

**CASE STUDY FOR THE DELIVERY OF THE EXPLORING PROGRAM
VIA COUNCIL RESOURCES VERSUS DISTRICT RESOURCES IN THE
MT. DIABLO SILVERADO COUNCIL**

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ABSTRACT

During the 1980's and 1990's Exploring division thrived in Mt. Diablo Silverado Council. Exploring grew in units and membership. There was a Council Committee for Exploring. This committee had a sub committee for training, development, and finance. Exploring Posts had numbers equal to or better than some of the traditional districts in units and membership.

During that time frame the council was known as Mt. Diablo Council which consisted of five districts and an Exploring Division. Later the council merged with Silverado Council to what is known this present day as Mt. Diablo Silverado Council. Exploring had a dedicated professional assigned to Exploring. When the council started to experience financial challenges the Exploring professional position was eliminated. Therefore, responsibility for service and support of Posts became the responsibility of District Executives within their districts. However, this was not part of their critical achievements. As time went on Exploring volunteers started to disappear as there was no glue or effort to keep the team together for the purposes of serving our Posts. There was no professional designated to work with Exploring volunteers. Posts experienced minimal contact and support from the council office.

Contact was pretty much limited to once a year when a District Executive would reach out seeking forms and money to recharter the Post. As the years progressed some Posts disappeared but still maintained their operation but they felt why do I need to be a part of the official Explorer Program? All they do is want our money but provided no service to us.

Posts continued to drop away from the Exploring program. Today some are still functioning and promote their Explorer program on their web sites and recruit, yet they are not part of our current program.

In March 2017 three volunteers got together with the push of Ed Gray from Herms District and became the council's Exploring committee. At that time there were seventeen Posts, consisting of police and fire. Today that number has increased to, soon to be, twenty-five Posts.

Mt. Diablo Silverado Council now consists of eight districts and Exploring is supposed to be serviced through the districts. Is Exploring being well served at the district level? Do district committees know what Exploring is? Are they serving their Posts? Due to the efforts of the current Exploring committee more and more people are becoming aware of the presence of Exploring Posts in our council. The big challenge still

remains to get districts to help service their Posts. This is only occurring in two of the districts today, Herms and Muir. These two districts consist of six Explorer Posts. Thus, nineteen Explorer Posts receive no support from their current districts, other than what is provided by the Council Exploring Committee.

Due to the uniqueness of Exploring I have concluded that Exploring would be better served and sustained if all the Posts were removed from districts and once again became their own district / division within Mt. Diablo Silverado Council. With continued growth to one day have their own District Executive assigned to Exploring.

INTRODUCTION

At one time Exploring was a major part of our council activities including a number and variety of Posts and membership. What happened to those numbers of Posts and memberships? How are the Posts being serviced today? How do you rebuild the Exploring component in the council? Is it working? What are the solutions?

From my experience, past and present; contacts with advisors, former and present; along with information from www.exploring.org I will present a history of Exploring in Mt. Diablo Silverado Council from the late 1970's to present time today.

The ultimate goal is to get Mt. Dialbo Silverado Council excited about Exploring and with the National Office of Learning for Life's efforts with EXPLORING EXPLOSION to once again be a vital component of our council's efforts for our youth!

EXPLORING'S PAST IN MT. DIABLO SILVERADO COUNCIL

I started my law enforcement career as an Explorer with Fremont Police Department. Latter I became a police cadet and police officer with Fremont. I became an Associate Advisor with Fremont Police Explorer Post 119 for a little over a year. On November 1, 1977 I transferred to Martinez Police Department. When I arrived I asked if they had an Explorer Post. The response was no as the current police chief was not interested in sponsoring a post.

In July 1979 our police chief retired and the city hired a new police chief. Mt. Diablo Council conducted an "Impact Luncheon" which the Chief attended. Business leaders and administrators were invited to the luncheon to learn about Exploring and seeking potential sponsors. At the luncheon our Chief learned Martinez Police Department was one of a few in Contra Costa County who did not sponsor a law enforcement Post. When he returned from the luncheon he asked the lieutenant why we did not have a

Post. The lieutenant informed the Chief that his predecessor had no interest in Exploring. Chief responded we need to create a Post with our police department. The lieutenant then came to me and explained the wishes of the Chief. He knew my background with police exploring and asked me to get it started for us.

