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Dear Parents,

**Subject :- Scouting and Parental Partnership**

I have been intending for some time to put pen to paper (brain to PC!) and to open a dialogue with you all regarding our joint investment in your children.

Yours is the primary role and a very difficult role it can be, though it is often very rewarding. I have three grown up children, so I know at first hand the challenges.

Parents choose to have children and then shoulder the responsibility of educating, helping and coaching them to a level where they can manage societal pressures unaided and make their own way in the world.

Have you ever thought why Scout Leaders do what they do? Several hours a week, planning and delivering, what should be enjoyable and educational programmes to the children of other people? Giving up weekends with their own families for camps, events and for training courses which are sometimes held in Munchen-Gladbach or London.

There are all sorts of theories - altruism, power to influence a new generation, returning benefits to society, etc., but, in my opinion, whilst the higher vocational motives play a part, the primary motivation is that our leaders enjoy what they do and get a kick out of the process. Most would not do it otherwise.

Teachers fulfil a similar role, but they also get paid for their activities .... Scout Leaders do not.

The only direct reward a Scout Leader can expect is a medal after 10 to 15 years of dedicated service!

We also have a very able and supportive Executive Committee, which takes care of fund raising, logistics of getting to camp, quartermaster, treasury, projects etc. Most of the Exec members have (or have had) children in the group and give of their time to help the leaders in their task of working with the children.

The reason I raise this subject is to discuss the "partnership" we need to have with you to deliver the benefits that Scouting undoubtedly adds to the development of your children.

We have to continuously recruit and train leaders and to fill positions on the Executive Committee but so far (Telstar has been running for >30 years) we have succeeded reasonably well. Our leaders and



Exec members are dedicated in their efforts but often meet with frustrations that you can help us to reduce. If we can ensure that the work that our volunteers do is fulfilling and rewarding, we will retain our existing team and also encourage others to volunteer.

We all have busy and complicated lives and sometimes this leads to us missing things and not giving sufficient attention to Telstar issues. This can seriously complicate the job for our volunteers.

Could we ask you to help reduce this frustration and to play your role as partners with the adult leaders and supporters of the group by:-

1. **Responding proactively to requests from Leaders or Exec members.**
2. **Reading the notes we send out and responding within the requested time period.** It may seem easier to just telephone the leader at the last minute, but remember that the leader may have 30 people who decide to do the same thing and this is extremely time-consuming and at just the wrong moment, when they have done advanced planning and purchasing of food etc. and spent a lot of time to get it right. Of course, emergencies are always handled with a smile, but casual add-ins and dropouts (usually with a request for a refund) at the last minute are not welcomed. We have to plan and payout money in advance and ask that you support us by thinking of this.
3. **Supporting events to raise money to fund the group activities.** We could increase the subscriptions to a level sufficient to pay all equipment and expenses, but this would be a burden to some and would leave us without the social dimension to the group which, we believe, is important to our children and their families.
4. **Volunteering, when asked, to help in supporting activities.** When we return after several days in camp, our leaders and helpers are usually exhausted and to offload the equipment and to dry wet tents is often a 'bridge too far'. One hour of your support can relieve this load.
5. **Being on time to drop off or collect your children at meetings and events.** Leaders are always happy to discuss any concerns or queries that parents may have, but please try to avoid asking the Leader at the beginning of the meeting when you drop off the child. These discussions delay the start of the meeting which affects the timing of the programme and the waiting children become bored and restless.

If you can help us in these ways, we can devote more time and energy to the quality of the Scouting that we deliver. The resulting partnership will surely enhance the Scouting experience of your children and better prepare them for life in the community.

Thanks for your patience in reading this missive and please feel free to respond, comment and /or make suggestions.

Yours faithfully,

