

# **PROPOSALS FOR VENTURING**

# What is Venturing?

## **Program**

Venturing is a youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 14 through 20 years of age and have completed the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Venturing's purpose is to provide positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults.

Venturing is based upon a unique and dynamic relationship between youth, adult leaders, and organizations in their communities. Local community organizations establish a Venturing crew by matching their people and program resources to the interests of young people in the community. The result is a program of exciting and meaningful activities that helps youth pursue their special interests, to grow, to develop leadership skills, and to become good citizens.

Venturing crews can specialize in a variety of avocation or hobby interests. Venturing programs are developed around six areas of emphasis:

### **Citizenship**

- ❖ Develop a better understanding of America's social, economic, and governmental systems.
- ❖ Encourage pride in our American heritage.

### **Leadership**

- ❖ Develop leadership skills.
- ❖ Prepare for giving leadership and to fulfill responsibilities to American society and to the peoples of the world.

### **Fitness**

- ❖ Improve mental, emotional, and physical fitness and an appreciation for sports.
- ❖ Develop ethical decision-making skills.

### **Social**

- ❖ Instill stable personal values firmly based on religious concepts.
- ❖ Develop skill in dealing with all people and encourage a sense of family and community responsibility.

### **Outdoor**

- ❖ Develop a degree of self-reliance based on courage, initiative, and resourcefulness.
- ❖ Understand and appreciate the wise use of resources and the protection of our environment.

### **Service**

- ❖ Encourage the skill and desire to help others.
- ❖ Gain a keen respect for the basic rights of others.

## Goals

Young adults involved in Venturing will:

- ❖ Engage in a program of activities centered on avocation interests, life skills, service learning, character development, citizenship, and leadership experiences designed to encourage the development of the whole person.
- ❖ Experience positive leadership from adult and youth leaders and be given opportunities to take on leadership roles.
- ❖ Have a chance to learn and grow in a supportive, caring, and fun environment.

## Methods

The methods of Venturing have been carefully chosen to meet the needs of young adults.

- ❖ ***Voluntary association between youth and adults.*** Because Venturing is voluntary, youth are receptive to new ideas, experiences, and relationships. For the youth members, these relationships provide a connection to new ways of thinking and acting, and a new identity as a responsible young adult.
- ❖ ***Ethical decision making.*** By asking young people to be responsible for themselves, for a program of positive activities and experiences, and for other people, Venturing provides numerous opportunities for making decisions and ethical choices. With the influence of positive adult role models and structured activities, youth learn to make effective and ethical decisions.
- ❖ ***Group activities.*** Venturing activities are interdependent group experiences in which success is dependent on the cooperation of all youth and adults.
- ❖ ***Recognition of achievement.*** Recognition might come through the achievement of one of the many awards available to youth members, but peers and adults also achieve it through the acknowledgement of a young person's competence and abilities.
- ❖ ***Democratic process.*** Venturing crews provide exposure to democratic ideas and skills that are needed throughout life.
- ❖ ***Curiosity, exploration, and adventure.*** New experiences and Venturing activities provide an excellent opportunity for acquiring new skills and participating in action-oriented activities.

## Venturing Crew Specialties

The program of every Venturing crew evolves around a special avocation or hobby interest of the youth members and adult leaders. Youth members have the interest, and the adult leaders provide the resources and expertise. There are hundreds of different specialties that a Venturing crew may pursue. Venturing crews, depending on their special interest, will be part of a specialty cluster. These specialty clusters include:

- ❖ Outdoors
- ❖ Sports
- ❖ Arts/Hobbies
- ❖ Youth Ministry
- ❖ Sea Scouting

## Ethics in Action

An important goal of Venturing is to help young adults be responsible and caring persons, both now and in the future. Venturing uses "ethical controversies" to help young adults develop the ability to make responsible choices that reflect their concern for what is at risk and how it will affect others involved. Because an ethical controversy is a problem-solving situation, leaders expect young adults to employ

empathy, invention, and selection when they think through their position and work toward a solution of an ethical controversy.