I contacted Mt. Diablo Council office and was put in contact with the Exploring Executive. We discussed what we wanted to do in Martinez. We met later to talk about the process of creating a new Post and the steps to take. Next I met with counselors at Alhambra High School and told them what our department desired to do. They told me to write up a small article explaining the program and they will run it in the schools daily bulletin for one week.

We conducted an open house in November 1979. Our Exploring Executive was there to help me. We only had about four students show at the open house to hear what we were offering. The students completed the Exploring applications and the Exploring Executive took the copies and left at the conclusion of the meeting. That was the last I saw of him or heard from him for about a year.

We struggled during our initial year. I continued to run articles in the schools daily bulletin seeking additional membership. There was no support out there for new

Exploring Posts. I did not see anything about training for advisors nor information regarding options for Explorers to participate in outside of our regular meetings and in house training. Support for me, our Post, as well as resources were nonexistent.

About a year later I was contacted by our Exploring Executive. It was time for our annual recharter. We talked over the phone regarding my struggles to increase membership. He explained that several years earlier the council had conducted a career interest survey in our high school. The survey was distributed amongst the students where they indicated several career interests as well as hobbies. The goal was to determine interest to then seek sponsors to create future Explorer Posts. Although the survey was several years old I asked if he could forward a list of those students expressing an interest in law enforcement.

We took the names of students still in high school and sent each of them a letter on department letterhead signed by the Chief of Police inviting them to an open house at the police department. The open house was a success with a nice turnout which generated a spike in our membership. I now realize the benefits of utilizing Career Interest Surveys! For the next year or so we relied on the daily school bulletin at the high school and word of mouth to sustain our membership.

NEW EXPLORING EXECUTIVE

Around 1981 I am heading out the door with my family when the phone rang. I answered the phone and a cheerful lady was on the other end and identified herself as the new Exploring Executive in our council. We spoke a short time getting to know each other and agreeing to meet at a latter time to continue our conversation and her vision for Exploring's future in our area.

The new executive continued to telephone Exploring volunteers as well as meeting with them, to discuss Exploring and their needs. As a result of her efforts she started building relationships with the volunteers as well as identifying potential committee

members for Exploring. Next she started to bring various volunteers together to meet and discuss future activities for our Explorers. This moved into finally arranging a meeting with multiple volunteers. Next thing you knew we were the Council Exploring Committee. After a few months she scheduled training for Exploring Leadership. Prior to that training we had another committee meeting. Next thing we knew we were now the Exploring Training Committee.

As the weeks and months passed there had been volunteer training sessions which created more volunteers wanting to get involved and have fun with Exploring. To start to bring Posts together we held an Explorer Olympics over two days and now the youth were starting to get to know each other which promoted more activities for Explorers. On two occasions we had the opportunity to visit Travis Air Force Base and we boarded a C141 Starlifter and flew around California for several hours. The Explorers and volunteers loved the experience.

As time moved on the committee was able to embark on a concept of building an Exploring Officer's Association (EOA). This brought together youth leaders from Posts with dialogue, sharing of ideas, and this led to several council wide EOA events for our Explorers. We also had a strong law enforcement component in our council. Together we created the Mt. Diablo Law Enforcement Explorer Academy. Our first effort was a basic academy from Friday evening through Sunday afternoon. Next we added an

advanced academy lasting one week. After several years we abandoned that concept and went to a two weekend academy being run along the lines of the weekend Wood Badge course. We were in session one weekend, the next we were off and the third weekend was the conclusion. We had great success in these academy sessions and had youth from multiple councils. The academies were held at military bases in the San Francisco Bay Area as the cost of housing was zero and they charged us the military rate for meals.

As our program grew in size to around 85 to 90 Posts we created clusters. They included; Sea Scouts, High Adventure, LDS, Law Enforcement and General (did not fit anywhere else).

SO WHAT HAPPENED?

The council's finances were becoming lean. To help mediate the financial situation the council embarked on some cost cutting measures. One of those was the elimination of the Exploring Executive. The next challenge upon us was the creation of the Venture program around 1990. Sea Scouting, High Adventure, and LDS were moved from Exploring to Venture. Then the remaining career interest Posts were moved into the new subsidiary, Learning for Life (LFL). Up to that point LFL was an in school program which our council participated in. Those career interest Posts then became forgotten

units in our council. There was next to little or no support from the council office to support the remaining units which were now part of the New Exploring movement. I refer to it as the New Exploring program as the Venture program absorbed the Exploring training materials as theirs and they merely changed the logos in the initial start of Venturing. Exploring had to recreate itself.

