



# National Network

## From National Commander Ken Hunt

A Bimonthly Issue November-December, 1992

Devotions ..... Information ..... Suggestions ..... Plans  
Activities ..... Techniques ..... Calendars ..... Helps

### 1993 National Training Camps

<input type="checkbox"/>	FLORIDA	Fort Meade	January 28-31
<input type="checkbox"/>	TEXAS	Jacksonville	February 25-28
<input type="checkbox"/>	LOUISIANA	Woodworth	April 22-25
<input type="checkbox"/>	ALABAMA	Springville	April 29-May 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	IOWA	Ogden	May 13-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	CALIFORNIA	Weimar	May 13-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	TENNESSEE	Goodlettsville	May 20-23
<input type="checkbox"/>	MARYLAND	Whiteford	May 20-23
<input type="checkbox"/>	CALIFORNIA	Twin Peaks	June 3-6
<input type="checkbox"/>	OREGON	Sisters	June 10-13
<input type="checkbox"/>	MISSOURI	Eagle Rock/NRRTC	September 9-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	NEW JERSEY	Medford Lake	September 9-12
<input type="checkbox"/>	COLORADO	Cedar Ridge	September 16-19
<input type="checkbox"/>	OHIO	Bellefontaine	October 21-24

### 1993 Winter National Training Camp

<input type="checkbox"/>	CALIFORNIA	Emigrant Gap	January 20-23
--------------------------	------------	--------------	---------------

### 1993 Buckaroos/Straight Arrows Training Conferences

<input type="checkbox"/>	WEST VIRGINIA	Falling Waters	April 15-17
<input type="checkbox"/>	MISSOURI	Eagle Rock/NRRTC	May 6-8
<input type="checkbox"/>	GEORGIA	Forsyth	May 27-29
<input type="checkbox"/>	NEVADA	Las Vegas	September 30-October 2
<input type="checkbox"/>	TEXAS	Jacksonville	October 14-16
<input type="checkbox"/>	CALIFORNIA	Bay Area (part 1)	October 30
		Bay Area (part 2)	November 6

### 1993 National Training Trails

<input type="checkbox"/>	CALIFORNIA	Kybruz	June 10-13
<input type="checkbox"/>	MISSOURI	Eagle Rock/NRRTC	October 14-17
<input type="checkbox"/>	ARIZONA	Apache Junction	October 28-31

### 1993 National Canoe Expedition

<input type="checkbox"/>	CALIFORNIA	Healdsburg	September 23-26
--------------------------	------------	------------	-----------------

### 1993 Advanced National Training Camps

<input type="checkbox"/>	FLORIDA	Fort Meade	February 9-13
<input type="checkbox"/>	WASHINGTON	Medical Lake	September 22-26

## CALENDAR NOTES

**The 1993 National Royal Rangers Council and National District Leaders Seminar** is scheduled March 18-20. This council will be held at the Sheraton Inn and Conference Center; 3333 S. Glenstone, Mo. 65804. Twenty NDLS classes will present current topics vital to Royal Rangers. Please encourage your wife to come. We'll have another year packed with activities for them to attend.

**A European national commanders' meeting is scheduled for February 27, 28, 1993.** This first meeting of European national commanders will further strengthen the Royal Rangers ministry in this geographic location. I look forward to attending this historic event.

**Switzerland National Commander Hanspeter Neck reports on Royal Rangers events in Europe:**

**Denmark:** The first NTC in Denmark took place May 1992. A Staff School is scheduled for November.

**Portugal:** An NTC is being held October 29-November 1.

**Czechoslovakia/Switzerland:** About 30 Czechoslovakians have been invited to attend an NTC in Switzerland.

**Switzerland:** A JNTC was held in July and an NTC in September. On August 30 the Royal Rangers there celebrated their 10 year Royal Rangers anniversary.

**Romania:** An outpost was planted in Brasow in April. A group of about six people traveled to Germany for training in July-August.

