



Retention Issues and Solutions for Troops

ISSUE: "POORLY RUN TROOP PROGRAM"

- Lack of trained leaders
 - Solution: Get your leaders to Three Peaks Training either online or in-person! Join Area Trail Gatherings to learn from other Troop Leaders in your Area. Check out Basecamp for all of your training and resource needs.
- Very little spiritual emphasis
 - Solution: Involve your Chaplain and Troop Ministry Liaison. Also, check out the Worthy Life program! Your Troop is to be a ministry of the church for boys and men. Check out [TLUSA Core Values](#) and [TLUSA Christian Worldview](#).
- No annual calendar plan in place, or no "buy-in" from families into program planning
 - Solution: Check out the Annual Planning Guides found in Trail Life Connect. They have tips on annual planning, budgeting, fundraising, recruiting, and more.
- Incorrect methods
 - Solution: Get connected with your local Direct Service Advisor. He's an experienced mentor who can guide you through any Troop issue that arises.
- No Summer Adventure or not enough camping or outdoor activities
 - Solution: Again, get your leaders to Three Peaks Training for help! Check out *Getting Woodlands Trailmen Outside and Active* in Trail Life Connect for ideas to get your youngest Trailmen outdoors.

ISSUE: "FUNDRAISING"

- Too much emphasis on fundraisers in the first few meetings after joining
 - Solution: Plan and hold just one fundraiser a year, lasting 5-6 weeks. See *Troop Fundraising 101* in Trail Life Connect for more information.
- Lack of money to carry out the things we planned.
 - Solution: See the same resource as above
- Lack of reasons to fundraise—no goals; no annual Troop budget in place
 - Solution: Hold your annual Troop-wide planning "Dream session" and calculate the price tag for a full year of fun and adventure. See *Annual Program Planning and Budgeting* in Trail Life Connect for more information.
- Cost Complaints- Higher than expected
 - Solution: Communicate the price tag for a full year of fun and adventure at the Open House joining event—but communicate the solution as well (an effective fundraising plan). Put an end to parents paying for everything!

ISSUE: "WRONG LEADERS IN PLACE"

- Doesn't know his stuff, or doesn't lead well
 - Solution: Get your leaders to Three Peaks Training! Check out [Basecamp](#) for role-specific training and resources.
- Old-timer (stayed in the same position too long)
 - Solution: Succession planning—agree upon a transition timeframe for every position—and write it into the position description!

- Dictator, or “one-man show”.
 - Solution: See above.
- Conflicts between leaders within the Troop
 - Solution: Have the Chaplain conduct a Bible study on “unity”. Reach out to your Point Man or Direct Service Advisor for Troop mentorship.

ISSUE: “LACK OF COMMUNICATION”

- Not enough info given to new families
 - Solution: Add an Onboarding Chairman to your leadership team. Check out these best practices for assimilating new families into your Troop. See the Onboarding New Families resource in Trail Life Connect.
- “No one ever called us after we joined to tell us what’s going on.”
 - Solution: Hand out a personalized “Welcome to Our Troop” letter at Open House. Send out a *Welcome to our Troop Email* to send additional information about your Troop and invite the family to a New Parents’ Orientation.
- Trouble understanding where to find the Trail Life resources we need
 - Solution: Check out the help menu in TLC for helpful videos and information about navigating TLC. Check out [Basecamp](#) for training to search for role-specific resources.

IN SUMMARY

The biggest positive impacts for the Troops to retain members are:

- Focus on the first few weeks each fall...THAT’S when Trailmen and their families are most likely to drop out: Get boys outside at their very first Troop meeting!
- Onboard new families within a week of when they join
- Follow TLUSA methods—and explain these to potential members at your Open House
- Hold outdoor events—specifically, camping weekends soon after joining—in late September (as an individual Troop) and in October (at an Area event)
- Start the Troop properly (have a Core Team on board, trained and committed before adding direct contact leaders, interested dads or youth—doing this backwards NEVER works!)
- Insist on training for all leaders—with follow-up to make sure they complete it
- Engage with your Troop Ministry Liaison (to use their Troop as a ministry of the church)
- Connect with your Direct Service Advisor (your in-person coach assigned by your Point Man)
- Area Teams play a crucial role by making sure Troop leaders are trained, coached by a DSA, and have multi-Troop (Area-wide) activities planned to supplement their Troops’ program. Ask for help from your Area support team!

WHAT ELSE DO MEMBERS WANT?

The annual Thriving Troop Surveys tell us...

- What **parents want for their sons**: godly friends, time with son, positive role models, fun activities, camping/outdoor events
- What **parents want for themselves**: Communication, organized meetings, to understand advancement and program methods
- What **boys want**: more games, more action, less talking