



TROOP 402 NEW FAMILY ORIENTATION

<https://www.troop402.org/>

We have posted a lot of information on our website, but we hope that this document will help prospective families learn more about our Troop. If you have any questions at all, please feel free to reach out!

SCOUTS BSA/SCOUTING: *(you can skip this if you are already familiar with Scouting and Scouts BSA)*

History---- Scouting was founded by Lord Robert Baden Powell in 1908 in Brownsea in England. An outdoor focused program fostering youth leadership, it grew globally with recent membership estimates of 40 million around the world. In 2018, the Boy Scouts of America made a decision to allow girls in to the organization within all-girl troops, starting in February 2019- and renaming the organization as Scouts BSA. The US joins 85% of the world's national Scouting organizations that have already included girls- most for many decades.

Patrol method, eagle scouts---- there is a lot more detail available online

(<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2014/09/05/patrol-method/>), but some foundational aspects of scouting are the division of the troop in to Patrols, with youth leadership at all levels, and the notion of rank advancement, (more information available here, <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/>) all the way to the Eagle Scout rank - as youth develop outdoors skills, as well as leadership skills.

TROOP 402

Our Troop was founded in February 2019, by several families who had sons in Lafayette's Troop 204- which has been in existence since 1932. We are a stand alone, separate troop with our own adult leadership organization, equipment and infrastructure, and we run our meetings and events with just our girls separate from Troop 204. With Troop 204 we do share access to the Lafayette Scout cabin on School Street, and we share the same chartering organization- the Lafayette's Dad's Club. We have studied the success of Troop 204 and have incorporated many ideas and approaches into our Troop, and also have families that have their daughters in our Troop and their sons in Troop 204.

TROOP 402 GUIDING PHILOSOPHY & CULTURE

In establishing Troop 402- we have focused on four foundational elements, and we think that, so far, this has led to our rapid growth:

1. Outdoor focused- we are committed to enabling the outdoor themes of scouting

2. Girl-Led- as much as possible, we seek to have the girls lead the running of the troop with support from our adult leaders.
3. Leadership for everyone- we would like to see every one of our girls take on leadership roles at some point in their scouting career, and we enable that to happen.
4. Positive Environment- we are seeking to create a fun, positive, supportive environment for the girls to enjoy- allowing them to safely fail and learn as they take on new adventures, and being welcoming and inclusive to all girls that want to learn and enjoy the BSA Scout Program.

LOGISTICS:

How often do you meet? Where?

While we do take a portion of the Summer off to allow time for other family events and vacations, as well as Holidays, we do generally meet weekly on Thursday's at 7:30pm at the Scout Cabin in Lafayette at the corner of School and First streets. (more calendar details below) Meetings generally run 60-75 mins, though the girls have been having a blast and often run longer (though feel free to take them earlier). We believe that the weekly meetings have allowed us to rapidly build a cadence and a great group bonding that has helped accelerate our learning and growth.

Is attendance mandatory? Attendance is not mandatory, but we hope girls can attend 75% or more of the meetings and activities, as we think it really helps their bonding as a group, and their development in scouting.

ADMISSION:

Age requirements - Youth are allowed to enter the BSA Scout Program beginning at the age of 11 OR have completed the 5th grade and are at least 10 years old, OR have earned the Cub Scout Arrow of Light Award and are at least 10 years old.

We welcome girls of all ages to join at all times of the year and we try to start new scouts at the same time at the beginning of each month. There is some baseline training that we are trying to do with all new scouts, but we don't think that there is a bad time of year to join Scouts- we just may be more or less busy! For certain events, like Camporee and the 50 miler, there are certain prerequisites of training and practice that may preclude some new Scouts - but we expect that to be minimal.

Parental involvement - We highly encourage at least one parent to submit an adult application along with your daughter's application. In order to participate or be on site with the girls you must have an application and YPT (Youth Protection Training) completed with the BSA Office. This will allow you to participate in the outdoor activities, be a merit badge counselor or sit in on Board of Reviews, or fulfill any other position that you are interested in.

