

# P.A. Days and Scouting — A Perfect Match

**E**very year, school boards across Canada hold Professional Activity (P.A.) Days for elementary and secondary school teachers; in Ontario there are about six a year.

As Scouting Field Executives in Southwestern Ontario, we saw this as a great opportunity to bring more youth into a structured short-term program. Successful P.A. Day programs were already running in St. Catharines and Windsor, and with SCOUTSabout programs having varying success, we decided to see if we could expand the concept further.

Setting our goal high, we aimed to have 1200 youth participate in the Scouts Canada P.A. Day programs in 40 locations throughout Southwestern Ontario.

We worked with the area commissioners in each of our assigned areas to select three P.A. Days out of each school board calendar and targeted those dates for the program. So as not to overburden council resources during the fall, we chose the winter and spring months for our experiment. Council Field Executives were to identify 8-10 potential facilities that could accommodate our program. With facilities identified, and after school boards had established their calendars, we began the process of selecting the dates and the 40 sites.

## Formula for Success

### 1. Recruit Qualified Volunteers

Our formula for success included recruiting qualified volunteers to act as program coordinators and to be part of the team. This was our biggest challenge in most of the areas. As an incentive, if they volunteered for all three P.A. Day programs, the council would cover the registration fee. This was modified as we got further into the program and found that volunteers were available on different dates but not necessarily all three. High school students, senior Scouts and Venturers were recruited to some of the programs.

### 2. Advertise Using many Venues

Flyers were sent to schools throughout the locations. On-line registration made it convenient and easy for parents to register their children in the program. As locations were confirmed, they were listed on the web site with information and details. We also promoted internally to groups in our areas. In a couple of locations, we ran newspaper ads to supplement the school flyers. A media release was sent out in hopes that this might catch some media attention too.

### 3. Select Enticing Themes

The program was targeted to girls and boys aged five to ten years old, and was based on a variety of our existing SCOUTSabout and JUMPSTART materials. Themes were timely and relevant and the children really enjoyed participating. For example, during the Climate Change program in Windsor Area, Kim McLaughlin, CDW, says that during lunch, participants were asking where the recycling bin was for their juice boxes. The three themes for the three days were:

**Day 1** – Climate Change (Only One Earth – Care and Share)

**Day 2** – Around the World in a Day

**Day 3** – A Day in the Wild

By the end of the first program, we had youth recruiting their friends and word was getting out in the community. We reached more young people by the second and third days and most indicated they would come back next year. As competition for P.A. Day programs in some of these cities is fierce, we were pleased with the success of our programs.



## Come Help Us Celebrate 100 Years of Scouting in Nova Scotia

# SCOTIA JAMB 2009

### Camp Carter, Cape Breton - July 11-17, 2009



Cape Breton  
Adventure II

\$300  
per participant  
(does not include food)

Cape Breton - The Stuff of Legends & Firsts - Celtic Mists, Mi'kmaq Lore, Acadian Charm,  
Downhome Hospitality and in July 2009 - The Challenge of Your Life.

Check out the web site [www.ns.scouts.ca/sj09](http://www.ns.scouts.ca/sj09) for details, registrations forms

Fun filled program,  
make new friends!

Space is limited  
register early!

SJ'09 You will be challenged with Earth, Wind, Fire and Water. Can you survive?

#### 4. Keep Fees Minimal

The full program ran from 8:30 – 4:30 and in some cases offered before and after time care for those parents that required it. Each camper brought their own peanut-free lunch and two healthy snacks were provided. The fee for all three days was \$89.00, but as interest from parents developed, we modified our fee to include a one day fee of \$32.00. Our intention was to run these programs at a breakeven level. Much of the equipment was simple and already available through other programs run in the past.

#### 5. Explore Community Resources

Thanks to Lorne Ellis, Revenue Development for Southwestern Ontario, we received a grant of \$2000 from the Scouts Canada Foundation. Most of our locations were provided at no charge, which allowed us some flexibility in the program. Community partners were quite willing to help and supported our efforts by offering the space and, in some cases, use of equipment.

If you are interested in finding out more about this program, either to start one in your own area, or to send your child to one, contact the Southwestern Ontario Administration Centre at 519 432-2928 or by e-mail at: [trishores@scouts.ca](mailto:trishores@scouts.ca).  
— Thanks to the Southwestern Ontario Field Staff and Community Development Workers team who developed this successful P.A. Day program.



Photo: Scouts Canada's Photo Archives

### Kookaburra Callers

**K**ookaburras are very large terrestrial kingfisher type birds native to Australia and New Guinea. Kookaburras are best known for their unmistakable call, which is uncannily like loud, echoing human laughter. (Craft taken from the *Around the World in a Day* theme.)

**Materials:** construction paper, yarn and material scraps, feathers, googly eyes, disposable plastic cups, string, damp cloth, scissors and craft glue.

**Directions:**

Decorate the cup with the materials provided. Poke a small hole through the bottom of the cup and draw a piece of string approximately 30.5 cm in length through the cup. Anchor the string solidly enough so that when pulled on, it doesn't come through. Hold the cup with one hand, and with a damp cloth in the other, run it down the dangling string. The sound that resonates from the cup should resemble that of a Kookaburra's call.



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