

Welcome to Troop 865 Frequently Asked Questions

What is the history of Troop 865?

We were chartered in 1970. Our motto "Honor the past, Build the future" is very important to us. In 1995 for our 25th anniversary, adults in the troop gathered a lot of information about the history of our troop. This has been preserved in our web site: <http://www.geocities.com/troop865>. We have many traditions including issuing beads to show participation in various activities and summer camp T-shirts.

When and where does Troop 865 meet?

Regular meetings are held every Wednesday from 7:30 to 9:00. Some merit badge and special work is done from 7:00 to 7:30 as needed. We meet at the Scout Room located on the campus of St Pius X near the corner of Materhorn and San Vincente.

What does your son need to do to join Troop 865?

You just need to fill out an application (available through BSA or adult leaders) and pay a registration fee. The registration fee pays for BSA registration, magazine, insurance, and troop expenses. At some time soon after you join we will need a medical form (available through BSA or adult leaders) and a copy of their insurance card - this is required for campouts and outings.

How is the troop organized?

Troop 865 is a boy run troop. That means that the boys determine what the troop does. The adults advise them and help them carry out their plans. The highest-ranking boy is the Senior Patrol Leader. He has an assistant called the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. The rest of the boys are divided into patrols of 5 to 10 boys. Each patrol has a leader called a Patrol Leader and an Assistant Patrol Leader. Many other positions are available. Holding a position is required for advancement in rank.

The boys plan and carry out activities. Once a year a meeting is held where the monthly themes and activities for the year are determined. Each month a meeting is held to plan the details of the activities for the month based on the theme for the month. These monthly meetings are called Patrol Leader Conferences or PLC. It is mainly for the Senior Patrol Leader and the Patrol Leaders of each patrol, but all others are encouraged to attend. They REALLY should attend if there is something special they want to do like earn a specific merit badge or if they don't like how something is being done. This is their opportunity to make their voice heard.

Can parents participate?

YES, and we highly encourage them to do so. Troop 865 prides itself in having more registered adults than youth. We have a great time on campouts and at meetings. Adult leaders guide the youth in planning activities and insure that they are executed to the best of their abilities. This includes making sure they have all the funds, the proper equipment, that facilities and transportation are available, spearhead fundraisers, generating ideas, etc. Other opportunities include going on campouts and outings, contacting individuals to arrange for them to speak to the boys or teach merit badges, or arrange outings. There is something for everyone. Adults find that the time they spend in Scouting is not only fun, but also very rewarding and fulfilling.

What does a person need for a uniform?

Some parts of the uniform are specific to Troop 865 and some are available through Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts of America store in our area is called the Scoutfitter and is located at the Circle Ten Council Office at 8030 Harry Hines Blvd. From there you will need a Boy Scout hand book, Boy Scout shirt, red epaulets, belt, merit badge sash and patches for Circle Ten Council and a troop 25-year patch. From Troop 865 you will need a neckerchief (given to boys who cross over from Cub Scouts otherwise \$5), hat (\$5), troop numbers (\$2 it is a single patch with all three numbers on it. It looks better, costs less, and is easier to sew on). Scout pants are encouraged for special events like Scout Sunday and Court of Honor, but are not required. If you don't have Scout pants, olive colored pants are best, jeans can be used.

This is frequently referred to as a class A uniform. A class B uniform (troop T-shirt instead of BSA shirt) is the only other acceptable uniform. Shirttails must be tucked in. Camo is discouraged during all activities. There are rare occasions during certain campouts that camo is allowed.

When is the uniform worn?

Class B uniform is worn ONLY to Troop meetings during the summer, at summer camp, and while at monthly campouts when Class A uniforms are not required. The Class A uniform is worn to all other meetings, Scout Sunday, Court of Honor, and while traveling to and from campouts.

What are the Troop T-shirts?

This is one of our traditions that goes back to very early in the troop's existence. Each year for summer camp, we come up with two designs for shirts. Boys design some of these, some by adults, but the boys vote on which two they want. They also vote on the color of the shirts. We wear these shirts for 4 of the days we are at summer camp. It makes our Troop look good and it is easier to identify individuals from a distance. After summer camp we wear these T-shirts to our Wednesday meetings and at campouts.

What are the beads some of the boys and adults are wearing?

This is another one of our traditions that goes way back. The beads are for participation in various activities and are carried on a special "totem" worn on the belt. All new members of the troop are given a totem. Beads are awarded in the following fashion:

- Purple Star – Attending Scout Sunday
- Blue beads – Fair Weather Campouts
- Black – Rain Campouts
- Red – Campouts over 100 degrees
- Clear – Campouts below 32 degrees
- White – Snow Campout (Awarded twice in troop history)
- Green – Summer Camp
- Pink – Order of the Arrow activities
- Orange – Attendance at a special activity
- Yellow – Hikes

How are merit badges earned?

Many troop activities during the month will deal with a merit badge, thus the regular troop meetings are sometimes used to do merit badge work. Also, boys meet with a merit badge councilor to learn about the subject matter of the merit badge. Various activities must be completed in order to earn the badge. This work can be done during the meeting or may need to be completed at home. In general, most of the work is done independently by the boys. We hold merit badge classes from 7-7:30 before Troop meetings, however other meetings can be arranged to complete work. Many merit badges are earned at summer camp - that's one reason why attending summer camp is so important.

How are the boys recognized for achievements?