Our troop could not be as successful as it is without all of our wonderful parent volunteers and their involvement.

As in any youth organization there are many hats to wear and roles to fill. We truly are blessed with the amazing parents that help to support our girls in many aspects of our troop. There are many ways to get involved with opportunities to spend a lot of time helping the girls, to roles that

are well appreciated for the parents that are available for shorter time commitments. We believe that in order to be successful, sustainable and to allow us to grow- we have to have a certain amount of adult roles filled.

Required training for adults - There is YPT (Youth Protection Training) that is required for any adult member to interact with a BSA Youth. This is an online training that takes about 45 minutes to complete. If you choose to be involved more or want to have a leadership role there is more specific training involved, both in person and/or online, depending on which position you are interested in. For most roles- no prior Scouting experience is needed.

TYPICAL ANNUAL CALENDAR

What is the flow of the year? When is the really active time? Monthly events?

Our typical calendar runs from the first week in August with our Backcountry 50 Mile Trek. Our weekly meetings begin the second week after school starts and run through the middle of May with time off for Holiday and school breaks. We try to schedule an overnight outdoor activity opportunity once a month for the girls to participate. Our busy time is more in the spring when we are preparing for the District Camporee and beginning our practice hikes for our 50 miler. So you can expect March, April and May to feel busier than most months. We stop our meetings through the summer, and except for the make-up practice hikes or optional outings, the summer time is family time. The outings are usually chosen by the Scout leaders and something they are interested in. A typical calendar would involve a water sport in September/October, hiking/biking/climbing November, snow camping/snowshoe hiking event in February, March and April are reserved for District Camporee training and overnights and are usually shorter months because of spring break, and then another event in May that may include a water sport or ziplining...These events are really guided by the interests of the scouts. We will rotate through these events every other year in order to make sure to allow for opportunities with many different types of adventures.

WHAT ARE SOME KEY BIG EVENTS?

Annual backpacking trek- a Cornerstone of our outdoor activity is an annual backpacking trek into the mountains. Typically 50-ish miles over 7-9 days. We prepare all summer with practice hikes and gear checks and trek leader trainings

Camporee - this is a competition of scout skills by patrols, against patrols from other Troops in the surrounding area. Typically in the first or 2nd week of may- we use the prior three months to get our girls trained and ready to rock!

Summer camp- typically in June or July we attend one of many camps in the California area where the girls can continue their outdoor adventures, while also earning merit badges and advancement

Monthly weekend adventures - These activities are designed to have the youth participate in all seasons of outdoor activities. The scout leaders will decide which activities they would like to

organize depending on the interest of all the girls. So far they would like to do kayaking, whitewater rafting, hiking/climbing, snowshoeing/sledding and ziplining.

Community Service Opportunities - We are in the process of finding new and exciting opportunities to help our community. So far we have been involved in helping the local schools and food banks. We are always open to ways that our girls can give back to this amazing community.

FINANCIAL OUTLAY/FUNDRAISING?

What are the initial costs? The first initial costs are:

*Class A Uniform - that is worn at all Thursday meetings and Court of Honor Ceremonies. Shirt, pants, BSA belt, sash. These can be purchased at the BSA Scout Store for about \$100 total. Then Hiking Boots purchased at your choice of stores.

*Class B Shirt and Purple Bandana- This troop shirt is worn at the outdoor activities, community service events, Summer camp, District Camporee. \$25

*Scouting application fee - \$33

What are equipment costs? The troop provides tents, cooking equipment, water filters, etc. What the girls need to have are the individual camping supplies, sleeping bag, sleeping pad, hiking backpack and personal items. Our troop has suggestions and advice on how to help you purchase the right equipment for your daughter. We have also negotiated deeply discounted deals with top of the line equipment companies for you to take advantage of.

What are on going program costs? We do not have annual dues for our members and currently we have the girls' families pay for the program on an event-by-event basis. Our intent is to leverage our significant annual fundraising push to start paying for almost all costs. If our fundraising goes as planned, most monthly activities will be covered by the fundraising with the exception of Summer Camp and a few higher ticket items.

