



Normal Friend Activities (NFA's)
Growing BSA Membership – Old Hickory Council

One of the best ways to grow unit membership is through Normal Friend Activities (NFA's).

Here is how it works:

Scouts and parents are offered opportunities to join, but the NFA is not a high-pressure sign-up event. If youth and scouts are dressed in normal attire (and not uniforms) that can also help the new Scouts not feel out of place. Also, invite prospective Scouts and Parents back to future NFA's, as it may take several times for them meet and feel comfortable.

Start with finding leaders that will host/run an NFA event. Then promote, promote, promote!

What are NFA events? Any event where you can invite youth and parents to join your unit such as...

- a. Open House
- b. Bike Rodeo, Fishing Derby, Rocket Day, Raingutter Regatta, Pinewood Derby
- c. Football/Baseball/Basketball game
- d. Hike
- e. Picnic
- f. Halloween, Ice Cream Party
- g. Service Project (i.e., Scouting for Food)
- h. Carolina Classic Fair or local event
- i. Pool party unit event, volleyball or softball game
- j. Fall Adventure Week-End at Camp Raven Knob, or a Ski trip this winter

Start with meeting with your current Scouts and Parents and ask them to come up with 3 names each for an upcoming NFA. Also ask members of Scout committee, your charter partner (i.e. Church) for names. Ask former Scouts who dropped out to come back and alumni of the unit. Youth want to belong to units with their friends – new and old.

Promote with email invitations, Facebook announcements and text messages to family friends. There will be NFA's you want to promote harder than others, like an Open House, Bike Rodeo and Fishing Derby. There are others like a day hike or day bike trip planned that if you add just a few interested Scouts to come is fine also.

Hold NFA's at least monthly throughout the year – give youth a chance to join (and come back) all year long - not just once a year.

Often your best source of new prospective Scouts and Parents come from the newest Scouts and Parents. So, momentum for adding youth grows as your unit grows but it takes hard work at the beginning. As you add youth, you will also add new adult volunteers to help.

Make NFA a topic of discussion at all committee meetings, throughout the year. The council hosts NFA events all year long and note that our insurance coverage extends to youth who attend an NFA event.