

06/15/2018

Dear Scouts, Scouters and Parents:

As you all know by now, the San Francisco Bay Area Council has had to establish a fee to help pay some of its costs associated with insurance expenses. On top of these costs we have and will continue to increase our summer camp fees to cover increased food costs and wage increases as mandated by California law SB3. Recently the California Assembly passed new firearms laws that have resulted in increased expenses for proper storage and handling of firearms and ammunition.

Unfortunately, the Council has had to cut costs to help cover some of these realized and anticipated financial shortfalls. These cuts include, but are not limited to, eliminating two paid professional positions, the loss of the paid staff advisor for Wood Badge, termination of our HAT (High Adventure Training) program and the Board has elected to not fill current vacant positions. All these cuts can have a dramatic effect on the quality of program that we can offer the youth in the community.

Overall it costs the Council about \$509 per year to serve each scout. This covers the cost to provide the scout service center, helps to pay the staff, supply recruitment material, maintains the properties, and more. This is a very short list of real services and hard cost items that your unit receives without charge from the Council.

As with any nonprofit organization the Council's funding sources come from just a few places, endowments, revenue from camps and activities, rents from the Scout Shop, income from several benefit events and dinners, Friends of Scouting (FOS), and the Trail's End Popcorn Fundraiser. Some of these sources have fixed and regular annual amounts but others, such as FOS and popcorn, can greatly fluctuate, creating dips in expected revenue vs. budget.

In just the area of the Popcorn Sale, the Council has been grateful that in the last two years our sales have increased by \$170,000 adding around \$47,000 to the budget (with a similar amount going to unit treasuries). But with only 1500 of our 6500 scouts participating in selling popcorn we could do a lot better. If each of our 6500 scouts were to participate and sell an average of \$500 worth of popcorn the Council's portion of the sale would be enough to cover the shortfall. Moreover our budget would be whole, and our services to all members could go well beyond expectations. Right now, the 1500 scouts who do sell popcorn are trying to carry the weight of the 6500. We really need maximum participation to help out those who are performing well.

There are many myths surrounding the popcorn fundraiser, such as, it's only for cub scouts, it's too expensive, too hard to sell and more. But these are just myths. At the point of the sale with a customer it's not about some expensive popcorn, it's about the whole scouting program. Just like someone can buy a music CD from a PBS (Public Broadcasting) fundraiser for \$50 when they know they can get the same CD at the store for \$10; people buy popcorn to support the program. To help you grow your sale or answer your questions, we have created training and mentoring programs designed and led by a National Top Popcorn Seller, Life Scout Luke Fewx. Luke has sold almost \$150,000 in the last 5 years, proving that selling popcorn is not just a Cub Scout thing.

If your unit hasn't been participating in the sale lately or ever, now is the time. We call on you to become an active partner in the budget solution by participating. If your unit has been struggling with sales, plan to connect with our training team. Not only will you be helping the Council but your unit and your scouts as well. You will have funds for your unit and a better-quality program with enhanced scout ownership and pride.

Yours in Scouting,

**Kenneth C. Mehlhorn** | Scout Executive/CEO  
**BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**  
**San Francisco Bay Area Council**