What fundraising does the troop do? We plan to sell wreaths for our fundraising. This is a proven event that raises enough money to provide for the troops activities for the remainder of the year. All the girls will be required to sell 55 wreaths starting in November. In participating in the wreath sales program they can also earn their salesmanship merit badge and gain confidence and organization skills selling door to door or at a site sale like grocery store, church or restaurant. The girls will take pride and ownership in making the money to support their Troop and all the fun activities they get to do throughout the year.

EAGLE SCOUT/ADVANCEMENT PHILOSOPHY

Scouting has a great program of rank advancement. We think it assists in their outdoor skills development, their confidence and sense of accomplishment as well as their leadership development. We have many girls who are eager to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout, and we

are supporting their drive to do so, but we also appreciate that not everyone has the same aspirations, and we believe that Scouting has so much to offer girls of all aspirational types.

CHILD SAFETY AND TRAINING

We, and Scouts BSA, take youth safety and protection very seriously. All leaders and any parent that is involved with the troop and the girls are required to authorize a background check and also take the Youth Protection Training program offered through BSA Scouts. This training is an online course that helps adults to understand the principles and rules that BSA Scouts have set up to keep the youth in a safe and supportive environment throughout their scouting career. In addition we work with our Youth Leaders on their leadership styles and how to manage issues and challenges that they may be observing.

OUR DIFFERENTIATORS (at least what we think so far!)

Starting a girls troop is a new venture and parents may be wondering how to compare us to other troops. It is hard for us to judge that based on the short time scale so far, and our own biases, but based on some discussions with other troops we think the following are somewhat unique:

- We believe that our decision to operate as a truly independent girls unit has allowed us to build an environment that we have helped design and influence, and it has allowed girls of all ages to join Scouting where everyone is effectively “new to it” - without preconceived notions or beliefs
- Our approach to having every girl take on Patrol leadership is different, and we believe that, based on our experience with Troop 204, it will have a meaningful effect on girls of all types and styles developing leadership skills and experience
- By committing to an annual Backpacking trek, we believe that we are anchoring in a very outdoor-focused agenda that will prove beneficial in skills development, personal development and a love for the outdoors.

With the above being said, it's important to note that we continue to seek out new ideas and approaches from around the world, and we continue to work toward our goal of creating one of the best troops ever.

FAQ (to follow, based on accumulating questions)

HISTORY OF HOW TROOP 402 WAS STARTED

Troop 402 was founded by a few families that have sons in the Boys BSA Troop 204. Our daughters initiated the interest in creating a troop when the opportunity opened up that BSA Scouting was opening the door for girls to join. Our daughters have watched their brothers grow

and develop and enjoy the scouting experience and wanted to do what their brothers have done.

We organized a team of adults that had multiple years of experience in the scouting program. This team included the troop 204 scoutmaster of 13 years, the Unit Commissioner for our Briones District and multiple families of 204 that wanted to develop a successful troop for girls. With the resources and experience of many years being in the scouting program, we started brainstorming in July of 2018 how we could create an environment and base structure for the girls to thrive in. Through several meetings and hours of discussion we came up with a plan and an idea of what we thought would be the beginning for a troop the girls would be proud to be a part of, and on that would succeed. Our first official troop meeting was February 21, 2019.

We began with 11 girls ages ranging from 6th grade to a Sophomore in high school. We were very fortunate that our 2 oldest scouts Christine Mlynek and Alexia Tzortzis have grown up experiencing scouting through their brothers. They took the leadership roles very seriously and helped to create a culture of positivity and fun for the girls to learn their scouting skills in. As of June 2019 we now have 22 scouts that are enjoying the program and advancing and earning merit badges on their own, or in the week long summer camp. Our troop has grown to be currently comprised of 1 junior, 4 sophomores, 4 freshman, 1 8th grader, 8 7th graders, and 4 6th graders and are looking forward to welcoming your daughter if she would like to join. We are excited about the program we have developed and are still developing and welcome anyone that would like to find out more information, or join our Troop.



If you would like to join please contact us troop402lafayette@gmail.com for applications and let's get your daughter scouting!