## **Crew Activities**

What a Venturing crew does is limited only by the imagination and involvement of the adult and youth leaders and members of the crew - sail the Caribbean, produce a play, climb a mountain, teach disabled people to swim or attend the Olympics. All these adventures and many more are being done today by Venturing crews and ships across the country. All that is needed are concerned adults who are willing to share a little bit of themselves with today's youth - tomorrow's leaders.

## **Starting a New Venturing Crew**

Organizing a Venturing crew is easy to do. Just follow these steps:

1. A survey is conducted annually in community high schools to determine students' recreational, hobby, and avocation interests.
2. A meeting is called of key people within an organization, with a Scouting representative in attendance. The representative explains the Venturing program, describes the key volunteer leader positions, and plans the recruiting of adult leaders.
3. The crew committee and advisors are recruited and meet with the Scouting representative. Responsibilities of adult leaders are explained. The Scouting representative also discusses program ideas and helps develop a one-year program. The crew's one-year program is reviewed and adopted.
4. The organization's top executive writes a personal letter to each young adult selected from the survey or identified through other recruitment efforts and invites the youth and their parents to attend an organizational meeting. This letter is followed by a personal phone invitation from a member of the organization to each prospective youth.
5. The first meeting is held involving young adults, the adult committee, and selected consultants. Adult advisors share the program plans with the new Venturers (youth) and discuss member involvement and leadership roles through the election of youth officers.

## **What Youth Want**

Research has revealed these major points:

- ❖ High school students have many vocational and avocational interests.
- ❖ Teenagers want a broader experience that provides practical hands-on experience and is tailored to their cultural backgrounds.
- ❖ Teenagers want to belong to a group that provides a safe haven from which to address the youth development issues that affect them. These issues include experimentation, moving from dependence to interdependence, social relationships, psychological changes, sexual maturity, and a re-evaluation of values.

## **Program Support**

The Venturing Division is designing literature, audiovisuals, training, activities, and awards to support Venturing crews and ships.

**Literature and audiovisuals.** A variety of books, pamphlets, and videos are being developed to assist with organization, program leadership, and activities. In particular, the Venturing Leader manual will support leadership and planning.

**Training.** Basic and advanced leader training sessions, along with crew leader workshops, quarterly advisor meetings, and program conferences will be available to improve and enrich Venturing crew programs. A week-long high adventure skills course for Venturing advisors is available.

**Activities.** Programs that enhance youth participation, such as the National Leadership Conference, will be available to all Venturing crews, youth and adult members.

**Advancement Awards.** A variety of awards are available to Venturers who accomplish specific advancement achievements. These awards include:

- ❖ Venturing Bronze Award
- ❖ Venturing Gold Award
- ❖ Venturing Silver Award
- ❖ Venturing Ranger Award
- ❖ Sea Scouting Quartermaster Award

**Recognition Awards.** Awards that are designed to provide recognition for youth and adults include:

- ❖ Venturing Leadership Award
- ❖ Venturing Advisor Award of Merit

**Uniforms.** The BSA will offer the traditional spruce green uniform shirt for Venturers. It is recommended that crews adopt a charcoal gray casual pant and/or backpacking-style short for their uniform. However, each crew may determine what, if any, specific uniform pants or shorts they will wear based on crew activities.

**BSA Councils.** The Venturing crew and ships are supported by local BSA councils that provide staff and volunteer support, operate service centers and camps, and conduct training and activities.

**Liability Insurance.** The Boy Scouts of America has liability insurance that covers leaders and organizations to which Venturing crews and shops are chartered. Accident and medical coverage are not included but are available through local BSA councils at a modest cost.

For additional information and support on organizing a new Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship, contact your local Boy Scouts of America Service Center or the Venturing Division, National Office, Boy Scouts of America.