For law enforcement there was still the annual regional conferences and the every other year national conferences, which some of us participated in. In order to participate in those conferences your unit and Explorers needed to be registered. As time went on the units who did not participate stopped renewing their charters. Some of those Posts fell to the wayside and some of them continued to operate, but not as a chartered LFL unit. Next the Posts would hear from the council office at the end of the year seeking to renew their charter. Once a Post completed the renewal they did not hear from the council until the end of the following year. Exploring was becoming a non program in the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council.

EXPLORING EXPLOSION

In 2016 new Chief Scout Executive, Michael Surbaugh initiated Exploring Explosion.

This effort was a mission driven, nationwide exploration growth campaign that engages more volunteers and professionals. Advances local programs and ultimately improves the Journey to Excellence scores for local councils.

The Exploring Explosion brought renewed efforts across the country to more actively engage in and promoting growth in Exploring.

EXPLORING TODAY IN MDSC

Around the same time of Exploring Explosion our council brought in a new Director of Field Service who I had known through previous years and he knew of my involvement in Exploring. We spoke on occasions regarding rebuilding and servicing Posts in our council.

He subsequently identified one of the District Executives to service Exploring. Months later, with the efforts of Ed Gray, Herms District, we had our first meeting in March 2017. The initial three members were Ed Gray, I, and a representative from Chief Solano District. We started to meet monthly discussing Exploring and strategies to service our existing Posts. We started to identify names and emails for advisors and Posts committee members to make contact with and check on their needs as well as a way to communicate with them to share information.

January 2019 the councils District Executives rotated into various other responsibilities, in addition to their assigned districts. Andrea Knowles was assigned to Exploring. She brought in new perspectives and added support to our efforts.

One of our first challenges we discovered came during the recharter efforts for units in our council towards the end of 2017. Being Posts were part of the districts we learned that it appeared the efforts of District Executives were to obtain Packs, Troops, Crews, and ships charter in for 2018. The priority was to create and distribute charter renewal packets to those units. Ed Gray distributed Post packets to the four Posts in Herms District and I delivered the two to Muir District Posts. District Executives were to distribute the remaining packets to Post in their districts.

During November and December of that year we started to follow up with Posts who had yet to turn in their charters for 2018. We learned a lot of them had yet to receive their renewal packets. One Post I contacted did not know what I was talking about as they were new and their first time dealing with a renewal. This was around the second week of December and they did not have their renewal packet. I contacted the District Executive who told me he indeed had it and was planning to deliver the packet the following week. That would be the third week of December and the renewal packet was due back in the office by the end of December? Due to work load of officers in this police department, retirements, and new committee members; this Post did not re-register with the council until the start of 2020. Due to a number of Posts not receiving their renewal packets in a timely manner we spent a lot of time in the first quarter of 2018 to obtain those renewal packets.

So, in 2018 the council Exploring committee assembled the renewal packets and insured the proper forms were included. The prior year the council staff made the packets with Scouts BSA forms and not the ones specifically designed for Exploring. Our committee then distributed the packets in October 2018 to the Posts instead of waiting for District Executives. The renewal process was greatly enhanced for 2019 charter year due to those efforts. Also, by this time we had been communicating with Posts by distributing information to them electronically with information, newsletters,

fundraising opportunities, youth scholarships, and competition events. Relationships with Posts were being built and generating positive responses.

With the success of the 2019 Posts renewals we replicated our 2019 efforts. We once again assembled renewal packets with the correct paper work and had them distributed by the end of October 2019. Most of those 23 Posts turned in their renewals prior to the end of the year. The last one was turned in on March 2, 2020. A great turnaround from the fall of 2017!

We made a concerted effort in 2019 to work with District Executives to recruit at least one member from their district to work with the council Exploring committee. As a result we obtained one new committee member from only one district.

It is not my intent to be critical regarding the charter issues and attempting to get districts to recruit an individual to work with their Explorer Posts. I do not know why but there seems to be a disconnect in districts where Scouters understand Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venture Crews; but no interest in reaching out and serving their Explorer Post.