**Prayer Task Force--San Jose, Costa Rica:** I'm leading a Light-for-the-Lost Prayer Task Force trip to San Jose, Costa Rica, December 5-13, 1992. This PTF can accommodate husband and wife couples--a team of 20. The prayer team will be supporting the Children's Congress, which is to be held at the national camp near San Jose. About 100 children's leaders (pastors and laity) will gather from 20 nations for this seminar and time of spiritual uplifting. Because of our burden for kids, Royal Rangers have been called upon to lead and to support this event. The total cost of travel to San Jose from Miami, Florida, is \$800. Although the date deadline for registering has already expired, I can still get you aboard if you will work with me by telephone. Definite commitments and all moneys are required by October 30. A passport is needed. If you're interested call me ASAP.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The *National Network* will soon be offered to any Royal Ranger on an offering basis. (Our office will continue to make this publication available to councilmen without charge.) This will enable the national office to better inform Royal Rangers across the United States. Share the news in your regional/district newsletter to help spread the word.

The national office will be enacting the 1992 National Council Resolution VII, NIV, by citing the **New International Version in future publications.** Our office is hoping to soon develop a 52-week *Buckaroos Leaders Planning Guide*, which would have a dual translation of King James and NIV Scripture references. We have also researched ways to include the NIV in the *Royal Rangers Bible Study Lessons*.

The **FCF Handbook** is being revised but will be several months before it will be published. More information on the availability of this handbook will follow.

**Delivery of the new *Royal Rangers Leaders Manual and Adventures in Camping*** are anticipated February 1, 1993. The new cover designs and content will be a much-sought-after item. The *Adventures in Camping* (revised 1986 edition) is being reprinted--supply to be made available next month--in order to fulfill ongoing requests for the handbook until the revised edition can be made available. In addition, the revised *Leadership Training Course* will be made available by January 1993. The LTC will include test questions on the "Child and Substance Abuse" chapter of the revised *Leaders Manual*. Plus both the standard and *Buckaroos-Straight Arrows LTC* will have new covers.

**Royal Rangers Terms:** The 1992 revised *Leaders Manual* will refer to advanced awards as "merits." Also, the word *outpost* will be used to refer to a local church group of Royal Rangers. Individual groups, conversely, will be referred to by name, not as "outposts." (Example: "An outpost can consist of seven groups: Straight Arrows, Buckaroos, Pioneers, Trail Blazers, and Air-Sea-Trail Rangers.")

**Don't do without the latest Royal Rangers video.** The *One in a Million* video is great for promoting the Royal Rangers ministry at both church and conference events. You may recall that during the 1992 National Council I had asked that those interested in purchasing a continuous-play video contact Marshall Bruner. About



30 councilmen had raised their hand, expressing an interest. However, only a few have actually followed through with the request. Since a master continuous-play video will cost much to produce, the national office must have the names, addresses, and GPH account numbers of at least 15 individuals. Again, contact Marshall Bruner at the national office if you are interested.

**The national chartering desk will be closed Wednesdays of each week.** Fay Stephenson, chartering secretary, still will be in the office but working other assignments.

With sorrow I report that the son of **Doug Jones, New Mexico district commander**, passed away on **September 23, 1992**. Let's lift the Jones family in prayer, asking God's grace and comfort during this difficult time.

**The fifth Australian National Camporama will be held January 4-8, 1993 at Ballarat, Victoria.** If you wish further information, contact Australian National Commander Will Thorne: 3 Norma Avenue; Eastwood NSW; 2122 Australia.

**Those involved in Royal Ranger of the Year testing need to know:** The *Trailblazers Handbook* (see introductory remarks of "Advanced Awards") should state: The highest earned Pioneer Award may also be worn above these awards."

National Deputy Commander Paul Stanek is looking for recommendations from district commanders of individuals who are bilingual in Spanish and English and who are qualified to teach at an upcoming NTC in Spain. District leader, if you can assist Paul Stanek, please contact him as soon as possible at the national office.

Thanks to those who are contributing to the Overseas Travel Fund. Just a reminder: **District staff members have pledged to pay \$10 each--\$60 per district--toward the national Overseas Travel Fund.** District commander, please check with your staff to ensure the pledge is fulfilled for 1992. Thanks!

