



# The Brotherhood – Reaching Out to Others

by Myles Vanni

**B.-P.** coined a phrase ‘Peace Scouts’, where he envisioned Scouts from different countries spreading the ideals of Scouting as Ambassadors of Peace. World Jamborees have been a great way of carrying out this mission but a newer activity is putting the idea of brotherhood into action.

For over 50 years, the Canadian Scout Brotherhood Fund has been the means for Canadian Scouts to help fellow Scouts worldwide. Providing funds to local Scouting groups in developing countries, Canadian Scouting has assisted with building schools, digging wells, establishing community farms and growing local Scouting.

A number of councils send teams of Venturers, Rovers and advisors to developing countries to experience community building first hand! These projects have had a profound effect both in the lives of the village where the project has been undertaken, but also in the lives of the Canadians who have rolled up their sleeves and literally dug into the project. Using Scouts Canada’s Canadian Development Booklet, found on the web site, here’s how two councils organized their Brotherhood Projects.

## Central America Brotherhood Projects

In 2000, 30 members from Islands Council in British Columbia and in 2001, 24 members from Tri-Shores Council in Ontario traveled to Central America (Costa Rica and Belize respectively) for building projects. The trips were each three weeks long but the preparation and work to get them there took 18 months. The building that took place was not just in those countries but very much here in Canada. Construction skills, communications, planning, public speaking, teamwork, leadership and fundraising helped ‘build’ our youth here in Canada.

Both trips followed similar planning and organization models, focusing on youth taking leadership roles. Such a project is certainly a major undertaking but extremely rewarding. These steps could help a group in your council have an extreme adventure – the time of their lives!

## Team Organization

Once the contingent advisor and youth contingent leader were chosen by the council commissioner, an information meeting was held for Venturers, Rovers and advisors to learn more about the opportunity, previous Brotherhood Projects and the required commitment. Each was given an application form to complete (detailing their Scouting experience, other travel/international experi-

ences, skills they could bring to the team, a paragraph on why they wanted to participate and two references).

Once team members were selected, they were put into one of five work groups. These work groups reflected the main areas for planning and preparation: Fundraising, Program, Marketing and Education, Project Preparation and Transportation (see sidebar). Each work group had a youth leader chair and an advisor. The youth chairs and the advisors, along with the contingent leader and contingent advisor, formed the Steering Committee.

With member’s input, the team developed a ‘Code of Ethics’. This ‘Code’ spelled out expectations of behaviour for all members during the year of preparation and while on the trip.

## Choosing a Project

Working with the International Relations Committee is the best means to find potential projects. They can contact other countries for their needs and match them to the committee’s goals. In determining the country of location, careful consideration needs to be paid to stability and safety of the country, ability to communicate (language, e-mail etc.), support that can be provided by the country’s National Scout Association, transportation costs and program opportunities.

## Budget

Although the Canadian Scout Brotherhood Fund contributed towards the building design and material costs, all other expenses were the responsibility of the team. These funds covered items such as transportation, food, accommodation, program, equipment, contingent items (clothing, crests, thank you gifts, equipment, etc.), contingent training and meetings, travel insurance, etc.

## Program

While the Venturers were in the country for three weeks, just over two weeks was spent in the village and the last few days were spent touring. Weekends and Wednesdays were also spent on an activity. Initially, the amount of time planned in program was a concern to

Photos: Iain Tait and Myles Vanni

some of the members, who thought more time should be spent on the project. It was later recognized how important these breaks were due to the heat and amount of physical work. Each project team would need to determine their own schedule.

### Pre-Trip

On both projects, one of the things that led to the success of the project was a pre-trip made by both the contingent leader and the advisor. Traveling to the country 6-8 months before the trip enabled us to lay the groundwork to make sure things were well organized locally (safety and security issues, life in the village, the construction needs, transportation possibilities, program opportunities, etc.). Most importantly, it established face-to-face relationships with the village and national Scouting organization to help ensure local ownership around the project. This was most important for success!

### Life in the Village

Our time in the villages was spent as much as possible in contact with the locals so that we could experience how they lived. In Costa Rica, we tented at the construction site and in Belize we tented at the Council Chair's home. Local villagers prepared food for us (which we paid for), while we assisted with cleanup. This served two purposes – it maximized the time we had for building and we tasted many native foods. We had a night in home stay – two Canadian youth together in a local home which really gave the youth a chance to experience how the villagers lived.

It's important for all participants to understand how different life will be in the country and village you go to. Relaying experiences from the pre-trip is an important step. So much is very different from Canada – food, culture, society values, work standards – the best way to learn is to be open-minded and not place our values on the countries we visit.

### Planning Tips:

- ☞ arrange for a small reception at the Canadian Embassy/Consulate
- ☞ plan on leaving behind materials to assist Scouting even further. In Belize, we left tents with the Scout Association for their use, as well as tools and coolers for use at the National Scout Camp. A plaque, inscribed with all the members' names was taken down and mounted on a small cairn built between two flag poles at the construction site (we left extra Canadian flags too).
- ☞ prepare to leave passports and flight tickets in a safe place (with the Embassy or Scout Association) while in the village and traveling. The contingent leader and advisor carried copies of each person's passport and medical info with them at all times. VERY IMPORTANT!
- ☞ keep parents informed with regular meetings.
- ☞ send out regular news bulletins with updates and reminders of tasks to be accomplished.
- ☞ say thanks! Donors and supporters were sent a post card as a thank you from the contingent while in Belize. Feedback on this was very positive!

Without a doubt, an experience such as this makes 'The Brotherhood' come alive and can serve to be the highlight of a Scouting experience! \/\

– Myles Vanni, has led two Brotherhood projects to Belize. Read more in the January 2007 Leader Magazine.

## Suggested Work Group Responsibilities:

*Fundraising* – to develop, plan and run fundraising activities.

*Program* – to research the country and program activities that could be undertaken to learn more about the country and culture and put on activities in the village (i.e. Canada Night).

*Transportation* – to research transportation, getting quotes on airfare, transport to and from the airport, airline baggage requirements, immunization requirements, etc.

*Marketing and Education* – to develop media releases, contingent wear, donor thank yous and an education kit to share with all sections in the council. It contained information on the country and program ideas to help leaders teach their youth about the country and Brotherhood projects.

*Project Preparation* – to develop training needed to prepare the team – construction skills, first aid, etc., as well as organize pre-camp weekends and develop personal and team kit lists.



PLANNING YOUR  
COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROJECT



## Planning Your Community Development Project

For more information, download the Planning Your Community Development Project booklet, available on Scouts Canada's web site ([www.scouts.ca](http://www.scouts.ca)), under International, The Canadian Scout Brotherhood Fund.

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