MY RECOMMENDATION ON HOW TO SERVICE POSTS NOW, AND INTO THE FUTURE

Taking into account my experiences in Exploring during the 1980's and 1990's where our council had a robust Exploring program which consisted of an Exploring committee, training committee, development team, Service Team, and a great group of Exploring volunteers; I am confident we are able to strive to once again have a robust Explorer Program in our council. Granted it was not built in a day but with a core of active volunteers and a dedicated interested District Executive we could come back.

To do this I encourage council leadership to remove Exploring from districts so Exploring would be their own district / division; such as it was in the 1980's and 1990's during those successful years. Serving Posts in districts today is not working. Posts are not adequately serviced today with our current structure. For unknown reasons districts appear to not be up to the task. We are not getting nor building a volunteer base from Scouters in their districts to support Exploring. So why not put Explorer Posts in their own district / division?

In those early years we were able to build our volunteer base from current and former Exploring volunteers from within the Exploring Division. Walking in or calling Explorers and talking Boy Scouts, you lose this audience.

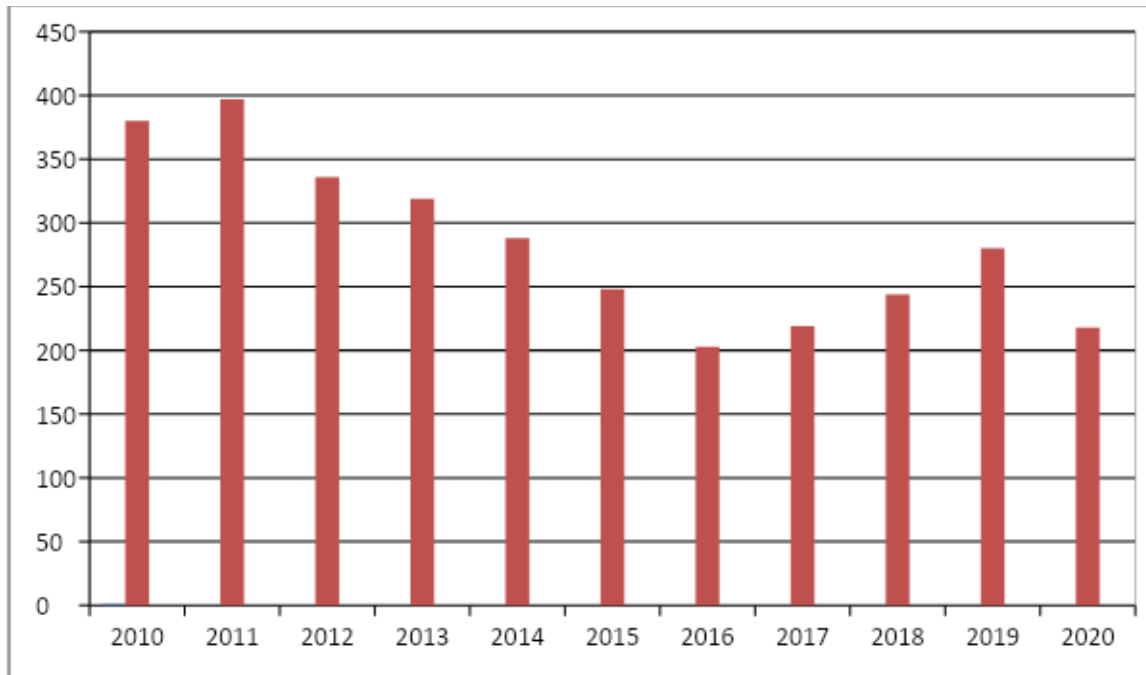
At the end of 2019 the LDS church changed their male youth program from Scouting to a newly created LDS church program. This greatly decreased the size of units in the eight districts. Today there are 23 Explorer Posts. After shelter in place is over, during this pandemic, we will add two more Posts for a total of 25. In 2019 we experienced 14.8% growth in youth membership and we are striving for 7% growth in 2020.

With the recent approved merger of Mt. Diablo Silverado Council, Alameda Council, and San Francisco Bay Area Council there is no time like the present to make such a move to an Exploring District / Division with the newly created Golden Gate Area Council.

