

# Facilitating Communication

Communication is the key to the success of the service unit. As lives become busier and technology advances, individual volunteers may have different preferred methods of communicating. Therefore, it becomes even more important that the service unit manager keeps the lines of communication open.

## What does good communication look like in the service unit?

- There should be a forum for open discussion.
- Volunteers can share successes and challenges.
- Diverse viewpoints are expressed and valued.
- Creative ideas are valued and executed when appropriated.

## Let volunteers know what to expect from you and the service team members:

- Explain thoroughly the role of the SUM and the role of each team member.
- Identify who the volunteer can go to for help if they have questions.
- Make sure all volunteers are appointed to a position and given a job description.
- Ensure each team member participates in position training and understands their role.
- Make sure volunteers are recognized for their commitment to the organization.
- Discuss frequency/importance of SU team and SU meetings.
- Work and coach team members individually to help them achieve their assignments.

## Communicating with your volunteers:

As a service unit team, it is crucial to maintain regular communication with all volunteers in your service unit to ensure that everyone has access to all information. To meet the various needs of your volunteers, please identify and utilize a primary and secondary form of communication. Here are some commonly used communication methods:

- Email
- Service unit Facebook group(s) and posts
- Text messaging
- Communication apps (i.e., GroupMe, Band App)
- Dedicated service unit webpage
- Phone calls
- Short electronic newsletters/blogs

## Be aware of the needs of volunteers:

- Recognize what motivates volunteers (it is not the same for everyone.)
- New volunteers may feel isolated or overwhelmed – check in with them to provide support.
- Experienced volunteers may be looking for new opportunities for sharing their leadership.
- Identify their skills and encourage them to use their talents.
- Work with the recognition chair to provide recognition for volunteers monthly and at both the service unit and council level.

**Be available when you are needed:**

- Listen actively. Be present with the people you are talking with, and make every effort to understand their perspective.
- Offer advice in a supportive manner.
- If you don't know the answer, tell the volunteer you will find it and commit to the time that you will get back to them.

**Confront inappropriate behavior:**

- Address conflict immediately when presented by a troop or among service team members.
- Your role as SUM is to be impartial when presented with conflicts.
- Contact your service unit support manager for guidance and support for both giving and receiving constructive feedback.