On fully using your talents in Scouts (and how rewarding it is)

By Didi Gorman

Our post today is focused on Scouters. There are numerous articles about the immense benefits of Scouting to youth, but today’s post is dedicated to you, the adult volunteer.

Let’s start with a question: Are you familiar with that great feeling when you get to practice a skill you really, really enjoy? This rewarding feeling is called self-fulfillment – a big word which stands for ‘the feeling of being happy and satisfied because you are doing something that fully uses your abilities and talents.’ (Definition taken from the Merriam-Webster dictionary).

Now think about your Scouting experience. Do you get to use that skill in Scouts? It may even be a skill you have not been aware of before and only discovered through your Scouting experience, for example: leading, coaching, mentoring, fundraising, organizing, keeping track of supplies, budgeting, business planning, public speaking, problem-solving, writing, communicating, researching, inspiring others, fixing, repairing, building or constructing, cooking, caring, managing or coordinating.

I could go on and on, but you get the gist.

You probably noticed the wide variety of talents in this list, reflecting both leadership as well as administrative and support roles in a group. I’ve included a few skills that may seem quite vague or less obvious than others (in the sense that they are not strictly related to Scouting), but if you stop to think about it, you have quite possibly observed some of these abilities in a real person in a real situation in a Scouting context, whether in a fellow Scouter or in yourself.

I’ve observed fellow Scouters blossom when leading a game or an activity with the youth. Similarly, I’ve seen members with a remarkable knack for the organizing and coordinating of any kind of project, however complex.

As for less obvious examples, let’s take writing (and hopefully ‘inspiring others’ as part of it) which is not strictly a Scouting skill but can still be put to full use for the benefit of Scouting. Such was the case with me when an opportunity to take on our group’s publicity presented itself a couple of years ago, and included writing about our group in local newspapers and Scouting blogs.

A virtuous cycle is created when you’re in your element, practicing a talent you are passionate about. The practice makes you better at it and consequently, you enjoy it even more – a win-win for you and your group.

We’re now touching on a major factor in member retention – a topic deserving a post all of its own. I would like to conclude, therefore, with two words which beautifully capture the essence of a fulfilling Scouting experience:

Have fun!
Yours in Scouting,
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