

Event Planning Toolkit
Version 1.0

www.HARLEMSCOUTS.COM

About the film

759: Boy Scouts of Harlem is a 72 minute documentary film that is available to be screened in your community via DVD. Be prepared to be amazed as Scout Troop 759 heads from the streets of Harlem to the woods of Camp Keowa. Eleven year old new scout Keith Dozier spends his first week at camp facing the challenges of the woods - the dock test in the deep dark lake, creepy creatures of the night, the daunting climbing tower, the raucous dining hall and the seductive Siberian sirens of the kitchen. With help from his fellow Scouts KC, Devon and Manny and wise Scoutmaster Sowah, young Keith faces the challenges and earns his place as a Scout. *759: Boy Scouts of Harlem* is a warm, tender, and funny family documentary about Scouting in an unexpected place.

The film premiered on May 14th to a 350+ standing-room-only crowd at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem. A trailer for the film is available at www.harlemscouts.com



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About this toolkit

This toolkit has been designed by Jake & Justin--the filmmakers--to help you host a successful screening event in your community. Depending on the objective and format of your event many sections of this toolkit may not be relevant to you—so pick and choose the parts that work for your screening but above all Be Prepared!

If you have suggestions on how to improve this toolkit please contact Justin at justin@harlemscouts.com.



Getting started

Identify your objective

Think about why you want to host a screening. The film can be used to help energize people active in Scouting, reenergize alumni Scouts or introduce people to Scouting who may not know much about it. Because much of the film takes place at summer camp it may also be a great way to communicate what Scout Camp is all about. Your objective might be to just have fun and check out a family-friendly independent film with some friends—which is an excellent reason to host a screening.

Determine your target audience

Once you figure out your objective you need to figure out who you are going to invite. Maybe it is your Scout Troop or Troops from your Council. Maybe it is kids who are thinking about joining Scouting and their parents. It could be people who are interested in Harlem and urban issues. It might simply be members of your church or students at your school. In any case think about who they are, how many you might realistically attract and how you could get them interested in your event.



Select a location

Where will your event be held? at your home? at your church? at a school? at a community center, a theatre, a museum or some other venue? Many places have facilities to host film screenings. Try to find a space that you can use for free, that is easy to get to and is about the right size for your target audience. Our film is available for not-for-profit community screenings only—so it is not designed for events where you charge admission, but we understand you may request a voluntary donation to help defray the cost of the screening. From a technical standpoint the location must have the ability to play a film from a DVD. If you have a very large venue with the right kind of digital projection capabilities we may be able to provide you with a blu-ray disc or a high definition tape that will yield a better picture. But the film, played on a regular DVD with a proper digital projector, looks and sounds great.

Select an event format

You may just want to simply screen the 72 minute film—or you may want to do something more. Here are some ideas. No matter what, be sure to plan enough time for whatever format you choose and make sure you keep an eye on the clock so you respect everyone's schedules.

invite a guest speaker—you may ask someone who is a good speaker and familiar with Scouting, with urban issues or with independent film to give some brief remarks after the screening.

host a Q&A panel—host a facilitated discussion about the film with three or four local Scouters, filmmakers, teachers or qualified experts.

make it a fundraiser—if you order a “screening kit” you can sell DVDs to help raise money for your organization or you can use the film in connection with an event for donors. The film, however, is not designed for events where you charge admission. If you'd like to order more DVDs to sell just contact us.

create a Scout recruiting event—invite Scoutmasters or other Scout leader to talk about the local programs and how to get involved.

invite the filmmakers—if it works with our schedules and if there is a way to manage the travel expenses we would love to attend your event!

host a reception—simply have people hang around after the film—maybe with some drinks or snacks—to socialize.

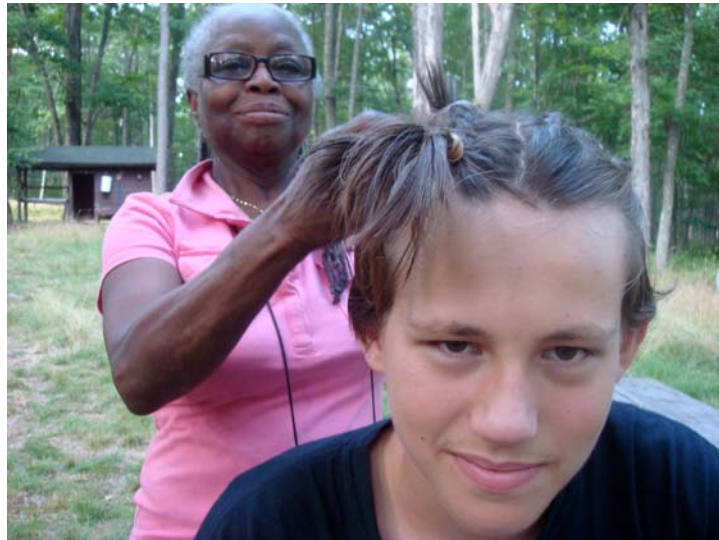
No matter what format you choose remember that your event, above all, ought to be a lot of fun!

