

To Prospective Troop 187 Scouts & Parents

Thank you for taking the time to visit our troop. Attached is our Troop Handbook.

Will this handbook really tell us what Troop 187 is all about? Not in the least. The troop is comprised of Scouts, Scouters, and Parents; all individuals all working together as best as we can so that your son can hopefully experience Lord Baden Powell's motto for Scouting, "Fun With A Purpose". You will learn about our Troop by watching, listening, and asking questions; not by reading.

Why is there a handbook then? About two years ago some folks thought it would be nice to have one so we put one together. If your son decides to join our Troop then this handbook will provide value to you and your son.

How many Scouts are in Troop 187? As of 01/01/08 we had 57 Scouts and 26 uniformed leaders, 11 of whom are Eagle Scouts. Of the 26 uniformed leaders we are most proud of the 5 leaders who no longer have sons in the Troop, 1 transfer leader, and the 3 recent Eagle Scout leaders who are college students but wish to remain as active in the Troop as best as they can.

How many Scouts dropped out of the Troop last year? Great question. 6 Scouts were dropped from our official 2008 roster. One was a 17 year old who went out of state to attend college, his 16 year old brother got the 3Gs (girls, gas [car], & green [job]), one joined Boy Scouts at a late age (high school) in 2007 and decided not to remain, two who were rarely active in 2007 dropped out, and one Webelos crossover from 2007 did not return. In 2007 20 first year aged Scouts joined the Troop and we are very proud that 19 have remained in Scouting and in our Troop since a 95% retention rate for Webelos II crossovers is extremely rare in Scouting. We do not have any phantom "paper Scouts" on our Troop roster.

What is it like having a Lutheran Church as the Troop's Sponsoring Organization? We would not know; St. Luke's is not our Sponsor, the Forrest Lodge VFW Post is. We meet at St. Luke's and are most appreciative for all the hospitality they provide us. Our relationship with the VFW and St. Luke's is excellent and we are fortunate to use the facilities of both organizations. In the summer of 2008 our troop performed extensive renovations to the grove at the VFW. The renovations included rewiring the complex's electrical wiring, outdoor lighting, building a new storage shed for our patrols' gear, renovating an existing building to store our troop trailer, and the patrols began construction of individual patrol campsites at the grove.

Where do your Scouts come from? We are a very diverse Troop since there is no "Pack 187" and we have Scouts from at least six different Cub Scout packs. A few Scouts are home schooled, a few attend private schools, a dozen attend various Central Bucks SD schools, and the rest attend various Pennridge SD schools. Since the VFW is not a school, municipal group, or religious group our Troop does not have a majority from any one organization or group. This diversity is one of our strengths.

How involved do I have to be as a parent? As little or much as you want to.

Do I have to volunteer? No.

The troop is very fortunate to have a very large number of volunteers. It is important to note that participation by parents is neither frowned upon nor required. Some troops do not want additional or new leaders and some troops are desperate for them and we are neither. For most outings our parental participation, either registered leaders or just parents who want to attend (almost exclusively fathers) is very high. The current troop leadership cannot recall ever having a need for additional drivers for outings. In fact, usually one or two vehicles are left behind, despite prearranged carpool arrangements, when we leave on trips.

Another welcome fact about our parents is that a large number of them are current or former Den Leaders, Cubmasters, or Pack Committee Members and yet they have not registered to become a leader in our troop. Typically their sons are relatively new to the troop and the parents are more than happy to take a “sabbatical” after volunteering for years for Cub Scouts. They frequently attend meetings and outings and are more than happy to initially sit back and watch others do the official volunteer work. Fortunately, after their year or two “sabbatical” ends, most of these parents do register as leaders and become official volunteers bringing a continual source of new enthusiasm to the troop.

If I want to volunteer are there any expectations of me? Yes, absolutely. First and foremost Youth Protection, Troop Committee Challenge, and other Internet based training is required. Furthermore, the Troop will strongly encourage you to become a “Trained” leader which totals approximately 4 courses taken over a camping weekend. Also, we very much want our Troop to be a Scout, not a Leader, run Troop so we ask that all our volunteers let the boys be boys and learn from their mistakes. Our leaders should not lead but should instead mentor or coach.

What type of outings are there? What are your meetings like? Is advancement important or secondary to activities? What “type” of troop is Troop 187? Is Troop 187 the “best” troop for my son? Great questions! Why don't you ask someone?