

**Reaching for a better tomorrow
One youngster at a time**

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How many times have you either heard or said “Look at the next generation, boy we’re in trouble”. And if you’re like many Americans, you sit back, shake your head, go ‘tsk-tsk’ and go on living your life so you can grouse once again.

But there are a group of adults who have taken an extra second or two, paused and said to themselves, “There has to be a way to provide structure and enhancement to these kids’ lives.” In business we’d call it value added education. For these adults, they call it the Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

As one adult volunteer said, “Seeing young cadets develop into young responsible adults. There is hope for our nation!”

The Naval Sea Cadet Corps is sponsored by the United States Navy League in association with the United States Navy, United States Marine Corps and the United States Coast Guard. Adult volunteers come from many walks of life, although many are former military officers.

Impetus to join also takes many forms, for Hollie Brown, who is a Lieutenant in the Naval Sea Cadet Corps (NSCC), and the Commanding Officer of Paul Revere Division located in Norco, CA, it was following her son’s lead. The same can be said for Pier Tegel, a Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) and a staff member of Pacific Southwestern Region 11.

Her husband Gary, also a LTJG in the NSCC; is serving as the Executive Officer of the El Toro Battalion. In addition, Gary is a Chief Hull Maintenance Technician (Surface Warfare) HTC/SW in the United States Navy Reserve.

LT Forrest (Woody) Woodward, NSCC is the Commanding Officer of the Liberty (AGTR-5) Division located in Amityville, NY. Woody was a Sea Cadet in his youth, and is Federal Law Enforcement. He re-joined because he saw a need and acted proactively to help bring focus and structure to the lives of the Cadets and prospective Cadets on Long Island.

A short history

The Naval Sea Cadet Corps (NSCC) begun in 1958 by the Navy League was officially chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1962 under Public Law 87-655 (36 USC 1541). Now that's a mouthful, but it means that Congress felt so strongly about this program for young people that they officially recognized the program.

The Naval Sea Cadet program is geared towards boys and girls 11 through 17 and is broken into two programs, Navy League Cadets for the 11 through 14 year olds and the Naval Sea Cadets from 13 to 17. Hundreds of thousands of young men and women have gone through the program with many of them becoming role models and leaders in business, science, the military and government.

It is the cadre of adult volunteers that make this organization work. These adults, from all walks of life, joined the NSCC "...to encourage and aid American youth to develop, train them in seagoing skills, and to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance and kindred virtues." - NSCC Charter - 36 USC 1541

All the adult leaders have some similar qualities. They all possess US Citizenship and are over 21 years of age (18 - 21 for Midshipmen). They are physically fit to conduct the programs in which they volunteer to participate and have passed an extensive criminal background check.

But that's just the baseline of these individuals. Many come from a military background, but not all. Some are parents, some are professional teachers, and others are just plain interested in creating an environment which enriches our youth with concepts that are the backbone of the United States Coast Guard; "Honor, Respect and Devotion to Duty" and the United States Navy; "Honor, Courage, and Commitment."

Vahan Manoogian is a unique example of being in the right place at the right time both for himself and the NSCC. Vahan's family owns a retail store in Burbank, CA. One of his customers, 90 year old Carl Phillis invited him to come to a drill for the local NSCC unit, the Bryce Canyon Division located at the Encino Naval Reserve Center.

Carl has been a volunteer in the Naval Sea Cadets for forty-two years, since 1966, and still serving the youth of America, as the training officer of the Besty Ross Division. Carl holds the rank of Lieutenant Commander in the NSCC and retired from the Navy as a Chief Yeoman.

As Vahan tells it, "When I arrived at the drill site, I was introduced to the CO of Bryce Canyon who happens to be the individual we bought the business in Burbank from (small world). After a couple hours, I was signed up as a training officer. I went from TO, XO, to CO of the unit within 2 years."

The NSCC trains adult leaders, so fear of not knowing what to do, or never having been in the military is not a liability. Hollie Brown said when asked why she joined the NSCC, "Knowing that I could help without prior military service, that I'd be taught how to do what is necessary, just like the cadets."

And or those adult leaders who volunteer with the NSCC who are on Active Duty or in the Reserves are able to obtain points toward retirement (check you're your service, mileage may vary).

Diversity

Like any organization, to survive and succeed you must have and embrace diversity. The Cadet Corps is no different, and they succeed because they encourage diversity within their Officer Corps.

