



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

BLACKHAWK AREA COUNCIL

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE SCOUTING VOLUNTEERS OF BLACKHAWK AREA COUNCIL WHAT HAS REALLY CHANGED WITH THIS NEW POLICY? FROM DON KINNEY, SCOUT EXECUTIVE

Let me ask you a few questions: Are you any less protective of your Cubs or Scouts than you were a week ago? Are they any less excited about the up-coming summer camping season? Are they any less rambunctious than they ever have been? Do you believe the boys in the class coming up behind them need Scouting skills and ideals any less than this bunch you've got? Let me answer for you... "NO!" None of those things has changed.

When was the last time you removed a boy from the program for being gay? Let me answer that one too... "Never have". And I don't expect that we ever will remove a boy because of his mere status or orientation even if we were aware that it was "different"... unless their behavior would become an issue... That's our policy, and pretty much has always been our practice.

Cub Scouts don't know about that stuff, and it ought to stay that way. Nobody should be talking with kids about sexuality except their parents, when the time is right. Probably 90% of our Boy Scouts are the kids we've been bringing along through the Cub Scout program for years already. These are our kids. And if, as they get older, they have issues come up in their lives, we always have gotten them connected with their parents and clergy.

The Resolution recently passed at the BSA's National Annual Meeting clearly states that "youth are still developing, learning about themselves and who they are, developing their sense of right and wrong, and understanding their duty to God to lead a moral life." In addition, the BSA resolution states that "any sexual conduct, whether homosexual or heterosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting."

We are maintaining our stringent policies that protect all of our members. Scouting remains a safe haven for all boys, and that includes orientation... even if they don't have a clue what that means until they are older.

Let's be patient with each other as we work through the differences that may divide us. We've always been an opinionated bunch, all 4,000 of us, but we've always found ways to work together as Americans and as Scouters, for the benefit of kids. And that has not changed either.

American families are depending on us to do our best, and to teach core values and life skills so that their sons will grow to be role models as principled men themselves someday.

When you get right down to it, Scouting is not just something that we do... it's who we are... and that hasn't changed either.

Don Kinney
Scout Executive,
Blackhawk Area Council