When a boy advances in rank, he is recognized immediately at the weekly meeting. Merit badges are awarded shortly after they are earned. Once each quarter we hold a special Court of Honor. These occur in March, June, September, and December. Here we recognize advancements in rank and merit badges completed. We also highlight activities from the past three months and inform parents of upcoming activities. At the March Court of Honor we also recognize the most outstanding Scout of the year with our Monica Slackney Award. The June Court of Honor centers on preparations for summer camp. The September Court of Honor highlights the accomplishments and events (usually funny) from summer camp.

What is re-chartering?

Each year in January, the Troop has to register all adults and boys in the Troop. We collect a fee of \$60 for each boy and \$10 for each adult. This money covers the cost of registration, insurance, subscription to the BSA magazines (Boys' Life and Scouting), awards, supplies, and other Troop expenses.

How are campouts organized?

Generally, during the month of a campout, the troop meetings will prepare the Scouts for the activities during the campout. The campout is the culmination or focal point of all the activities. Usually at the Wednesday meeting before the campout, the menu will be planned by each patrol (adult operate like a patrol also). One individual from each patrol will be responsible for buying all the food and supplies needed.

Each patrol member brings cash to that meeting to pay for these. Usually it is about \$10 for breakfast, lunch, dinner and a light snack for Sunday morning. There may be other fees that are collected at this time or the campout. A parent usually helps (especially the younger boys) get all the food. They need to make sure they have enough food, drinks, paper towels, ... for all the boys. Food needs to be in coolers or plastic containers. We can usually get ice from the St. Pius gym. After the campout the family that purchased the food usually takes anything left over.

We meet on Friday evening about 6-6:30pm to pack up the vehicles and leave. Each boy needs to have a permission slip signed by a parent. The trips take from 1 to 3 hours. We usually stop once at a convenience/gas store for a restroom break and to get gas for the vehicles. The boys are allowed to buy snacks and drinks then. We arrive at camp usually after dark and set up lanterns and tents. Lights out is around 11:00.

On Saturday, we cook breakfast, do activities, eat lunch (usually sandwiches), do more activities, cook dinner, activities and campfire.

On Sunday, we get up and pack up personal gear, tents, and troop gear and maybe eat a fast easy breakfast. We clean up camp so it is cleaner than we found it. On the return trip we usually stop for breakfast at a McDonalds' or equivalent. We arrive back at St. Pius usually between noon and 1:00pm. Boys call their parents to pick them up and we unpack the vehicles.

If the tents were wet when we packed them, one boy from each tent will be responsible for taking the tent home and drying it out and cleaning it up. They can return the tent at the next Wednesday meeting.

You may want to take an extra \$5 or \$10 to cover snacks and breakfast during the trip.

Are there any items that are not allowed to take on campouts?

Yes. Boys are not allowed to have ANY electronic devices except flashlights and fans. No CD players, Gameboys, radios, ... Also banned are any game books (video, ...) or trading cards (Pokeman, ...). Use your judgement. The focus of the campout is the monthly theme. If the item will not advance that theme, then it shouldn't be taken.

The troop has a number of walkie-talkies that the adults are allowed to use for communicating during the trips and at camp. Cell phones are allowed for emergency purposes (Adults only).

Does my son need a backpack?

Everyone needs something in which to organize their equipment. This can be a duffel bag, 5-gallon bucket, or backpack. 5-gallon buckets are nice because they can be sealed and will keep things dry. They can also be used as a chair. Duffel bags are inexpensive and great for stashing your stuff. When we go camping, we can always get our vehicles close to camp so carrying your gear is not a problem. 5-gallon buckets or duffel bags are fine for starting out. Eventually you will want a backpack to participate in backpacking trips. Get one with a heavily padded waist belt and lots of adjustments to accommodate his changing size.

What other activities is the Troop involved in?

In February we participate in the Scouting for Food program. That involves about two hours each of the first two Saturdays in February. We also participate in the Religious Retreat in February. In February, March, or April we help St. Pius X in their religious ceremonies by assisting in the burning of palms on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday and the blessing of the fire on the Saturday before Easter.

What is Scout Sunday?

The first Sunday of each month is designated as Scout Sunday. At St. Pius we meet in the Parish Hall at 8:15am and attend 8:30 Mass as a group in Class A uniform. Members of other churches can participate with those at St. Pius or attend their own church services in uniform.

How do fund raising activities work?

Each year the troop has fund raising activities to help the boys earn money for summer camp and re-chartering. We typically participate in the BSA sponsored Popcorn sale. We also do candy sales and whatever else the boys want to do. With these activities, 10% of the profit goes to the troop to help with expenses. The remainder of the money goes into individual accounts based on the level of participation of each boy.

Is attending summer camp important?

Yes, it is a great learning opportunity for the boys. They are out on their own, but there are adults always close by if they have any problems and to keep them in line. New Scouts do a lot of activities to advance in rank and it is especially important that they attend. With older Scouts the emphasis is more on earning merit badges and participating in more high adventure activities.

How much does it cost to go to summer camp?

It is usually about \$230 for boys and \$80 for adults. This covers the cost of the use of the camp facilities, meals, Troop T-shirts, and transportation. The big variable is transportation. It depends on the distance to camp and the type of transportation we arrange. If we travel to a more distant camp like Colorado or Tennessee the cost of transportation could add \$100 or more per person.

What about medications and medical conditions?

Any medications to be taken by the boys on campouts or summer camp needs to be placed in a container with clear instructions. Prescription medicine must be in pharmacy packaging with the prescription label attached. This needs to be given to an adult leader who will be responsible for administering it. Also, please discuss any conditions that the adults should be aware of. It helps them understand better and look out for possibly dangerous situations.