Diversity is the key to the NSCC Officer Corps and the success they've had for the last 50 years. Today, more than ever before, diversity is playing a major role in both the development of the Officer Corps and the Cadet Corps as well.

Societal pressure, school pressure, economic pressures make attracting quality people more and more difficult. And we're talking both adult volunteers and the boys and girls who will become the young men and women who make up the Cadet leadership.

Hollie Brown understands these pressures. A world-class gymnast, she and her two older children were the victims of a drunk driver. Circumstances led to her homeschooling her children and the NSCC gave her children the opportunities to interact with other children in a structured program.

Gary Tegal uses his background in the Navy to assist his Cadets in succeeding in life. Stressing the need for all Cadets to excel, not only in Cadet Programs, but in their educational pursuits, Tegal said, "I am responsible for making sure cadets are up to date with their coursework ...and ensuring that their grades in school continue to be in accordance with the Sea Cadet regulation. If you drop below a 2.0 GPA we put the cadet on academic leave. If they receive a 3.0 or better they are awarded the academic ribbon." Tegal also handles discipline at the unit, again using his military training.

Providing a structure

Forest "Woody" Woodward is the Commanding Officer of the Liberty (AGTR5) Division located in Amityville, Long Island, New York. Woody, as his friends call him, was a NSCC cadet in the late 1960's. While a member of the San Diego Parche Division, he attended boot camp at the Naval Training Center in San Diego (1967) and a two week training cruise aboard the USS Tioga County (an

LST – landing ship tank, class vessel) in 1968. He was also a member of Division color guard and rifle drill team.

The structure learned in the Naval Sea Cadets has stayed with Woody all these many years, from his time in the US Army, as a member or a recon platoon, the military police and finally Special Forces to his 30 year career in law enforcement. He credits his success to the structure learned in the Naval Sea Cadets.

In 2003, while stationed in New York as the Special Agent-In-Charge of the US Army Criminal Investigation Division (CID), he rejoined the Naval Sea Cadets. He joined as a Chief Warrant Officer; then moved up the chain of command, from Training Officer to Commanding Officer.

Along the way, he was able to inculcate his Cadets with a structure that enables them to both lead and succeed in school, in sports, in life and hopefully in the careers they choose for themselves. These Cadets have to some extent learned these lessons, since the Liberty (AGTR5) Division has been in the top 3 Divisions the country in their annual inspections, which look at all parts of the programs and at the educational achievements of the cadets. The last inspection in 2007, they were number two, and Woody in 2008 they became the number one unit in the country.

Vahan has similar types of structure in his background. He is a US Marine Reservist who was called back to Active Duty in support of Iraqi Freedom. He worked for the YMCA Director for twelve years, working with both youth development programs and adult volunteers.

After being the Commanding Officer of the Bryce Canyon Division in Encino, he was appointed the Regional Director and became the Commanding Officer of Ben Morreell Battalion at Naval Base Ventura County, where he was able to take the struggling unit from four Cadets to forty-eight!

He has provided the structure to succeed on a personal level, supporting many children, not his own in to adulthood or close to it. Many have been members of the Naval Sea Cadet Corps at one point in time, and now two are members of the Marines, and one is in the US Air Force.

One child at a time, leading them to success

All these men and women donate copious amounts of time, energy and money to reach out and make a difference with today's youth.

The NSCC strives for a balance in excellence; building a strong commitment to education, and one to service to the community. Along the way, they provide the tools for success in whatever endeavor the Cadets choose to take in their lives.

All the adult leaders find they have a mission accomplished, when they hear their former cadets graduating college, on entering the work force, on joining the military or even becoming a politician.

These adult leaders want their charges to succeed in what ever pursuit their Cadets wish to take, as long as they are productive lives.

But, like all ventures, they can't do it alone, and they can't help youngsters if the youngsters don't join the program.

If you're an adult, think about joining the Naval Sea Cadet Program. If you're a parent or relative of a youngster, male or female, think about suggesting they join a local NSCC unit.

All the adult leaders possess US Citizenship and are over 21 years of age (18 - 21 for Midshipmen). They are required to be physically fit to conduct the programs in which they volunteer or participate and have passed an extensive criminal background check.

For more information, contact the Naval Sea Cadets at www.seacadets.org.

You will thank yourself in years to come.

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