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Rewarding your leaders at camp

Introduction

The main reason for running events, like big camps or jamborees, is to assist in the delivery of the youth programme. However, the opportunity to recognise and reward leaders and other adults at such events should not be overlooked. These events often involve many months and often years of preparation by adults, who volunteer their time because they believe in our Mission.

The purpose of this Euro.Scout.Doc is to raise awareness of the value of recognising and rewarding leaders and other adults at events like camps or jamborees as well as other large-scale events. It is intended to be used by those people involved in the organisation of such events and who might be considering how to support leaders and other adults involved in their realisation.

The document provides examples from experiences at EuroJam in 2005 and Roverway in 2006, when the European Scout Region had the task of creating a place for recognising and rewarding the many leaders and staff involved in delivering the event to many thousands of young people.



Understanding the needs of a leader

Members

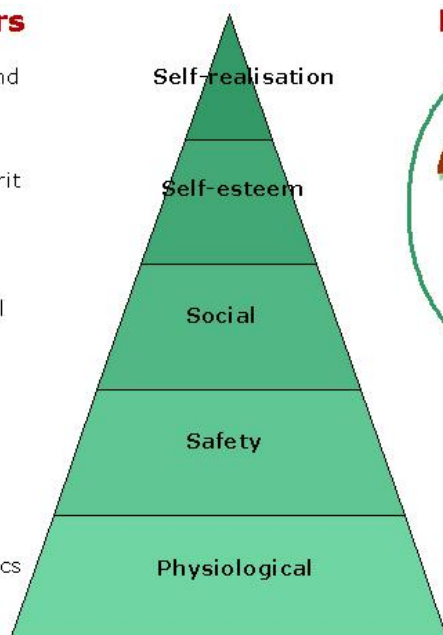
New skills and challenges

Scouting spirit

International friendship

Camp rules
Child safety

Camp logistics



Leaders



The needs of a volunteer or a person in general could be scaled and differentiated on the basis of the Maslow pyramid. In the rewarding process, there's no need to acknowledge the order of needs because you, as an organisation, offer only a part of the answer. Other needs can and will be fulfilled by others (friends, family, work...) But this view on different aspects helps us to be creative in developing how we reward and award.

Taking care of the needs that aren't offered by other people or activities at an event like a large camp or jamboree are often warmly welcomed. For example: if a campsite is dirty, people are happy to have the possibility to feel clean again. Generously meeting this need, by offering a shower with ten different kinds of smelling shampoo's, soft background music, a person who offers special feet care, ... a kind of beauty salon will be very popular. It is unusual, unique and welcome.

Why reward leaders and staff on large camps?

As has been said, the main goal of events like large camps and jamborees is to offer an attractive and fulfilling programme to our members, having a fun time in a Scouting spirit where there is an inspiring environment full of learning opportunities and where new friendships start.

Rightly, most of the communication is focused on what the participants are experiencing. In a supportive role, leaders and staff feel rewarded by the smiles and thanks that receive from the participants. For short events, this kind of recognition is usually adequate and it can be enough to sustain the hard working leaders and other adults.

However, at bigger and longer events, leaders and other adults also need a break and some time for themselves.

Which needs should be tackled?

Assuming that every leader and other adult will have some personal time, the focus of any recognition and rewarding actions should be based on the care of the adult as opposed to the care of the youth member.

Providing a place for leaders and other adults and giving them the attention they require is an important task for an organiser of such large events. In this document you'll find some inspiration for your own reflection on this necessary condition for running well-supported events.

Inspirational Ideas

Leaders and other hard working adults need a place of tranquillity in order to relax and recharge

- Consider locating such a place in, for example, a marquee in a quiet area of the campsite.
- Provide easy listening music, comfortable chairs like sofas with plump cushions as well as some decoration like flowers and pictures... It will be unexpected but welcome

Offer also possibilities for leaders and other adults to take their mind off the camp or event. They will appreciate the opportunity to escape for a short while from the pressures of delivering the camp or event.

