

September 22, 2016

Steven D. Bradley

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RE: Russell Etzenhouser

To the Council Selection Committee,

I met Russell about 3 years into his professional life when he moved from New York as an Exploring Executive to Orange County Council as a District Executive in Southern California. Our first assignment together was in Cub Scout Camping, and to find facilities that would be a good fit and meet the standards the BSA had at the time. After 6-9 months of searching we found 3-4 places that would meet the standards and started the promotion of Cub Camping.

It was in my next assignment in 1999, that I became a member of the Board of Directors and became the Chairman of the Lost Valley Committee (summer resident camp) and Russell and I were paired again, Russell this time as our Camping Director. We both inherited a dysfunctional group of volunteers who only had bad things to say about just about everyone and everything, people who were not listened to, nor their opinions valued at all. We both knew that to be successful we needed to change that culture. Russell and I both had several conversations with our scout executive at the time (Kent Gibbs) and after putting a plan together for success we moved forward. After several months of team building, which Russell led every month you could start to see a change in attitude, if we promised something we came through with it and we listened to what our volunteer committee had to say, we had some very talented people already, we added several more and they started to come together as a team. We started adding program to the camp off season, we worked to help maintain the facility, and we worked hard to earn the respect of the whole committee.

This was not an easy task and it took us over a year before any concrete tangible results occurred. Russell and I worked on this project for 4 years together. At the end of that time we had a fully functioning council committee and a trust that had been built between the professionals (Russell) and the committee volunteers.

In addition to the camp, I also had the opportunity to work with Russell as he took on the staff advisers job of our local OA Lodge. As a former Lodge Adviser and at the time WR Chairman of the OA, I offered my assistance behind the scenes when it was necessary. Russell handled this just like I knew he would, consulting with his volunteers, asked the questions that need to be asked and by the time he left Orange County had a solid relationship with the lodge volunteer leadership.

I have had the privilege of watching Russell continue his good works both in the Circle Ten Council in Dallas Texas and of course in his current assignment as a Scout Executive in Buffalo New York. He has exhibited the same style of leadership throughout his career and if you are looking for an innovative executive with his eye to the financial health of your council and increasing your membership and mentoring both his professionals and the volunteers they work with, then I hope you will give great consideration to Russell being your next Scout Executive.

With Warmest Regards,

Steven D. Bradley
Vice Chairman-Volunteer Relations
Chairman-Lost Valley Committee
Orange County Council, BSA