**The Men's Ministries Department has announced the appointment of Rev. Benny W. Ferguson--of Columbia, Missouri--as national Light-for-the-Lost coordinator.** Brother Ferguson follows the leadership of Rev. Bill Strickland, who was named missions convention and Prayer Task Force coordinator for the

Division of Foreign Missions. Brother Ferguson is a long-time supporter of Royal Rangers. His son, Benny Jr., is himself a Royal Ranger.

**Thank you, commander, for your support for the new Light-for-the-Lost Junior Councilmen Program.** The LFTL and Royal Rangers Offices are developing curricula for this exciting missions program. Also, the spring 1992 *High Adventure* will introduce the program to the boys. I believe God is going to use this joint ministry to render great results in the lives of Royal Rangers and those children who will be on the receiving end of LFTL literature. Let's unite in prayer that God will anoint these efforts to educate thousands of Rangers about missions and to win thousands of boys and girls to Christ.

Speaking of prayer ... **earmark your calendar for the dates scheduled for the Royal Rangers Decade of Harvest prayer and fasting days.** The first Saturday of every month has been designated a day of fasting and at least 1 hour of prayer for the Royal Rangers Decade of Harvest efforts. Dates occurring during this publication date are November 7 and December 5.

**The National Training Center hosted the 1992 National FCF Rendezvous July 23-25.** If you missed it, you really missed a great time. More than 800 boys and men gathered in the Ozark hills for a time of fellowship and spiritual renewal. It was the largest ever National Rendezvous. Thanks to Fred Deaver, national FCF president, and his men for conducting a superb Rendezvous!

**The 1992 Eagle Rock Adventure brought in a total of 100--66 boys, 13 men, and 21 workers.** Thank God this camp was well attended. One of the highlights for boys was the newly installed high ropes course. (Thank you James Barger, Great Lakes regional coordinator, for volunteering your time to install this magnificent looking activity.) Many other activities--such as frontier crafts, canoeing, hiking, chapel services, and much more--provided a splendid time for the boys. Thanks you to all who made the camp a success. Special thanks to Don Brock and the North Central regional staff for the many hours spent in promoting the Eagle Rock Adventure and for sponsoring boys to attend. We couldn't have done it without you, Don. Your help is much appreciated!

Recently you should have received a "Summary of 1992 National Council Resolutions" sheet, which indicated those resolutions passed or failed.

Please note that Resolution-1992-IX should read "FAILED."

According to National Deputy Commander Paul Stanek, the revised IPS and IPS exams are now available through the national office. Please inform your training staff.

Paul Stanek was promoted to the rank of Colonel in the United States Army Reserves during a recent ceremony at the 102nd Army Reserve Command Headquarters in St. Louis, Mo. Commander Stanek has served in the Reserves since April 1972.

*The National Men's Ministries Department now offers 101 Poster Ideas.* This \$14.95 publication has 101 promotional posters (8 1/2 by 11 inches) for men's activities and events in the local church. Masters to be photocopied and used as posters, flyers, bulletins, inserts, and mailers. Call the National Men's Ministries Department and order item 08-0229.

#### PAST EVENTS

Thanks, Alaska Rangers, for hosting the August NTC at your district camp, near Wasilla, Alaska. Fred Deaver and myself traveled to Alaska to direct the camp.

The United Kingdom just celebrated its first

National Camporama, August 11-14, 1992. The event was held in Beaudesert, England. Evening speaker was our own Robb Hawks, national program coordinator. Congratulations England for the success of your Camporama and for the milestone you have reached.

A note of thanks to District Commander John Vazquez and the Spanish Eastern District staff for a most-successful Pow Wow. Its catchy theme was "The King of the City." I was guest speaker and enjoyed meeting with the district Rangers.

Iowa Pow Wow: Forty-three boys met Jesus at this recent Pow Wow. A record 318 boys attended. Russell Kinney, of Davenport, Iowa, was guest speaker.

Kansas: Fred Deaver, national FCF president, was guest speaker at this Pow Wow in August. The Pow Wow theme was "Free Trappers." I was guest speaker at the recent Commanders Conference Banquet in Wichita.

Nebraska Pow Wow: Dick Gruber, children's ministries consultant for the national Sunday School Promotion and Training Office, was guest speaker. This August Pow Wow carried the theme "God's Army -- Calling All Rangers, Report for Duty."

