

VENTURING MAGAZINE

"Siempre Listo Para Servir" by Rachel Eddowes

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Inaugural Interamerican Leadership Training

Rachel Eddowes has been selected as one of four youth to represent the BSA at the World Scout Conference and World Scout Youth Forum in Slovenia this August. Congratulations Rachel!



December 2013 was an exciting month for the Interamerican Region (IAR) of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM) as the pilot Interamerican Leadership Training (ILT) was introduced.

While initially scouting started in England, it quickly spread all over the world with WOSM being established in 1922. Now, there are six different regions within WOSM, with 162 countries participating with their own National Scouting Organization (NSO). The IAR comprises of 34 NSOs ranging between Canada and Chile, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) being one of them.

67 participants representing 33 of the 34 NSOs within IAR came to Houston for a week of leadership training, networking, scouting fellowship and fun. Some of these countries included Honduras, Venezuela, Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Mexico, and Belize, just to name a few. Participants were grouped into Teams (similar to the BSA's NYLT and NAYLE programs), with no two scouts from the same country on any one team. Participants worked and bonded together as they completed challenges and activities that went along with each presentation.



The initial idea of ILT came about in 2010 when Ricardo Wagner, head of the Asociación de Scouts de Guatemala, approached Dan Ownby, a member of the World Scout Committee, who is also from BSA (Sam Houston Area Council), and asked Mr. Ownby if he had any suggestions on how WOSM and/or BSA could help their expanding program. In early 2013, Mr. Wagner and Mr. Ownby collaborated and determined that assisting in the training of young adult leaders would be a way of having a long-lasting impact on Scouting not only in Guatemala but also throughout the IAR.

Since Scouting programs can vary from NSO to NSO, it was agreed upon that training in leadership and team-building skills would be something that would work for all the NSOs within the IAR. Mr. Ownby, with support from Mr. Wagner, took initiative and began the development of this training for the entire IAR. With funding from the United States Fund for International Scouting (USFIS) and from the Messengers of Peace Foundation, through WOSM, the Interamerican Leadership Training began as a projected ten-year project. (It is important to clarify that ILT is a WOSM program, not at BSA program.)

Mr. Ownby assembled a group of several adult and youth volunteers and, along with Mr. Wagner, introduced the idea to them with the hopes of getting this project off the ground and bringing it to fruition. From that group a core group of volunteers representing several Councils within BSA along

with adult leaders from Guatemala met and started the development of the contents and schedule for this inaugural training.

Armando Aguirre was asked to serve as the Course Director for this pilot course. Camp Strake in the Sam Houston Area Council (SHAC) was decided as the location, with the dates for the course to be between December 26, 2013 and January 1, 2014.

The syllabus was developed and assembled by a group of adult and youth scouting leaders who all had extensive leadership training experience. These leaders also served as staff for the pilot course.



Among the adult leaders were Brigitte Therivel, Fritz Maxwell, Ellie Morrison, and Dave Shelburne, along with Armando Aguirre, all of which have served as Woodbadge Course Directors. The youth on staff were assembled from across the country, including Venturers David Hines, Lane Randall (a former NAYLE Senior Crew Leader (SCL)), Amy Allbritton, Hampton Zobrist, Bear Bryt, Rachel Eddowes (a former NAYLE SCL), Sarah Mittrucker (former National Venturing Vice President), and Gerry Souser (a current National Venturing Vice President and a former NAYLE SCL), along with Boy Scouts Hilario Lumbreras, Todd Christian, and Matt Bursley.

The subjects selected included both contemporary and historical topics covered in several BSA trainings as well as other subjects that were introduced and developed by the youth and adult staff. The week was jammed packed with leadership training with topics that included the Values of Scouting, Communication, Understanding the Group, Benefits of Teamwork, Problem Solving, Setting the Example, Conflict Management/Resolution, Representing the Group, and Building Bridges.

Messengers of Peace played a large role within the course. Not only was the course itself a Messengers of Peace project, but also participants were Messengers of Peace Trained. The main focus of the course was to give participants the skills and resources to carry out Messengers of Peace Projects back in their home countries and to better their NSOs.

In addition to the training there was plenty of time for fun. During breaks scouts would lead scout songs from their countries, and in their native language. The staff prepared a campfire for the beginning of the course, and participants prepared one for the end of the course; each Team either presented a skit or a lead everyone in a song/dance. The staff was in awe at how so many different cultural backgrounds could come together to put on a campfire that was able to convey humor and reinforce the spirit of scouting.



The closing ceremony took place at the end of the week, with everyone was given a candle. The initial light came from a lantern that was spread from scout to scout until everyone was illuminated. Participants gave closing remarks as everyone reflected on the week. Many expressed that ILT was the highlight of their scouting experience. At the close everyone was given a Messengers of Peace neckerchief and ring to wear around their World Scout Emblem.

With everyone "ILT Graduated," International Night could begin. Participants shared the culture of their country with clothing, food, and gifts. Music ranged from Latin American to contemporary dance as everyone gathered to celebrate the New Year. Each hour the New Year was announced for each time zone represented.

Already there has been tremendous feedback of the positive effect of the pilot ILT course. NSOs within the IAR have already expressed that change has been occurring. The Facebook group created for all the participants to maintain their networking and connections has continued to be active as thoughts and updates are shared on their Messengers of Peace project.

Already plans are being made for ILT 2014.

"In all of this, it is the spirit that matters. Our Scout Law and Promise, when we really put them into practice, take away all occasion for wars and strife among nations."

- Sir Robert Baden Powell

Want to learn more? Here are a few web links:

- Interamerican Leadership Training Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IAR.LeadershipTraining>
- ILT Messengers of Peace: <http://scout.org/node/24437>
- ILT Wikipedia Page: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interamerican_Leadership_Training
- Interamerican Region website: <http://scoutiar.info>
- Interamerican Region Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ScoutIAR>