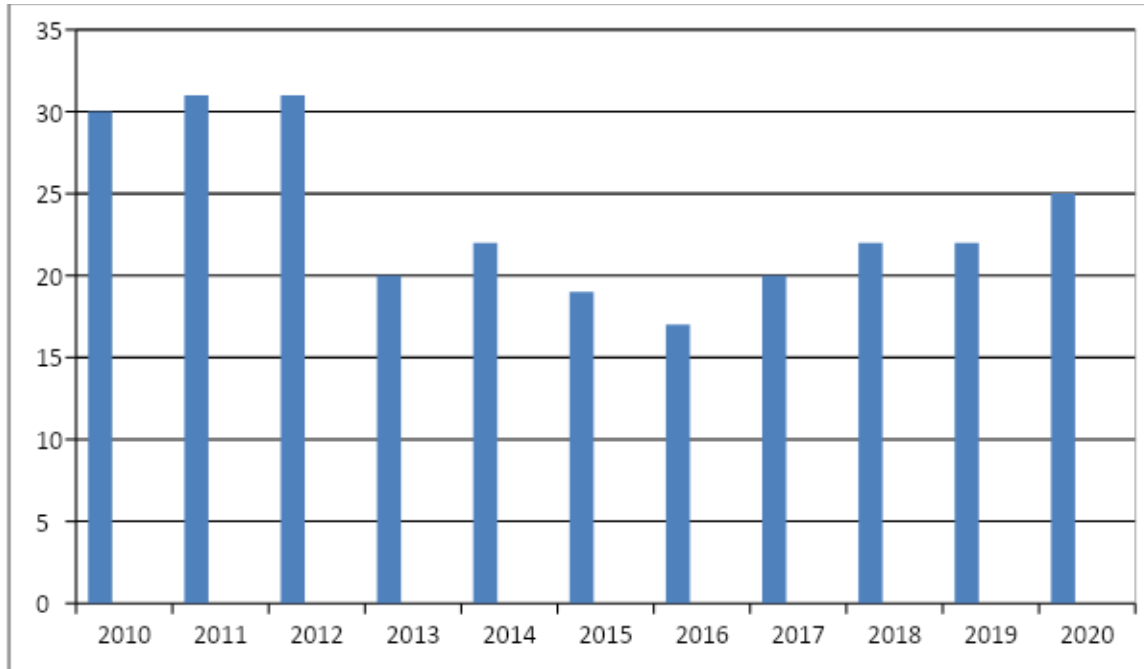
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- Exploring Express
- Cultivation Event Guidebook
- New Unit Playbook
- Safety First Guidelines
- Career Interest Survey Guidebook
- Exploring Officers Guidebook
- Unit Performance Guide
- Workforce Development Funding Guide
- www.exploring.org
- www.exploringexplosion.org

MEMBERSHIP



POSTS



The previous page of two charts shows the decline of Exploring youth membership until the current Exploring committee started their work in March 2017. The second chart shows the decrease in the number of Posts until March 2017. With the committee in place the decline stopped and we have experienced membership growth in 2017, 2018, and 2019. With the commitments we currently have we anticipate 2020 will be the fourth year in a row for growth in both youth membership and Posts.

The charts reflect Posts in districts were just not being serviced, hence the decrease in membership and Posts! If Exploring is going to be a part of the council I feel they would be better served if they were pulled from districts and an Exploring district / division were created.

EXPLORING PARTICIPANTS AS OF JANUARY 2020

Exploring Participants as of January 2020

Clubs/Posts = 4,450 Youth = 95,377 Adults = 19,799

Career Area	Posts	Youth	Adults
• Arts & Humanities	25	359	160
• Aviation	83	1,387	460
• Business	58	1,693	191
• Education	141	4,590	420
• Communications	15	323	56
• Engineering	81	2,210	437
• Explorer Clubs	395	14,903	704
• Fire/Emergency Services	1,022	13,466	5,360
• General Interest	258	7,720	1,015
• Health Care	220	9,936	909
• Law Enforcement	1,694	27,233	8,599
• Law/Gov't/Public Service	152	3,833	667
• Science	46	2,421	133
• Skilled Trades	50	837	200
• Social Services	8	145	28
• STEM	202	4,321	500

EXPLORING™
DISCOVER YOUR FUTURE

National numbers

EXPLORING'S 12 CAREER PATHS



MT.DIABLO SILVERADO EXPLORER POSTS

BRIONES DISTRICT

CHIEF SOLANO DISTRICT 8033 Suisun City Fire
C8133 Suisun City Fire
8365 CHP Fairfield PD
8480 Fairfield PD *
8651 Fairfield Fire