Northern Missouri Pow Wow: The district held its Pow Wow in August.



# Overseas Travel Fund

## National Royal Rangers Office

1445 Boonville Ave.; Springfield, MO 65802-1894

Thank you, national councilman, for your faithful contribution to the Overseas Travel Fund. Your pledge, which each councilman made at the 1991 National Royal Rangers Council to give \$10 each year--each district pledging \$60 a year--is greatly helping the national office promote Royal Rangers overseas. Please complete your 1992 Overseas Travel Fund pledge below, and return this form to the national office. May God richly bless you for giving!

### ✍ My Overseas Travel Fund Pledge for 1992:

A one-time gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

A pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid in monthly payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ before the end of 1992

District \_\_\_\_\_

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Funds to be deposited in Account Number 001-01-033-4001-000)

# Overseas Travel Fund

## National Royal Rangers Office

1445 Boonville Ave.; Springfield, MO 65802-1894

Thank you, national councilman, for your faithful contribution to the Overseas Travel Fund. Your pledge, which each councilman made at the 1991 National Royal Rangers Council to give \$10 each year--each district pledging \$60 a year--is greatly helping the national office promote Royal Rangers overseas. Please complete your 1992 Overseas Travel Fund pledge below, and return this form to the national office. May God richly bless you for giving!

### ✍ My Overseas Travel Fund Pledge for 1993:

A one-time gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

A pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid in monthly payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ before the end of 1992

District \_\_\_\_\_

My Name \_\_\_\_\_

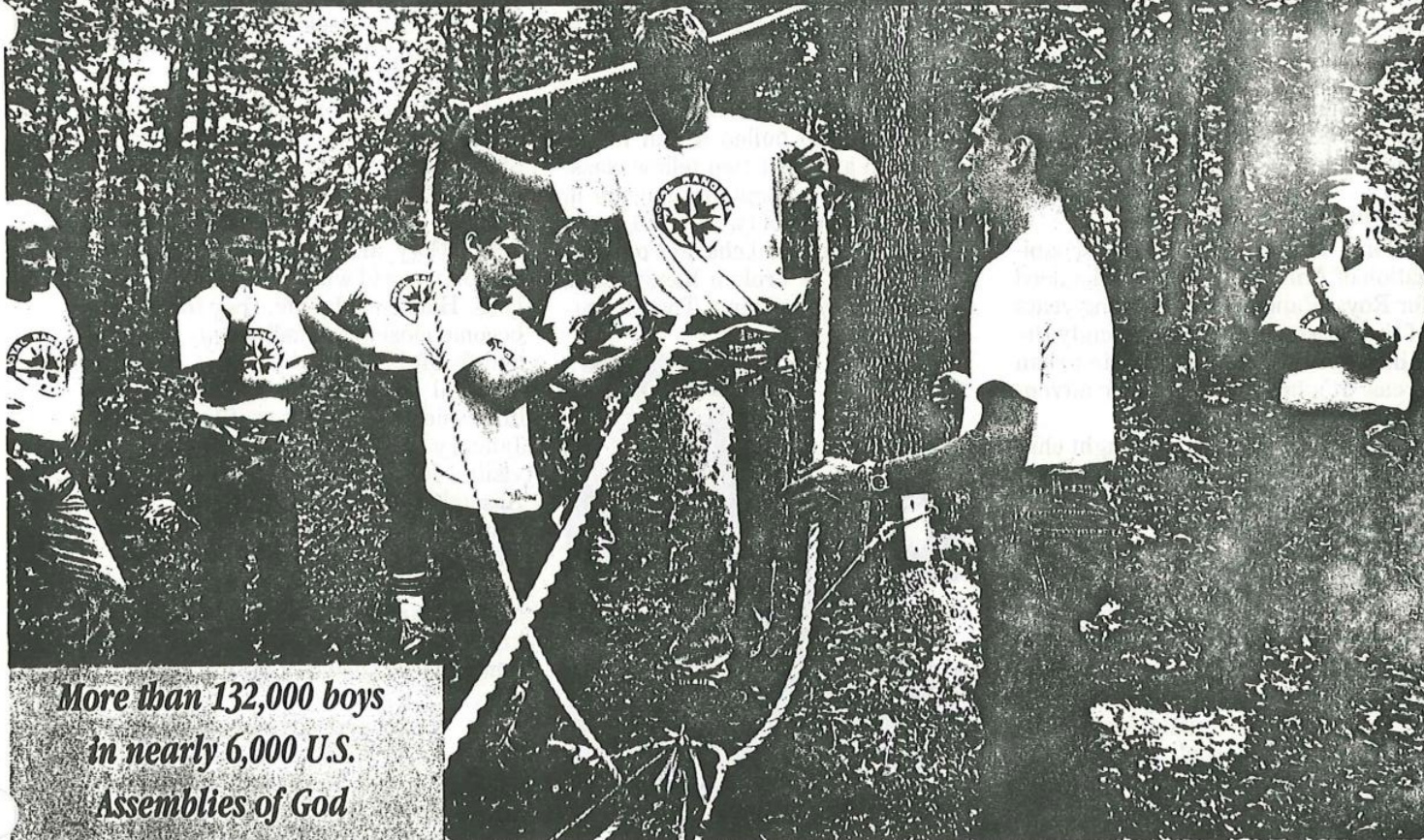
Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Funds to be deposited in Account Number 001-01-033-4001-000)



