

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **PIEDMONT COUNCIL FRIENDS OF SCOUTING CAMPAIGN 2024-2025**

#### **What is the Friends of Scouting Campaign?**

Friends of Scouting (FOS) is an annual fundraising campaign that asks active scouting families and community members to contribute financially to support the Piedmont Council. There are no dues required to be part of the Piedmont Council. Instead, the FOS Campaign helps cover part of the costs necessary to keep the Piedmont Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Council and its programs running. If we value having a local council in Piedmont, Scouting families must support FOS annually.

#### **How much, in total, does the Piedmont Council spend each year? How much does FOS contribute?**

Piedmont Council's annual operating budget is approximately \$657,000. The 2024-2025 FOS goal is \$115,000, which will fund 20+% of the Council's expenses. The current FOS goal is consistent with those in the past several years. ***Piedmont BSA and the Executive Board are incredibly grateful to the Scouting community for helping us to meet our goals!***

#### **What does the Piedmont Council do? (A lot!)**

Piedmont BSA helps organize and put on Scouting programs such as the Cub Scout Day Camp, Twilight Camp, Pinewood Derby, the Highlander Hikes, Cub overnight camps, Scouting for Food, and Camporee. This year the council organized a new Troop Aquatics Day for swim advancement tests and the Swimming Merit Badge. It also organizes participation in major Scouting events like the National Jamboree and high adventure summer experiences such as Philmont, Sea Base and Northern Tier. The office conducts programs, training, and monthly Roundtables so that Pack, Troop and Crew leaders have the resources and training to provide outstanding youth experiences. Piedmont BSA is in the process of purchasing fingerprinting equipment to make it easier for all council volunteers to comply with the recently passed CA Assembly Bill 506, which requires enhanced screening in all youth serving organizations in California.

Piedmont BSA pays for and manages the Council's 4 staff members, who are necessary to keep all these programs running and coordinated with the National BSA organization. Our council offers one of the few Trading Posts in the Easy Bay, which sells uniforms, handbooks, and rank and merit badges. It helps with recruiting Scouts and leaders, advancement, and recognition of Piedmont's outstanding Scouting volunteers. Administratively, Piedmont BSA supports unit registration and advancement records, while also providing mentor support and special recognitions for Eagle Scouts. General liability insurance and supplemental health and safety insurance are also provided by Council. Finally, Piedmont BSA provides a local touch point to allow many adult volunteers to stay active in supporting our Scouting community after their own Scouts have "graduated".

#### **I already made a payment to my troop/pack/crew. Doesn't that support the Piedmont Council?**

**No.** Families pay dues to their individual units (Pack, Troop or Crew) at the beginning of the school year, and a portion goes to the National BSA. This pays for insurance and various administrative functions associated with being a part of Boy Scouts of America. The rest of your unit dues and fees help pay for unit-specific activities, equipment, and other expenses that are planned and budgeted by each respective unit's leadership team. ***None of your unit dues go to the Piedmont Council!***

#### **How much are you asking families to contribute?**

The Council's operating expenses average approximately \$500 per youth. We ask each Scouting family to consider making a contribution of \$300 per youth towards that cost. More importantly, we hope that every Scout family will participate in the campaign at the financial level they feel comfortable with. Some may be able to give more and some less. ***The key is participation;*** if every family makes a donation, we will be assured of strong programs delivered locally and well supported by Piedmont BSA.

#### **Where does the FOS money go? Does any of it get into the programs directly?**

Yes. The FOS funds you contribute go directly to Piedmont Scouting's activities. Since we are independent from the national organization, the funds we raise remain right here in our community.

#### **What does it mean to keep the Piedmont Council independent?**

Remaining local and independent enables the Council to be responsive to the needs of families in our immediate community. It provides a "face" to Scouting and "boots on the ground" professionals in our city that isn't present in larger Councils, and allows experienced Scouting alumni to continue to contribute their time and talent to our council and youth. Please note that every Council has a Friends of Scouting Campaign.

#### **Is my contribution tax deductible?**

Absolutely, the Piedmont Council BSA is a registered 501C3 Corporation (ID #94-1156325). Your contributions to the Council are fully deductible!

