

How do I Facilitate a Bring-a-Friend Event for my Section?

- A great way to have more youth and adults explore the benefits of Scouting is to host a Bring-a-Friend event. The objective of an event is to grow membership by using existing Scouting members as ambassadors.
- For Scouting youth, Bring-a-Friend events are an opportunity to show their friends how awesome Scouting is, and to give their friends a chance to learn more about the incredible adventures and experiences Scouting offers. For the Group, it provides an opportunity to increase the number of youth in its Sections and to connect with more parents and potential Scouters.
- As always, youth are the leaders of Bring-a-Friend events. This is their program that they are showing off to their friends, and their perspective and participation is crucial to the event's success. Collaborate with the youth in your Section using the **Bring-a-Friend Trail Cards to involve them in each step of the Plan-Do-Review process of the Bring-a-Friend Night.**

- Engage the youth in your Section in the planning process for the Bring-a-Friend event. Who do they want to invite? What favourite games do they want to play? What fun activities do they want to show their friends? What do they love about Scouting? Help the youth in your Section create their invitations, and make sure they are clear on the date, time and location of the meeting. Reach out to your Group and Area team for the available supply of invitations, and check out resources available through the **Recruitment Tool Kit** and **Bring-a-Friend** websites. Beaver and Cub-aged youth will appreciate personalized paper invitations, and electronic invitations are a great idea for Scout, Venturer and Rover-aged youth. Ask the youth in your Section to talk to their parents about the Bring-a-Friend Night as well. Invited parents may reach out to parents from your Section with questions, so ensure that everyone understands the details of the event. Encourage the youth in your Section to prepare games that everyone may know, or are easily teachable. Prepare activities that are Scouting related but not Scouting specific. Youth with no prior Scouting experience should be able to enjoy these activities as much as the youth in your Section who do have Scouting experience.
- Reach out to your Group and Area team to see if there are any incentives associated with Bring-a-Friend events (such as Scout Shop gift certificates for successful referrals). An incentive creates excitement around the event, and provides youth in your Section with recognition for helping to grow their Section.
- A Scouter and youth member should be the first smiling faces visiting youth and parents see when they enter your meeting space. Use this opportunity to welcome visitors upon arrival to your Bring-a-Friend Night, and sign them in. Your sign-in sheet should include space for the parent's name, the youth's name and contact information for the parent. This sign-in sheet will ensure you have the information to follow up with parents after the meeting. Ensure that parents of visiting youth have a space to sit where they can observe what their children are doing during the meeting. One Scouter should stay with the parents throughout the meeting to answer any questions they have, and to tell them about all of the camps and events planned for the year that their children can take part in by registering.



SCOUTERS' TIP

ALL SECTIONS

YOUTH-LED

- Clearly explain each component of the evening, including the objective and purpose of all games and activities. Outline the significance of Opening and Closing ceremonies, and what visiting youth can expect during these ceremonies. Explain Scouting terminology to the visiting youth and parents. Who are the Scouters in the room? What is the purpose of a Scouter? What is a Section Leadership Team? What is a Lodge, Lair or Patrol? Remember that these youth have never heard these terms before, so help to clarify any confusion. Involve the registered youth in this process—ask them to buddy up with their friends so they can make sure they are comfortable.
- At the end of the meeting, ensure that parents are aware of what next steps they can take to register their child with your Section. Prepare a package to send home with parents so they have this information available for reference. This package should include:
 - Registration forms (participant and Volunteer) and instructions for online registration
 - A list of upcoming events and camps your Section has planned
 - Contact information for the Group (the Group Commissioner or a Contact Scouter)
 - Program information (for example, a **brochure** for your Section)
 - Invitation to attend another free meeting
- It is important to be mindful of Scouts Canada's *By-Law, Policies and Procedures (BP&P)* during all Section meetings, including Bring-a-Friend events. Ensure that you are always maintaining the **Two-Scouter Rule** and a ratio of one Scouter to every eight youth. Reach out to your Group Committee or other Sections if you will need more Scouters on the floor to accommodate more youth. Youth are able to visit a Section up to two times for free prior to registration. After these two visits, the youth must be fully registered in order to continue to participate in Scouts Canada programming. Please refer to section **13012.3** of BP&P, which discusses **Hold Harmless Agreements** for adults and youth who are not registered with Scouts Canada. Note that youth who attend two free meetings are not required to sign a release form.
- Ensure the youth review the Bring-a-Friend event at your next meeting. What did the youth enjoy? What would they do differently next time? How did the youth work together as a team? How did the Scouters and youth work together? Ask the youth to follow up with their friends (while the Scouters follow up with the parents). Do their friends want to try another meeting? Would they like to register? Do they have any further questions?
- Bring-a-Friend Week is a great opportunity to host a Bring-a-Friend event, but keep in mind that you can host a Bring-a-Friend event anytime of the year. Encourage the youth in your Section to talk about Scouting with their friends, and to invite them to your regular weekly meetings.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Bring-a-Friend!
Recruitment Tool Kit
Scouts Canada Brand Centre

Canadianpath.ca



It starts with Scouts.