*Boys ministry celebrates its 30th anniversary*



*More than 132,000 boys  
in nearly 6,000 U.S.  
Assemblies of God  
churches will be involved*

## Royal Rangers still changing lives

*in Royal Rangers  
this week.*

By **KEN RIEMENSCHNEIDER**

**L**uis Santaella, 23, moved to New Haven, Connecticut, from Puerto Rico 10 years ago. Fortunately his life didn't turn out like some of his buddies in New Haven's inner city. Nef\* is still a drug dealer, and Tony Ocasio died New Year's Day. He was shot to death while trying to break away from dealing drugs.

How did Luis avoid a similar fate? He met Jesus when he was 13 years old in Royal Rangers. About his first visit to Rangers, Luis said, "I could see the love in these people."

His parents and the influence of Royal Rangers kept Luis in high school. After graduating he attended trade school and today works at Yale University. In return, he is now touching the lives of inner-city boys

as a Royal Rangers commander at his church.

### **Royal Rangers—30 years old**

Royal Rangers observes its 30th anniversary this week. In fall 1961 the Men's Fellowship secretary, Burton Pierce, invited North Texas District Christ's Ambassadors president, Johnnie Barnes, to develop the new ministry. *Rangers* had been the working name for the program. It was Assistant General Superintendent Charles W.H. Scott who first dubbed the ministry "Royal Rangers."

"Reach, teach, and keep boys for Christ" was the stated purpose under which it was officially launched in the October 1962 *Pentecostal Evangel*. An Assemblies of God phenomenon was born.

Since then more than 1 million boys have been a part of this outreach in America. More than 2,200 boys have

\*Names have been changed.





attained the highest award the program offers: the Gold Medal of Achievement. In 1991, 234 boys received this recognition.

To a great degree the success of the ministry has been because of its comprehensive training program. In 1991, 8,383 individuals enrolled in the leadership training course.

### *Is there still a need?*

Some may ask, with the urbanization of America, is there still a need for Royal Rangers in the closing years of the 20th century? Surprisingly the ministry is growing rapidly in urban areas. It's here that outdoor adventure has great appeal.

Who would ever have thought children in America would take guns and knives to school?

#### *Every day:*

\*Guns take the lives of 10 American schoolchildren.

\*More than 7,000 teens will have their first sexual experience—hundreds contracting venereal diseases.

\*The shameful result of poverty will claim 27 children's lives.

\*Our generation's plague of drug abuse will cause the arrest of 211 children under age 12.

\*The ugly scar of child abuse will be inflicted on 1,849 children.

\*Children, who mature too fast in our nation's unregenerate, media-crazed culture, will commit crimes resulting in 1,629 being incarcerated in adult jails.

\*More than 3,000 children feeling lonely, unloved, and unwanted will run away from home.

