

SEA SCOUT LEADERS HAVE A SATISFYING ROLE

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The safety boat on call

Learning water skills



A grateful tow

"There is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats". *Kenneth Grahame, The Wind in the Willows*

Scout leaders are sometime portrayed as stereotypes, with the image of Sea Scout leaders perhaps being the strongest. The prevailing image is of craggy, bearded old-salt types teaching ancient skills, when actually all types of men and women enjoy being involved in Sea Scouts. The only common feature is a love of small boats and a desire to transfer that love to the next generation.

Why would anyone want to put their hand up and become a Sea Scout leader? Most of us lead busy lives and time is at a premium. And yet every year thousands of adult volunteers put their hands up and help organisations like Sea Scouts, providing their time and resources to keep these groups operating.

For those who have their own children in the scout group the decision is perhaps less difficult. Becoming a leader provides a chance to spend time with children, helping them enjoy an activity that grows and stretches their skills and abilities while still being tremendous fun.

At the same time, parents can have direct input into how the activities are organised and run. This helps ensure the groups strive for objectives that parents personally endorse.

Many responsible parents realise it is better to get in and help than to stand on the sidelines and criticise. Finally, there is the chance for those involved to ensure their own children have good, clean fun while staying out of trouble. In this day and age an environment full of positive influences is rare and valuable.

However, a significant proportion of Sea Scout leaders stay on in the movement even after their children have grown up. For

them the attraction is the fun and camaraderie that comes from assisting a group of enthusiastic youngsters.

Adult leaders get to play in the boats and take part in the same fun activities as the younger members. Continuous training is provided, so it is a chance for adults to extend their own skills and knowledge as well. Everyone is there because they choose to be. This creates an enjoyable environment for all.

The third source of leaders is adults without children in the movement who simply wish to help. Some of them have specific skills they would like to put to good use, such as sailing and boating abilities. Scouts learn sailing, rowing, kayaking and powerboating skills, and hence a Scout troop needs willing and knowledgeable leaders in all these areas. Even non-sailors can be a tremendous resource for a troop, thanks to their worldly knowledge and the ability to drive, organise, cook, instruct, fix boats or even simply put up a tent occasionally.

For many children it is a real buzz seeing adults getting involved. Just as the juniors compete against each other, so there is a strong competitive spirit among the leaders.

Most regattas have an open category run after the younger age groups are finished, and this is often the most hotly contested group. The social interplay between the various adult teams can be the highlight of the event, while the youngsters relish the chance to provide support (or gentle abuse) at their elder's performance or lack thereof. The results of the open events create bragging rights for the next year for supremacy on the water.

Many adults feel they are not skilled enough to be of any help, and yet assistance can range from as little as helping with transport or providing additional adult supervision at events. Full training is given in all aspects, including boating and sailing skills.

Leader certification now includes Coastguard courses, first aid training and safety and risk management. All this is provided free to leaders, in return for their time.

Unfortunately, most Scout troops suffer from an insufficient number of leaders, so if you have time and are willing, please get in touch with a Sea Scout troop near you.

See www.seascouting.org.nz or www.scouts.org.nz



Old and young alike



The ever-watchful eye of Ian Pryor



Leaders on parade