Getting the word out

Electronic outreach

Depending on your target audience using email and the internet may be the best way to publicize your event. Email lists and sites like Facebook and MySpace can help you link to members of the community. 759: Boy Scouts of Harlem has pages on Facebook, MySpace and YouTube. You can embed links to our website and 759 film trailer in your messages and our logo, our poster graphic and production photos are available on our website if you'd like to download them to use in your communication.

You may also contact local bloggers or websites that cover events in your area and ask them to help get the word out about your screening. This can be a great (and very efficient) way to reach your audience.



Posters & flyers

If it makes sense you may want to use posters and flyers to advertise your event at local businesses, schools, churches, coffee shops or wherever you get permission to do so. Mini-posters and templates for flyers are available on our website. Our "Screening Kits" include larger four-color posters that you can use.

www.HARLEMSCOUTS.COM

Local media

Why not get some local media coverage of your event? We have provided a press-release template on our website that you can download, customize and send to your local radio, newspaper and TV reporters. Your screening may just be the kind of grass-roots community event that they'd like to promote and cover. It is best to send your press release directly to the reporters who would likely cover your story—you can usually find their names and contact information on their websites. If you would like to send even more information about the film to your local media please contact us and we will get you a comprehensive information kit that you can use.



Co-sponsoring organizations

Another very good way to publicize your event is to partner with a group to co-sponsor your event. Scout Troops and Scout Councils, churches, museums, student groups, film societies, and other organizations may be interested in partnering with you to make a screening happen. Their membership and mailing lists can help make your event a success.



The event itself

Depending on the format of your event, we suggest you introduce yourself before the screening and explain that there will be a Q&A afterwards and DVDs will be on sale (if applicable). It is usually best to pass out any materials you might have before the screening in case people need to leave early. Don't forget to tell people to silence their cell phones--then sit back and enjoy the film. If you have some kind of discussion after the film be sure to keep an eye on the clock and facilitate the discussion so people feel included and that you respect their time. If people want to learn more about the film you can direct them to the website www.harlemscouts.com. Take some photos and send them to us—we will try to post them on our blog!

THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT: Nothing is more frustrating than having a technical issue that disrupts your event. It is critical that you test the equipment you will use to show the film—make sure everything sounds right and looks right.

Good luck, enjoy and please tell us about how your event was received!

759: Boy Scouts of Harlem event planning checklist

Once you have selected your target audience, objectives and format you can start planning your event.

Six weeks prior

- Book the venue and date
- Recruit an organization to co-sponsor the event
- Determine speakers if applicable

Three weeks prior

- Confirm you have the right technical equipment to screen the film—this could be a large TV and a DVD player or a projector, a screen and a sound system.
- Create a flyer to publicize your event (template flyers are available on our website)
- Draft an agenda and share it with your co-sponsor
- Contact the filmmakers if you would like to order additional DVDs to sell/raise funds at your event
- Email us about your screening and we will try to post it on our blog!
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Two weeks prior

- Create an email blast to publicize your event (templates available on our website) and send a message to your friends and contacts on MySpace and Facebook and ask them to help spread the word
- Contact community calendars and local bloggers about your event

10 days prior

- Send out press releases to media outlets and reporters (templates available on our website)
- Call local television and radio programs

A few days before

- IMPORTANT: test screen the DVD to make sure there are no issues!
- Send a second-round email blast and messages on Facebook and MySpace
- Follow up with press who expressed an interest in covering the story
- Put up posters and mini-posters for your event
- Make copies of any handouts and prepare a sign up sheet

At the event itself

- Ask people to sign up as they arrive to receive updates from your organization
- Before the screening pass out the postcards that came with your screening kit along with any other materials.
- Before the discussion announce that you have DVDs for sale that will help cover the costs of the screening. If you would like to sell more DVDs as a fundraiser please contact us.
- Have a timekeeper so that the panelists/speakers remain within their assigned time.
- Encourage people to visit www.harlemscouts.com to learn more about the film
- Take some photos and send them to us! We will try to post them on our blog.



We wish you luck with your event. Please let us know how it goes and if you have suggestions to improve this Community Screening Toolkit please send us an email at justin@harlemscouts.com!

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