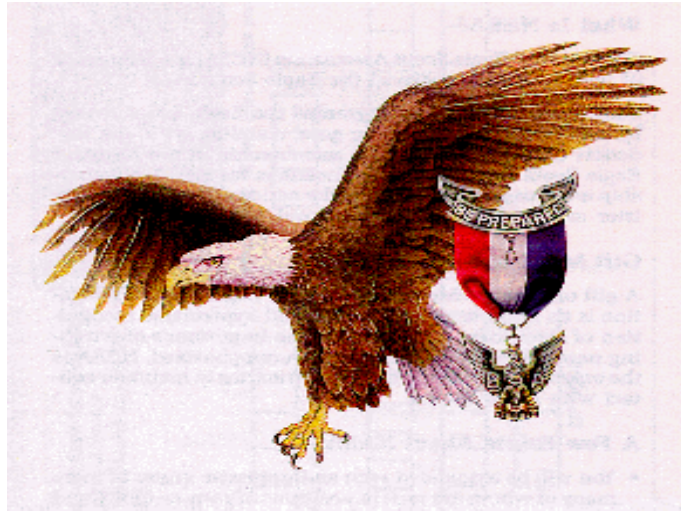


**TROOP 6 BSA**  
**PLEASANT RIDGE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
**CINCINNATI, OHIO**



**A Brief History of Our Troop**

Troop 6 is one of the oldest Scout troops in the United States. Boy Scouting came to the United States on February 12, 1910. Our troop turned 90 years old in 2005, having been founded on May 12, 1915. Through all those years, our troop has always been active, serving the youth of the Pleasant Ridge/Kennedy Heights/Silverton/Amberley/Golf Manor area. Currently, Troop 6 is the only Scout troop in this immediate area. Cub Scout Pack 517, whose chartering organization is Nativity Parish, is presently the only Scout pack that feeds into Troop 6. Troop 6's chartering organization, the Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church, is steeped in history and tradition. It was the first Presbyterian church in the Cincinnati area, opening its doors in a one-room log cabin in 1790.

At one time, our troop had over 100 active Scouts. After the bridging ceremony in March, when the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Webelos from Pack 517 join the troop, membership should number between 30 and 40 Scouts. Our troop is well known for its quality outdoor program, having been featured in the July, 2003 issue of *Boys' Life* with an article covering the previous summer's high adventure canoe trip on the Buffalo River in Arkansas.

**Two Ways of Looking at Scouting**

If your son has just joined Troop 6, welcome. If he's still considering it, we're glad he's interested. In either case, this information will answer your questions about Boy Scouting and our troop. There are two ways of looking at Boy Scouting. From the boy's viewpoint, it's a game. It takes him outdoors for camping, hiking, canoeing, biking, and a lot of other activities, and it gives him a chance to learn new skills and be recognized for them. Boy Scouting also provides plenty of fun with old and new friends. From the parent's viewpoint, Boy Scouting is all that and more. It aims to strengthen the boy's character through precept and example, to make him an aware, participating citizen, and to enhance his physical, mental and moral development. That sounds like a tall order, and it is. But Boy Scouting has proven over time

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that it can fill that order by exposing your son to new, wholesome experiences as he works and plays with his fellow Scouts in our troop.

**How Your Son Joins**

To be a Boy Scout, your son must be 11 years old or have completed the fifth grade, or have received his Arrow of Light Award in Cub Scouts, whichever comes sooner. Together, you and he must complete the application form and return it to our troop's Scoutmaster, Joe Harris, along with the troop's registration fee. The registration fee schedule is listed below and covers the cost of registration with the Boy Scouts of America, *Boys' Life* magazine, troop insurance, and the costs of advancement badges, leadership position patches, and the like. Our rechartering month each year is December; for scouts currently in the troop, the \$35 annual dues must be paid by the end of December. The yearly dues for a boy who joins between January 1 and June 30 is \$35. From July 1 through September 30, the fee is \$20. From October 1 to December 31, the fee is \$10. The fee for a second Scout in the same family is \$10 less than the above (minimum \$10) because only one subscription of *Boys' Life* magazine is sent to each family. Boys transferring into the troop from a cub pack where they have maintained active registration will pay \$10 less than the above fees (minimum \$10), since the troop has to pay less to BSA National Council to transfer the membership. If more than one Scout resides in a home, only the oldest Scout receives *Boys' Life* magazine.

