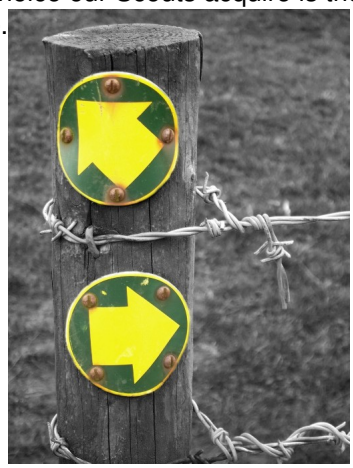
Our Scout Programs are by our Scouts, for our Scouts. Our Scouts choose, organize, and lead their own meetings, programs, and activities. Counselors are always on hand to ensure safety and to provide guidance when needed, but it is our Scouts who personalize their own Scout adventures.

It may seem to some that our Scouts are given too many choices by using this model of governance. But the most important concept about choice our Scouts acquire is the knowledge that there really is only one choice: to choose to allow others free choice.

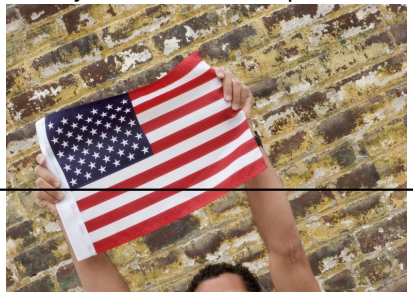


Our Scouts are people and like any other people, they do not always agree. Our Scouts use consensus to come to a decision - voting by majority and then discussing the issue until all the Scouts agree. Naturally every single Scout will not get to do exactly what they want to do most on every single occasion. Becoming familiar with the fact that we do not always get everything we want the moment that we want it is a lesson in and of itself for our Scouts. We encourage our Scouts to acquire the skills of brainstorming, cooperation, and negotiation.

By using consensus, our Scouts develop their public speaking skills and their skill of persuasion, important attributes life long.

In the world, we see adults wrestle with this concept everyday. People may hear someone they vehemently disagree with expressing themselves in a manner they do not like and think to themselves, "I'd like to make that person be quiet." Most of us have had that impulse at one time or another. However, we understand that if we had the power to make everyone be quiet, when someone tried to take our voice away, there would no voices left to defend us.

The responsibility of Team Leaders is not to act as an authoritarian, but to ensure free choice for all the Scouts. If they had the power to force the vote their way every time, our teams would quickly disintegrate into dictatorships. Our Scouts quickly figure out that how they treat others is likely how they will be treated and it becomes obvious the only way to get anywhere is through mutual cooperation. The only way to ensure their freedom is to ensure everyone else's. This is a complicated concept, but it is nonetheless at the heart of a functioning democracy, and also at the heart of basic human compassion and decency. Our Scouts acquire the knowledge that doing what is best for others IS what doing what is best for them.



For all the decisions and choices our Scouts make, they acquire the knowledge that one choice is the most important of all: to make sure they can keep on choosing. They learn that choosing not to impose restrictions on those who disagree with them keeps those who disagree with them from being able to impose restrictions on them. Our Scouts receive a lesson in democracy every time they choose, organize, and lead - not just pretty words, but actions that ensure free choice for themselves and for their teammates into the future.

It is natural that our Scouts who choose, organize, and lead their own meetings, programs, and activities will modify and create their own Scout Adventure. The adventure after all, is all theirs.