\*Many of these will become victims of the number-two killer of adolescents: suicide.

\*Thousands will turn to drugs, prostitution, crime, and violence.

Does America still need a ministry like Royal Rangers? Oh that every Assemblies of God church in America would see the need to invest in this ministry to boys that pays eternal dividends.

James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, declared the public is undergoing a "family agenda of the left." The job done by parents and church is under attack by those who feel child development should be left to professionals, commissioned by the government. According to Dr. Dobson, this distorted agenda "continually emphasizes an exhaustive list

of children's rights, providing wedges to separate kids from their parents."

It is disturbing to read of a child granted a divorce from his parents; of a professing homosexual boy and his family suing a well-known boys organization for admission; of a sixth grade boy who pulled a gun in the classroom and shot two fellow classmates before committing suicide in view of the class; of two second grade boys facing criminal charges of rape. The ravages of broken homes have taken a toll on millions. The absent-



### *Royal Rangers made an eternal difference in the life of Clayton Stovall.*

father syndrome has emaciated the male model in our society.

Is there still a need for Royal Rangers? I can shout a resounding yes! This sin-sick world needs Jesus more than ever. With a growing population and sin abounding, the need to reach boys is a greater reality today than when this ministry was birthed.

#### *An eternal difference*

Anniversaries are a time for celebration. We are grateful for 30 years of God's blessing upon Royal Rangers and thankful for thousands of faithful leaders since 1962. It's thrilling to see this ministry reaching into 50 countries around the world.

Thank God for hundreds of Royal Rangers alumni serving on home and foreign mission fields, in government, in churches, and living for God in their communities.

More than 132,000 boys in nearly 6,000 U.S. Assemblies of God churches will be involved in Royal Rangers this week. The number of Royal Rangers around the world is much larger.

Anniversaries are more than a time of celebration. They are also a time of commitment. The job is not complete. Millions of boys remain untouched by Jesus' love and forgiveness. They are failing to cope in a complex world with adult-sized problems. Hardened by life, they too often become closed and calloused, lonely, and fearful.

Royal Rangers made an eternal difference for Clayton Stovall. In January 1991, 17-year-old Clayton visited Royal Rangers at Northwest Assembly in Mount Prospect, Illinois. His language was coarse, he smelled of cigarettes, he bragged about all the boys he had beaten up, and he carried a knife and said he knew how to use it. Godly boys and commanders showed Clayton Christ's love.

He continued attending Royal Rangers and began shedding his rough exterior. He looked handsome in his Royal Rangers uniform. On Wednesday, April 17, 1991, Clayton surrendered his life to Jesus. His life was changed. He was happy, always smiling and cheerful. This once-hardened boy was now tenderhearted and willing to help in any way he could.

Commander Joe Landers last saw Clayton on June 19 when he drove him home after Rangers. Clayton was to leave the next day to spend the summer in Michigan. On June 27, 1991, Clayton died a short time after being hit by a car.

Clayton's family asked if he could be buried in the Royal Rangers uniform. The pallbearers for his funeral were Rangers. Royal Rangers made an eternal difference in the life of Clayton Stovall.

Around the world Royal Rangers, through faithful leaders, continues to touch thousands of boys just like Clayton Stovall and Luis Santaella. Jesus is the message; Royal Rangers is the vehicle. ▮



Ken Riemenschneider is secretary for the Men's Ministries Department at the Assemblies of God Headquarters.



**Mission 2000...**



***the children***  
***(Mark 10:14)***



# They needn't be alone

*James Barger*

**L**atchkey children. They number more than a million, and their silent cry echoes around the nation. After school each day they must go home to wait alone for their parents to return from work. They cry out for love, friendship, and adult companionship and leadership.

Church leaders are beginning to realize the mental impact on children of the latchkey era. Some pastors have begun to implement programs to minister to them.

For pastors who want such a church program, Royal Rangers has just the tool: the Neighborhood Extension Program.

By establishing neighborhood meetings in homes, schools, or public facilities (even restaurants), Royal Rangers leaders minister to thousands of boys outside the church buildings and then bring these young ones into the local churches.