- At EuroJam and Roverway a collection of international and local newspapers was provided every day. Some leaders and other adults were anxiously waiting for the new sudoku game when the Leaders Lounge opened and others challenged their minds on some wooden mind breakers. The possibility to charge their mobile was also much appreciated.

Accommodate the possibility for Leaders and adults to chat with each other. Often, because of the role that they have at the event, they might have limited contact with other leaders and adults.





- Offer free coffee, tea and biscuits fair trade, of course. Make leaders felt welcome to have a seat and to start a conversation.
- Have a team to act as hosts and show an interest in all the guests that drop by.

More direct rewarding can be shown by providing anti-stress activities with active or passive participation of the leaders.

- At EuroJam and RoverWay, back and neck massage was offered and many people were relieved to be given such care. It was much appreciated and to answer the increased demand training courses on how to do a good massage for fellow leaders and other adults were provided. After the treatment, leaders often enjoyed the comfort of a sofa to have a nap.

Other leaders and adults played games they had not tried before or learned some new dances.

- At Roverway, teamwork sudoku was introduced. Instead of the pen and paper method, the challenge was supplied on a nine by nine square on the soil with numbers written on laminated cards which let people think together to find solutions.

To answer the question of curiosity and the interest of exchanging personal thoughts of Scouting, a number of workshops, small discussions and informal conversations were held. Supported by some displays concerning topics the European Scout Region has recognised as being important for our leaders to reflect on, we exchanged ideas on how to tackle problems of recruiting new leaders, giving them new training opportunities or exploring trends relating to how adults

in society are volunteering. A few times, it was only a short reflection. In most cases it was possible to go more in depth offering solutions to take home. At Roverway, interviews with leaders were put on display with their answers to questions concerning their own recognition needs. Those examples of how they felt recognised by their peers gave input to new discussions.

Having experienced these relaxation and reflective opportunities, it was time for leaders to do some appreciation work on their own. Sending a postcard home to someone who made it possible to attend the camp was one welcomed idea; writing down some alternative ways to say 'thank you' on a display resulted in proposals such as 'offer a drink to fellow leader' and 'a good hug is always welcome'

Last but not the least, a right atmosphere helps leaders to put on their smile again. Some drawings of stupid situations, jokes and expressions made a lot of leaders and other adults continue their day even more positively.

Some other thoughts

At Eurojam, the tent of the European Scout Region was not in the neighbourhood of the International Service Team leisure space. Therefore, the hard working leaders and adults on staff were not fully aware of the possibility of relaxing in the Leaders Lounge. As the European Scout Region tent was closed in the evening, some people had no access to our service. It is worth ensuring that you have enough staff to run a tent like this on the right location.

Some leaders came, enjoyed the area and left without understanding the reasons. They used to come again and treated the area as a "free café where I can charge my mobile". Some of them even used to bring their young members instead of advising them to enjoy programmes created specially for them. You may think about choosing between different approaches. You can expect that by experiencing the feeling of treated well, they can unconsciously copy these ideas in their own future events. Or you can find nice and careful way to tell everyone that offering all the services is a way to thank them for the commitment and that people working there are also volunteers who have their task on the event - an important one too.



And now you

As organisers of a large camp or jamboree, you should take enough time to reflect on what these perspectives on rewarding could mean for your event. Probably a few of these examples can be copied but it's important to have your own view and offers depending on the profile of the leaders you expect. Some other rewarding activities are really nice if you do them only once, as a surprise and not every time, because they lose their impact.

At Eurojam, for example, youth participants were able to nominate their leader if they found him or her deserving of a well-meant 'Thank you'. This leader had the luck of having a complete breakfast in bed the next morning served by the members logistically supported by the European Scout Region.

Your creativity will generate many more ideas. Good luck with your own 'Leaders Lounge'.

This material was produced by the Adult Resources Core Group, WOSM European Region.

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