



# A PARENT'S GUIDE TO POPCORN



**Greetings! Whether you're a veteran parent or new to our unit, we want to share some thoughts about the annual popcorn fundraiser, why we think it's a positive activity for both our unit and Scouts – *your kids!* – and you.**

## **Popcorn has become as much a part of Scouting as cookies have for another organization**

People are used to Scouts selling popcorn during the fall. Also, Trail's End is part of Weaver Popcorn, which is one of the largest retail popcorn producers in the world. They're fanatical about quality, and experts when it comes to popcorn - they know what flavors sell the best!

## **The popcorn fundraiser is unique the return to Scouting**

Over 70% of sales stay local – 30-40% stays with our unit, and the rest stays with our council, right here in Central Illinois. The council uses the funds to support Ingersoll Scout Reservation, provide programming, fund staff support, and operate the Scout service centers. *The council also pays for the Amazon gift cards that Scouts earn, as well as the free summer camp that Scouts can earn at Ingersoll!*

By comparison, many other fundraisers only offer a 30-32% return to Scouting.

## **What does it cost?**

The prices range from \$15 to \$30. It may seem like a lot, until you remember that over 70% of that is really a contribution to your son or daughter's Scouting experience.

Also, a contribution to "Heroes and Helpers" can be made at any dollar amount. Our Scouts, unit and council still get credit for the sale, and the council then donates popcorn to area heroes - police, firefighters, EMTs, military personnel, etc. – as a result.

*Over \$36,000 of popcorn was donated locally this way in 2023.*

## **What does the fundraiser mean to our unit and our Scouts?**

First, it makes Scouting more accessible for ALL of the kids in our unit. The money helps fund our program. Unit supplies, awards and things we need for many of our events and activities can be paid for with the funds we raise, reducing the need for dues and payments from families for one activity after another.

Second, the popcorn fundraiser is goal-oriented – and designed so we’re not holding fundraisers all year long. No one wants that! Just like we plan our unit’s program in advance, we set an annual budget and plan our fundraiser to meet our actual needs – not just push everyone to “Sell, sell, sell!” This keeps it manageable, rather than exhausting, and a more positive experience for all of us.

Finally, it gives individual Scouts the opportunity to work towards goals – such as earning their way to camp. Plus, Scouts develop their maturity and communication skills by positively interacting with adults. Even when the answer is “No thanks,” our Scouts can learn to handle that with grace and respond, “That’s okay – have a great day!”

## **Next: How the fundraiser works, and some of the terms we throw around!**

### ***Ways of selling:***

- **Storefronts:** Selling popcorn outside of a local business. Trail’s End books many of these for us, and if we want to schedule them at other businesses or events, we can do so. 1 or 2 Scouts and their parents can work a single storefront shift, making this a very efficient and effective way to sell.
- **Wagon sales:** Selling door-to-door, usually just a Scout and their parent, working their way through the neighborhood. This can be done with popcorn “in a wagon” for immediate sales, or taking order for delivery.
- **Take Orders:** Taking orders and payment in advance, for delivery later.
- **Online:** The best way to sell popcorn to friends and families who may live out-of-town. Your Scout has a link they can send out by email, text or social media, and they’ll get the credit for the sale, while the popcorn is shipped directly from Trail’s End to the customer.

### ***How the fundraiser works:***

Generally, a unit like ours will start by planning a number of storefront sales, and we'll order popcorn in August for pickup in early September. While online sales can begin as early as July and run year-round (if a Scout is so inclined) the physical sales – storefronts, wagon sales and take orders – take place between the first of September and the end of October. We can get more popcorn if we need it during that time, and in early November we'll place a final order for any take orders that need to be fulfilled. Once we're done, we'll settle up with the council by the end of November.

### ***The Trail's End app:***

Available for Apple and Android phones, this is where you and your Scout can set their goals, monitor their progress, enter sales and payments, track inventory and deliveries, and manage their online sales.

### ***Payments:***

Cash may be king, but credit card payments, Apple and Google Pay, and the Cash App are even better, because neither you, your Scouts or the unit have to handle the money. You can even keep any cash your Scout collects and make a payment in the Trail's End app with a credit/debit card. Also, Trail's End pays all the credit card processing fees, and Scouts get the most rewards for payments made with credit/debit cards.

### ***Incentives:***

Trail's End uses a point system for rewards. Scouts earn 1 point per dollar sold for cash sales, and 1.25 points per dollar sold for app credit/debit card and online sales – another reason to convert cash sales to credit/debit! The more points Scouts earn, the greater the value of a virtual Amazon gift card they'll earn at the end of the sale. (500 points is the first threshold to earn a \$10 gift card, and it goes up from there.)

Additionally, the council provides Scouts with the chance to earn their way to camp as another bonus incentive. Cub Scouts (K – 4<sup>th</sup>) who sell at least \$1,400 earn free Cub Resident Camp at Ingersoll next summer, and AOL Scouts (5<sup>th</sup> Grade) and those in Scouts BSA who sell at least \$2,800 earn a free week of Summer Camp or NYLT at Ingersoll next summer.

# Trail's End®



## Fund Your Summer Adventure!

How to Sell Over \$1,400 in Just Over 8 Hours

5

MINS

### Personalize Your Account

Download the Trail's End app and register an account if you haven't already done so. Set your goal, add pictures and a short bio telling customers why you're fundraising.

10

MINS

### Online Direct

Utilize the Trail's End app to automatically reach out to contacts in your phone, asking them to support your Scouting adventure by ordering online! You can choose campaigns that include email(s) and/or text messages. Trail's End does the work, and the average customer orders over \$65 when they use Online Direct. You can also share your fundraising page through social media, and ask your family members to do so, too! **Just 8 online orders of \$65 = \$525!**

4

HOURS

### Storefronts

Sign up for and work storefront shifts of at least 4 hours at a local business that has already given permission for Scouts to sell there. A single Scout working with their parent can sell over \$125/hour. **Just 4 hours can equal \$500 in sales!**

4

HOURS

### Wagon Sales

Spend just four hours over a couple of days selling door-to-door in your neighborhood, either with product or taking orders. Wear your uniform, take a parent with you, introduce yourself and explain what you do in Scouts and why you're fundraising. **4 hours can easily equal \$400 in sales – or more!**

**Total Sales: \$1,425**

**That's more than enough to earn your way to ISR Cub Scout Resident Camp, or over half-way to a week of Scouts BSA Summer Camp at Ingersoll Scout Reservation! Plus, you'll earn an Amazon gift card worth at least \$50.**