Here is how it works: The Neighborhood Extension Program is a Royal Rangers community outreach that operates on the patrol system. In the outpost setting, for example, each age group—Straight Arrows, Buckaroos, Pioneers, Trailblazers, or Air-Sea-Trail Rangers—is divided into patrols of five to eight boys. They work as individual teams in all their Royal Rangers activities.

In the Neighborhood Extension Program, each patrol belongs to the chartered local outpost (Royal Rangers group). The extension patrol is staffed by trained commanders appointed by the church outpost council (to which the pastor should belong) and is coordinated by the senior commander of that outpost. A committed, trained leader—one who can effectively coordinate this outreach—is a must.

Meeting times can be after school, evenings, or Saturday mornings—

whatever best fits the community schedule. After school is an ideal time to hold meetings for Straight Arrows, Buckaroos, and Pioneers. Conversely, evenings better serve the older boys because of after-school schedules that may involve sports activities.

The senior commander is responsible for obtaining all meeting materials and must meet with patrol leaders each month to plan weekly meetings, rallies, and other group meetings such as parent-son banquets. The pastor should be involved in all plans, for he is the key to the program's success. The backbone of this outreach is the extension patrol commander.

Patrol commanders are parents, grandparents, or whoever is burdened to reach boys for Christ. They pray and plan to ensure the program's success. Access is needed to facilities that will accommodate as many as 15 boys, though the ideal patrol size is five to eight boys.

Meetings are planned around a major theme developed by the senior commander, the extension leaders, and the pastor. Program themes are implemented by the extension leaders who conduct the meetings like outpost meetings with devotions, Bible study, crafts, advancements, program features, recreation, and other activities.

## Maximizing involvement

The commander recruits and promotes his or her group. For example, inside or near a school (with school permission) a leader can hand out fliers that advertise the meeting time and place. Home visitation by the extension patrol commander enlists newcomers to the program, acquaints parents with commanders, and provides opportunities to witness. During home meetings the

commander explains the Royal Rangers program and how parents can become involved at home.

The Holy Spirit ministers through home visitation, and families begin to feel they are a part of the church.

## Maximizing unity

Each extension patrol gathers at the church during regularly scheduled outpost meetings. The group may consist of boys of all ages, but it helps to keep them divided by grade if possible. Boys meet with their respective groups when attending the outpost meetings.

In larger communities all extension patrols can come together two to four times a year for a Royal Rangers rally at one of the Assemblies of God churches in the community. During the summer all groups could be involved in a camping excursion and include a day camp for the younger boys.

A community-wide network of extension patrols allows many adults the opportunity to minister in ways they could not otherwise. The multiplication factor of the program will yield startling results; for example, if eight leaders have eight boys in each extension patrol, 64 boys would be impacted by the Royal Rangers ministry. If each boy were from a family of four, a potential of 256 lives could be led to Christ. Think about it.

The Neighborhood Extension Program's potential is limited only by one's vision. Its implementation may require a change in thinking in terms of ministry outside the church walls. However, the end goal of this approach—and it will work if used properly—is to get entire families into the church through Royal Rangers.

The national office recommends that each leader be trained by enrolling in the Leadership Training Course, which has two levels, Buckaroos-Straight Arrows or the standard course. The LTC is offered through correspondence and can be purchased from the Gospel Publishing House. It is also administered by sectional and district Royal Rangers staff. For information on Royal Rangers and its 30th birthday, see the Info on page 38. ▲

James Barger is Royal Rangers coordinator for the Great Lakes Region.



# Children's and youth workers: your legal liability

Richard Hammar

In recent years hundreds of churches have been sued because of child abuse or molestation occurring in church youth or children's programs. In most cases the plaintiffs allege either or both of the following: (1) the church was negligent in hiring the molester to work with minors (i.e., the church

What can a church do to reduce the chances that such a tragedy will occur? While an answer to such a complex legal question is far beyond the scope of this article, let me make a few observations.

A church can reduce its risk of legal liability for negligent hiring (and thereby the likelihood that an inci-

school, and Christian school. Ideally the application should also be completed by current employees and volunteers having custody or supervision over minors.