### Do some employers provide matching gifts?

Yes, and these matching gifts can double the value of your contribution. Please check with your employer to see if it offers a matching contribution and submit the forms. Let the FOS Coordinator know about this matching contribution program, so we'll know to credit it to you and your unit. Use the following link to check if your company participates in matching contributions.

[https://www.matchinggifts.com/bbscouting\\_iframe](https://www.matchinggifts.com/bbscouting_iframe)

### Can I make pay my Friends of Scouting pledge monthly?

Yes, it's easy! A donor can simply select the Monthly donation option on our website or pledge card and add a credit card. The \$300 requested contribution can be set up as a very manageable \$30 each month during the school year.

<https://www.piedmontbsa.org/give/donate-now/>

### How can I make a one-time donation?

You can donate online at <https://www.piedmontbsa.org/give/friends-of-scouting/>, or send a check made out to "Piedmont Council BSA" and mail to Piedmont Council, 10 Highland Way, Piedmont CA 94611

### How can I get more information?

Please feel free to contact Piedmont BSA Executive Board FOS Coordinator Lisa Reynolds at [lisareynolds440@comcast.net](mailto:lisareynolds440@comcast.net). Or contact Kate Benson in the Piedmont Council office at 510-507-4519 or [katherine.benson@scouting.org](mailto:katherine.benson@scouting.org)

## Meet Kate Benson, Piedmont BSA Scout Executive + the Council Office Staffers

- ❖ **Kate Benson, Scout Executive** Kate joined the Piedmont Council in November of 2020. She is the chief executive officer of the council responsible for the administration, financing, marketing, motivation, recruiting, and staffing required for successful council operations. She works closely with the board and council committees. Kate and her husband Neil have two children, Kajsa and Anna in Troop 11. She has worked for the BSA in various councils for over 20 years. Outside of work, she enjoys hiking, reading, and rowing.
- ❖ **Laural Fawcett, Registrar and Trading Post** Laural has been with the council for five years. She manages the council trading post and often serves as the first contact with the council office. She also takes care of registration and advancement questions and drafts the council's newsletter. Outside of work, Laural enjoys hiking, spending time with family, and exploring her community.
- ❖ **Herb Schmidt, Finance Admin** Herb joined the council team in February 2021, and is responsible for accounts payable and receivable, account coding, monthly financial reports, maintaining our donor database, thank you notes, tree lot back end support, and more. Outside of work, he enjoys hiking, cycling, and spending time with family.
- ❖ **Eris Turner, District Executive** Eris joined the team January 2022. They are responsible for providing staff support to program opportunities throughout the year, including the Highlander Hike Series, Twilight Camp, Camporee, and Day Camp. They serve as a point of contact for volunteer leaders and new families. Eris is also a council alum who earned their Eagle in T15 and was in the Piedmont Community Service Crew and Fencing Crew. Outside of work, they enjoy writing, gaming, and exercise.

## Highlights from 2023-2024

- **Piedmont BSA recognized 17 scouts that achieved the rank of Eagle in 2023, leading their teams through 2,330 hours of service.**
- **Piedmont BSA Council and the Executive Board successes:**
  - Licensed as a Live Scan vendor, and able to provide this service to Scouting volunteers at no charge
  - Guided our expansive Executive Board in setting up an action orientated Strategic Plan for council operations in 2023-2024
  - Supported Scouting for Food for Piedmont BSA and facilitated cross council coordination with recipient food banks.
  - Supported the council aquatics day for Scouts in Scouts BSA, supporting rank advancement and the Swimming Merit Badge.
  - Coordinated with the Piedmont Police for the bicycle rodeo
  - Operated a convenient local trading post selling handbooks, merit badge books, rank advancements and award recognitions (saves unit leaders from traveling to Pleasant Hill or San Jose!). WE HAVE UNIFORMS!
  - Provided secondary accident and sickness insurance to all registered Scouts and volunteers.
  - Worked with national to provide COIs for general liability insurance. This is a vital need for units as they secure facilities for meetings and special events.