At the time the Scoutmaster accepts your son's application to be a Scout, our Scoutmaster will talk with him to see that he understands and subscribes to the Scout Oath and the Scout Law; that he understands the Scout Motto, Scout Slogan, Scout Salute, Scout Sign, and Scout Handclasp; and that he knows the significance of the Scout badge and the Outdoor Code. All of these items are covered in Cub Scouting, normally during the last few months of 2<sup>nd</sup> year Webelos, and are also explained in the Boy Scout Handbook. Your son must also review the supplement in the front of the Boy Scout Handbook on Drug and Child Abuse with a parent. When he meets these requirements, he is a Scout.

Be sure your son obtains a copy of the Boy Scout Handbook right away. The cost is about \$8.00. The handbook contains everything he needs to know to earn badges and to become a real outdoorsman and a first-class citizen. The handbook is sold at the Scout Shop at the Dan Beard Council BSA headquarters, 2331 Victory Parkway, just south of McMillan Street in Walnut Hills. There is also a council service center in the Tri-County area, at 7255 Dixie Highway (Route 4) in Fairfield, where the handbook, Scout apparel and other items may be purchased. Check the council website at [www.danbeard.org](http://www.danbeard.org) for exact locations and hours of operation, or call 961-0500 (Walnut Hills) or 942-8200 (Fairfield).

The Scoutmaster will give to your son a calendar of events for the entire year (September – August). The calendar is also on the troop website ( <http://www.bsa-troop6.org> ). You should review the dates of all troop outings and activities and put them on your family calendar. Two other things you should do from the very beginning of your son's involvement in Scouting:

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- Keep one or more files in a file drawer devoted to Scout-related matters, such as monthly outing flyers, the troop calendar, handouts from merit badge workshops and skill sessions, National Youth Leadership Training information, summer camp, etc.
- Keep a ring binder with pockets for advancement cards, merit badge cards and other information related to advancement, since each Scout must have a record of his advancements in order to reach the rank of Eagle Scout

#### **Your Role as a Scout Parent**

Naturally, you'll want your son to get the most out of Scouting. So you will want to keep the dates of troop activities on your calendar as a reminder, encourage him as he progresses in the advancement program, and perhaps help him master the skills of Scouting. But his success in Scouting depends in part on the success of our troop. If the troop is strong, active, and vibrant, he will have a much better chance to make the most of his experience as a Scout. You can help keep the troop strong.

How you support the troop depends on your talents and available time. Perhaps you will be asked to serve on the troop committee, which functions as a sort of board of directors. Or you might be called upon for only occasional tasks, such as helping with occasional service projects, providing transportation for a campout or hike, maintaining troop equipment, or serving as a merit badge counselor in a hobby or career field with which you are familiar. For any role in the troop, training is available, whether it's "on-the-job" training from another parent in the troop, or more formal adult leader training through Boy Scouts of America such as Wood Badge, Scoutmaster/Assistant Scoutmaster, or Member of Troop Committee, to name a few. An outstanding opportunity to acquire both formal and informal training takes place at the University of Scouting on a Saturday in January; formerly known as Pow-Wow, the University of Scouting is now held at the University of Cincinnati Clifton campus. As with other adult training sessions, the troop pays the nominal registration fee. Be sure to watch for information on this year's University of Scouting, and plan to attend.

From time to time, your son's patrol may need a meeting place to work on a project or practice a skill. You can help him and his patrol by making your home available. The patrols are encouraged to develop their own activities, but as with all Scout activities, any patrol outing requires at least two adults be present (the "two-deep leadership" philosophy).

Occasionally, you and your family will be invited to a special troop activity, such as a parent's night or a court of honor, at which Scouts are recognized for their advancement. Parents are always welcome to come on the camping trips and hikes with the Scouts, and many do and love it. In November, the whole family will be invited to come to the traditional Turkey Campout weekend at a nearby state park or Scout camp. We cook several turkeys, and in some years a whole pig, over charcoal and have a grand feast on Saturday evening. Some families come for the whole weekend, but those who can't spend the night may come up for the day on Saturday. We also invite the 2<sup>nd</sup> year Webelos Scouts from Pack 517 to camp with us that weekend.

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## **An Overview of the Troop Outdoor Program and Associated Costs**

