

Troop 48: Recruitment

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, as social activities slowed and ground to a halt, troops across the country suffered in membership, and have struggled to recover from an immense decline. A portion of the root of this issue is the fact that troops are a secondary program, most members having participated in cub scouts for a number of years before 'crossing over' to become scouts. The Covid-19 pandemic also negatively affected advancement and the general, usually-consistent activities and goals of the scouting program. Because of this sudden stagnation, many pre-existing members ended their scouting careers altogether. Various other complicating factors within the life of the BSA have contributed to this issue and compounded it; it has become a considerable issue, and the overall future of this program has been called into question.

Though Troop 48 has fortunately experienced relatively few disinterest-based losses, the lower intake of younger scouts has made recovery difficult, and in the coming years, the troop will require better marketing strategies and a unique troop model. The fate of many troops which the pandemic's ensuing chaos and uncertainty affected was largely dependent on the approach they used when attempting to normalize and adjust quickly, as the future of social connection was beginning to seem bleak. Some troops did decide to stop meeting entirely during the pandemic. However, Troop 48 was able to stay connected and adapted as well as could be expected. The troop met online, and was able to involve scouts in meetings, organizing various activities to substitute an active, hands-on environment.

Now that meetings have begun to be held in their normal, in-person environment, the struggle of membership has been more to do with bringing in enough new members to fill gaps left by those who age out. In this way, it can be difficult to maintain a stable number, much less a steady growth. Despite this, Troop 48 has had several positive steps to account for its lacking membership. Troop 87, as it had decreased to include merely three scouts, was absorbed into Troop 48. For three scouts to join at once is unusual in these particular times. To add to this benefit, three other scouts, joining at separate times, have come into the troop, each from a different experience level or background. Though our troop- along with others- struggled during the Covid-19 pandemic, it has made its return, and is showing promising signs of recovery.