

Scouting as Community Support Opportunities for the Underserved to Exceed

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

It is absolutely critical that we have grand conversations about supporting young males of color in our communities. Though this conversation is now front and center, it has not always been this way. There have always been some organizations that were having this conversation behind closed doors and quietly. Historic organizations like the Boy Scouts of America have acted as a conduit to allow communities of color to mentor and support their boys and young men in ways that were authentic to the needs of the community and the resources that the community had to offer. This case study examines that infrastructure and those resources through the eyes of an executive leader within Boy Scouts of America who is also an African American male. This is a case study of nonprofit accountability within communities of color.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

About of the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts of America (the BSA) is one of the largest Scouting organizations in the United States of America and one of the largest youth organizations in the United States, with more than 2.4 million youth participants and nearly one million adult volunteers. The BSA was founded in 1910, and since then, more than 110 million

Americans have been participants in BSA programs at some time. The BSA is part of the international Scout Movement and became a founding member organization of the World Organization of the Scout Movement in 1922.

The BSA's goal is to train youth in responsible citizenship, character development, and self-reliance through participation in a wide range of outdoor activities, educational programs, and, at older age levels, career-oriented programs in partnership with community organizations. For younger members, the Scout method is part of the program to instill typical Scouting values such as trustworthiness, good citizenship, and outdoors skills, through a variety of activities such as camping, aquatics, and hiking. In order to further these outdoor activities, the BSA has four high-adventure bases: Northern Tier (Minnesota, Manitoba, and Ontario), Philmont Scout Ranch (New Mexico), Sea Base (Florida), and Summit Bechtel Reserve (West Virginia). The traditional Scouting divisions are Cub Scouting for children in grades K-5, Scouts BSA for youth ages 11 to 17 and Venturing and Sea Scouting for young men and women ages 14 (or 13 and having completed the 8th grade) to 20. The BSA operates traditional Scouting by chartering local organizations, such as churches, clubs, civic associations, or educational organization, to implement the Scouting program for youth within their communities. Units are led entirely by volunteers appointed by the chartering organization, who are supported by local councils using both paid professional Scouters and volunteers (BSA, 2020).

SETTING THE STAGE

Throughout their journey from the earliest years to college and/or career African American males and young men of color (regardless of their economic background) are disproportionately underserved. This is reflected in the following statistics; 82% of Hispanic boys along with 86% of African-American boys are reading below grade level. This is extremely disproportionate when we compare them to 58% of white boys who are not reading at grade level proficiency. This same disturbing trend filters over into the criminal justice system as these same males are more likely to be a part of the juvenile justice system and as adults the criminal justice system. This same population would more than likely be victims of murder at six times the rate their white counterparts. (Fact Sheet, 2014).

It is understood that mentoring is the countermeasure to the grim statistics in the previously mentioned paragraph. Over and over we have heard stories and reports on mentors who have made a powerful and incredible difference; in some cases life-altering for young males of color. We are well aware that has a positive effect on the development of youth. These relationships can be lifelong and transfer

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