Our troop has a very active outdoor program. Normally, we have a monthly campout, regardless of the weather. Typical activities on campouts include canoeing, mountain biking, backpacking/hiking, rock climbing, caving, and in some years, skiing. During the month prior to an outing, Scouts who are familiar with the upcoming activity present one or more skill sessions to the rest of the troop, so that all are prepared. Our troop goes to a week of summer camp every year, normally in the last half of June. The troop also takes one or two high adventure trips most summers; recent trips have included backpacking at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico (2005 and 2007) and in Isle Royale National Park in Michigan (2004), canoeing the Namekagan and Flambeau rivers in Wisconsin (2003), canoeing the Buffalo River in Arkansas (2002), and hiking in the Tetons in Wyoming (2002) and the White Mountains of New Hampshire (2001). For many of the high adventure trips, age and/or rank restrictions apply; for example, Philmont Scout Ranch requires all Scouts to be at least 14 years of age, or 13 years of age and have completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Many Scouts earn the entire costs of these trips by money-earning projects such as the annual pancake breakfast at the Presbyterian Church in February and the annual popcorn sale in the fall. The typical cost of a monthly campout is \$20 to \$30, summer camp is about \$175, and the high adventure trips usually run around \$200 to \$400. Council-sponsored workership and “campership” programs are also possible (ask the Scoutmaster about these). With the money-earning projects, money should not keep a Scout from enjoying all of the Scouting activities. The troop also encourages uniform exchanges: When a Scout grows out of his uniform, we encourage him to bring it in and make it available for a younger Scout. Purchase and upkeep of troop gear is primarily funded from grants from the Presbyterian Church and from money-earning projects.

## **Our Troop’s Uniform**

It is not the purpose of the Scout uniform to hide the differences between boys or make them feel they are all the same. Scouts come from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. They have their own religious beliefs and family traditions. Scouting wants boys to take pride in these differences, rather than to hide them or to be ashamed of them.

But there is one way in which all Scouts are alike. Whenever a Scout sees another person in a Scout uniform, he knows he is like that person because both have committed themselves to the principles of the Scout Promise and the Scout Law. The Scout Promise and Law bind all Scouts of the world together in a common purpose. So boys wear the Scout uniform to identify themselves openly with some beliefs to which we are all committed.

When a Scout joins Troop 6, he receives his troop neckerchief, troop numeral, red epaulets and neckerchief slide in a special induction ceremony. Other uniform parts like the council patch may be purchased at one of the two Scout shops. Rank badges and badges of office will be given to the Scouts at special ceremonies, such as courts of honor.

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The official uniform for summer events is the Troop 6 yellow T-shirt (the “Class B uniform”) and blue jeans or shorts. During the school year, Scouts are asked to wear the tan Scout shirt (the “Class A uniform”) and the green Scout pants, khaki pants, or blue jeans. At special events (courts of honor, pancake breakfast, et al.), Scouts are to wear the Class A uniform, including the troop neckerchief, and Scout pants or dress slacks. The Class A uniform shirt is available at either Scout shop; the Class B uniform shirt is normally given to new Scouts upon joining the troop, and is available to adults and older Scouts for about \$10.

#### **Later Needs**

As your son gets into Scouting activities, he will have some equipment needs. An active troop such as ours does year-round camping, so items such as a sturdy backpack, hiking boots, poncho/rain suit, Scout pocketknife and sleeping bag are needed. Use your own good judgment. Only you know what you can afford. We would suggest you and your son talk with the adult leaders and older Scouts in our troop about what are the good brands and which brands of equipment to avoid. You can be assured that official BSA equipment is well built, but you may be able to obtain just as good equipment at a lower price through mail-order catalogues, or websites such as [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com) or [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com), or on sale at a local outdoor store like Self-Propelled Outdoorsman, Sun & Ski or Benchmark. In general, the local outdoor stores will charge about the same or more than you would pay at the Scout Shop for many items. Keep in mind that equipment purchased at the Scout Shop carries a lifetime guarantee. If a fiberglass tent pole or a zipper breaks, just take it back for replacement. However, the Scout Shop never has a sale. You can certainly buy less expensive gear at a discount store, but it might not stand the test of time.

#### **How Our Troop Works**

Our troop is owned and operated by our chartering organization, the Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church. The troop is part of their youth program. The church is responsible for assuring the troop has a good program with qualified adult leadership. The church also provides a place to meet as well as providing some funds for troop gear and maintenance of that gear.

The Boy Scouts of America provides the framework for the program, but in no way owns the Scout troop or dictates to the troop or to the church who the troop leaders should be. These are the responsibilities of the church and the troop committee. The adult leaders of the troop are the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters, and the troop committee chair and the members of the troop committee. All are unpaid volunteers; some are parents of boys in the troop, while others are parents of Scouts who have “graduated” from Troop 6. This points up one of the greatest strengths of Troop 6: Many parents remain involved in troop activities, even after their Scout has reached 18 years of age and is no longer a member of the troop. The real leaders of the troop, however, are the youth leaders themselves.

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Within the troop, your son and a few other new Scouts will initially be assigned to a patrol with older Scouts, to provide an opportunity to “learn the ropes” with boys who have already been on several outings. After several months, once the newest Scouts have acquired some Scouting skills, they will form their own patrol, a group of six to ten boys similar in age. His patrol will be his team for games and contests, his closest buddies in camp, and his teachers as he works on advancement. One of the members of the patrol is the patrol leader. All patrol leaders are expected to attend monthly meetings of the patrol leader council (PLC) and communicate regularly with his patrol members. A parent is needed for each patrol to provide adult assistance and to attend weekly meetings; the “patrol parent” is encouraged to take the BSA training for the adult leader rank of Assistant Scoutmaster.