DIABLO SUNRISE DISTRICT 88 Contra Costa Fire
415 Brentwood PD

HERMS DISTRICT 110 Richmond PD
705 El Cerrito PD
1037 San Pablo PD
2111 Hercules PD

LAKE DISTRICT 7244 Clearlake PD
7295 Lake County Sheriff's Office
7777 Northshore Fire Protection District

MERIDIAN DISTRICT 2022 San Ramon PD

MUIR DISTRICT 243 Martinez PD
320 CHP Martinez

SILVERADO DISTRICT 7104 Napa County Fire
7201 Benicia Fire *
7220 Napa Fire
7234 Benicia PD
7258 Vallejo Fire
7262 American Canyon Fire
7301 Advocates for Aviation Safety
7325 CHP Napa

* Registration process in progress

ADDENDUM

On April 27, 2020 it was announced that the executive boards of Alameda Council, Mt. Diablo Silverado Council, and San Francisco Bay Area Council voted to merge. The official date of the new council, Golden Gate Area Council, is targeted to be June 1, 2020; after the necessary documents have been filed with the appropriate organizations.

I shared this paper with MDSC President, Tom Weibert on May 1, 2020. He responded back to me that he has shared the paper with the new council Key 3. They are currently working out the details for the future make up of GGAC. At that time he was unable to share any of the proposed organization ideas as it was a work in progress.

MDSC Exploring committee had our regular monthly meeting on April 28, 2020 and we discussed briefly the recent merger vote and the implications for Exploring in the new merged council. It was speculative at the time as it had just occurred and we will wait for the outcome of the newly created council. In the mean time we will continue on with our current goals and objectives for 2020. Our understanding at this time is Alameda currently does not have any Explorer Posts. SFBAC we heard they have a couple of law enforcement Posts and a couple of medical Posts. However, we are not sure of the accuracy of this information.

National Exploring office conducts a monthly “Live Hour” video conference for Exploring executives and council volunteers. It had been recently announced that the new GGAC President is Dan Walters. Mr. Walters is also the Western Region Exploring Chair and he was part of the video conference. During the conference I privately messaged him and introduced myself along with my contact information. We agreed to talk / meet at a later time. No meeting has been set yet.

MDSC Exploring Executive, Andrea Knowles, participated in two video conference calls with the other professionals from Alameda Council and SFBAC during the week of May 4, 2020. A couple of the SFBAC professionals had some experience in Learning for Life. It is unknown if it is with Exploring, in school program, or both. The next MDSC Exploring committee meeting is May 26, 2020. Mrs. Knowles is going to reach out to them inviting them to participate in our next monthly meeting on May 26, 2020, which will be a video conference due to the current shelter in place guidelines.

This new council is going to have a lot of expanded resources which Exploring could reach out to. To do just that we need resources that could open doors and make introductions. We need an expanded volunteer base to work the contacts and help build Exploring in our new council. I strongly feel by continuing to build relations with our

Posts, as an Exploring district / division those potential volunteers could be identified and recruited. The committee is looking at doing a council Exploring event in the near future. This would start to bring Exploring youth and adults together. This is also an opportunity to talk and explain the value of an Exploring Officer's Association (EOA).

Another move we would like to make is a presentation with the new executive board. The plan is to break them up into groups and list their professions as well as potential contacts for sponsorships of future Posts. A council in the Northeast Region did this at a board retreat with great success.

Recently I was in Commissioner Tools making contact entries in tools for our 23 Posts. I noticed that out of our eight districts the only contacts entered for the 23 Posts were from me. Only three districts have anyone listed for their Posts Service Team Member / Commissioner. Herms district has a Service Team Member listed for their four Posts. I am listed for Muir District, as I was the recent District Commissioner. I am also listed for Silverado Districts Posts as their District Chair asked if I would help service their seven Posts. **With MDSC 23 Posts divided amongst seven districts, it is a challenge to build a sense of camaraderie amongst the youth and adults as they are currently under serviced in our current set up.**

As of May 12, 2020 we are in a bit of a holding pattern to see which way the new council leadership wants to move in servicing Exploring. Our current committee is continuing to strive to recruit volunteers to assist in carrying out our mission...creating more opportunities for our youth.