Having an individual complete the form is in itself not enough to protect the church or your children or youth. Significant protection occurs only if the church takes the following additional steps:

1. If the applicant is unknown to you, confirm his or her identity by requiring photographic identification, such as a state driver's license.

2. Contact each reference listed in the application and make a written record of each contact. Show the date and method of contact, indicate the person making the contact as well as the person contacted, and summarize the reference's remarks. This record should be kept with the applicant's original application.

3. Contact each church in which the applicant has indicated prior experience in working with children or youth. Provide a written record of all the information contained in the preceding paragraph.

4. Be sure your entire staff (volunteer and compensated) is aware of your state's requirements for reporting child abuse. You will need to check with your church's attorney for clarification.

5. Be sure you are aware of any additional legal requirements that apply to your state. To illustrate, some states have enacted laws requiring church child care centers to perform criminal record checks on any applicant for employment.

*A single incident can devastate a church. Far more tragic, however, is the emotional trauma to the victim and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces.*

hired the person without any screening or evaluation), or (2) the church was negligent in supervising the individual. Most churches are willing to hire, without any screening, anyone expressing an interest in working in a volunteer capacity with minors (e.g., Sunday school, children's choir, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, youth group). This attitude has made churches easy targets for child molesters.

Obviously a single incident of abuse or molestation can devastate a church. Parents often become enraged, the viability of the church's youth and children's programs is jeopardized, and sometimes leaders are considered responsible for allowing the incident to happen. Far more tragic, however, is the emotional trauma to the victim and the enormous potential legal liability the church faces.

dent of abuse or molestation will occur) by having every applicant for youth or children's work (volunteer or compensated) complete a suitable application form. Such a form would ask for the applicant's identity, address, previous criminal convictions—if any, church membership, previous church work, and personal references.\*

Having all youth and children's workers complete such a form may seem unduly burdensome. However, failure to use such a screening device will increase a church's risk of liability and the likelihood that an incident of abuse will occur.

Churches electing to use such a form should have it signed by every applicant for any position involving the custody or supervision of minors. This includes Sunday school, children's choir, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, youth group, pre-



Again, you will need to check with a local attorney for guidance.

6. The church must treat as strictly confidential all applications and records of contacts with churches or references. Only those having a legitimate need to know such information should have access to the application and records.

These recommendations may seem burdensome to both churches and applicants for volunteer work. However, a church can respond to negative comments simply by apprising members and applicants that the recommendations are designed to provide a safe and secure environment for children.

Let me reemphasize that this article is addressing only the issue of negligent hiring of youth and children's workers. Even if a church acts responsibly in screening youth workers, it may still be sued on the basis of "negligent supervision" if it does not act responsibly in supervising youth and children's activities. Taking steps to avoid "negligent hiring" is not enough. A church

must also ensure that youth and children's workers are properly trained and supervised.

A number of church insurance companies are reducing significantly the coverage they provide for child abuse or molestation. Some companies refuse to cover these risks at all. Obviously the insurance industry is well aware of the risks involved. Churches should check their insurance policies to determine if

they have any coverage. If so, is it limited? The recommendations outlined in this article are even more critical for churches that have no coverage or reduced coverage. ▲

*\*A sample screening application is available on request from Mr. Hammar's office.*

Richard Hammar is legal counselor for the Assemblies of God.

## More than just a bunch of pretty faces!

Church directories create a visual journal of your church while providing a handy reference for names, addresses, and phone numbers. Plus there are special activity pages and a full-color cover.

**Your church and all participants receive a FREE church directory!**

Representatives are standing by with all the information you'll need to begin your pictorial directory program. Call toll free...

# 1-800-228-8275

(In TN dial 615-476-5553)

**Gospel Publishing House Church Directory Service**

In affiliation with Majestic Marketing.

# Russian Evangelism Outreach,

A ministry of the  
Division of Foreign Missions,  
reaches out to the  
290 million people who live in the  
Russian Commonwealth of Independent States  
and the Baltic Republics through  
*evangelism, church planting,  
Bible schools, and training seminars.*

For more information about these ministries, circle reader service card # 2 or write to:

***Russian Evangelism Outreach***

Division of Foreign Missions

1445 Boonville Avenue

Springfield, MO 65802-1894