The older scouts in the troop, those age 14 and older, may choose to form a special patrol known as a Venture Crew, while still remaining members of their regular patrol. This Venture Crew can plan its own more challenging activities such as kayaking and mountain climbing. But by remaining in a regular patrol, they are able to provide leadership and skills instruction to the younger Scouts. At this point, there are no Venture crews in Troop 6.

Troop meetings are planned and conducted by boy leaders under the coaching and guidance of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters. This is part of the plan to help your boy grow: To make decisions and to take an active part in making the troop program successful. A typical troop meeting includes work on outdoor skills, first aid, fitness, citizenship, or some other aspect of Scouting; a brief patrol meeting for advancement progress, or planning a future patrol or troop event; and ceremonies highlighting Scouting’s ideals.

At troop meetings and outings, and working on his own, your son will have a chance to earn many badges and awards. He will receive his Scout badge as soon as he has his first talk with the Scoutmaster. After earning the Scout badge, he will work on rank advancement for Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class ranks, and any of more than 100 merit badges. As he earns these awards and badges, he will progress from Tenderfoot through the Second Class and First Class ranks to the more difficult requirements for the Star Scout and Life Scout ranks. With sufficient hard work, he may earn the most distinctive of all: The Eagle Scout Award. Only 2% of all Scouts earn the Eagle badge. Our troop has awarded this coveted badge to many Scouts over the years, averaging 2 or 3 per year. We hope your son aspires to reach Eagle.

Each month, the troop will conduct one or more special events, such as an overnight campout, an outing to some location of special interest or significance, or a troop service project, to develop his interest and self-reliance. Encourage his participation in these events, but let him prepare for them on his own as much as possible. For instance, if he is going on a troop overnight, let him collect his own gear and pack it. He may make some mistakes or forget something. Let him do it; that’s part of the learning experience in Scouting.

During the summer months, the troop maintains an active schedule of activities, normally outdoors, on Monday evenings. Plans for these outings and assignments for organizing these outings are made at the April or May patrol leaders council. These outings usually begin at 6

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p.m., earlier than the normal troop meeting time, so that the activity can be conducted during daylight hours. Examples of summer activities include bicycling, fishing, rappelling in Eden Park, laser tag, miniature golf, frisbee/ultimate, and of course, Capture the Flag.

Your son may be asked to go to National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) camp if he becomes a junior leader and shows promise. Encourage him to take the opportunity. A Scout must be 13 years of age and have reached the rank of First Class. The troop usually pays all or most of his way, because the training is so important to a well-functioning troop. Such training is also very valuable to your son. At NYLT, he learns how to lead, teach, counsel and plan. These are the same skills he will need all his life to reach his highest potential. NYLT, formally Junior Leader Training (JLT), was redesigned by BSA National for 2005. Additionally, the troop normally spends one Saturday each year with an in-house training program which complements NYLT; this training is for the patrol leaders and others in leadership roles in the troop.

In addition to the skill sessions mentioned previously, other training opportunities are integrated into the Troop 6 calendar. Each year, the troop spends time at weekly meetings in training activities related to detecting and avoiding child abuse and drug abuse, developing a safe swim defense plan, maintaining safety afloat, and other educational programs.

The activities of Scouting are vigorous and demanding, as any Scout who went on the Isle Royale high adventure backpacking trip in 2004 or the Cumberland Gap weekend backpacking trip in February, 2005 will tell you. You will be amazed at what your son can do if he really wants to. It is hoped that each boy will have a physical exam soon after joining the troop. He will be required to have a physical exam before going to summer camp; the results of this exam and other information on his health history must be written on a special BSA health form and taken to summer camp.

#### **Meeting Time and Place**

Troop 6 meets almost every Monday night in the basement Scout room at the Pleasant Ridge Presbyterian Church from 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. Meetings typically last about 90 minutes. Generally, the Monday following a campout is PLC night, so no troop meeting is held then. Be sure to keep a copy of the troop calendar handy, and check the troop website frequently to keep current on troop activities.

All calendars, permission slips for campouts, information on upcoming campouts, troop rosters, pictures of past campouts, and other items of interest are on the troop website ( [www.bsa-troop6.org](http://www.bsa-troop6.org) ). The rosters are password protected. Contact Joe Harris, the Scoutmaster, at [josephsharris@fuse.net](mailto:josephsharris@fuse.net) for the current password.