

Bob,

Selecting Quality Leaders focuses on identifying and recruiting a leader when you need one. The successful unit identifies and recruits leaders BEFORE they are needed. For instance, a cub pack in our community had struggled with finding leaders for several years before I arrived. In fact, the year I arrived, they did a school night jointly with another pack, thinking that the two packs would merge. Surprise, they had more new boys than they expected and more than was suitable for a single pack. I didn't say much at the meeting but did fill out the form indicating that I had some scouting experience. A few days later the cubmaster called and asked if I would like to be cubmaster. I politely declined but said that I would be very happy to help out as a committee member and perhaps become cubmaster after a year or two. Ok, the CM would stay on and I'd help out. By the end of the year, I had assumed the CM duties. Fortunately, we had sufficient den leaders to get through the year. I immediately began the rounds of the den, telling each group of parents that I expected that at least two families other than the den leader's would help out. I wanted more but two was the minimum. One would be the assistant den leader, the other would provide a committee member. At the first leader's meeting I identified a couple of potential replacements for me. I didn't tell them but I asked them to take a larger role. I had in my mind that I would serve two years as CM (while my son was Bear and first year Webelos). After that, I wanted to be CM emeritus! I also wanted to have a progression started that would keep the pack with leadership.

At the end of my first year as CM, I identified my replacement, discussed it with him, and got committee approval. Between us we identified a couple of potential replacements for him and asked them to take a slightly larger role. The objective was to identify potential leaders while their sons were Tigers, try them out while they were Wolves, and place the best one in line for CM when his/her son was Bear. Their son's first Webelos year they would be CM. When their son moved to second year Webelos, the CM would move to CM emeritus--an experienced support role. A cubmaster would serve in that position for only one year, having served as CA for a year or two before. Because there was a defined path through and eventually beyond adult leadership, people were willing to help out. I started that in 1985 and when I visited the community last Christmas was told that the pack was still doing great with the leadership progression. It has had a different CM each year since I became CM emeritus in 1988. My youngest became a tiger that year and I helped with the tiger den and wolf den before we moved across the country. (I knew in 1988 that we would be moving in a couple of years so kept myself out of the CM progression even though I would have liked to serve again.)

For den leaders, we took a tiger approach and had the wolf den meet at

different locations each month. The host household provided the location, another family provided refreshments, and another provided program, all under the guidance of the den leader. Over the year, each family did each thing at least once. Those whose homes were not suitable for meetings were encouraged to choose months when meetings could be held outdoors (their yard or a nearby park). The dens that followed this pattern were generally stronger than those who met in the same location all year. A strong leader or two usually emerged for Bear and Webelos years.

Guess my real point is that you need to select quality leaders well before you need them. Encourage them to become involved, get them to training and once you have them hooked, let them run with it!

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