

# Cherokee Area Council Statement on Membership Policy Decision

On May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the BSA's National Annual Business Meeting, the over 1,000 volunteer delegates representing every BSA Council convened in Texas to vote on a proposed resolution that was presented by the BSA National Executive Committee. The resolution stated "*No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.*" The Board of Directors for the Boy Scouts of America has approved this change in the national organization's membership policy. The change only involves youth membership and has no effect on the organization's membership policy for adult staff or volunteers.

The Cherokee Area Council appreciates the opportunity to participate in the process and present our point of view at the BSA National Annual Business Meeting. Although the Cherokee Area Council does not set national policy, we will support and implement the new membership policy which takes effect on January 1, 2014. Prior to the effective date, the BSA will provide guidance through program support, publications, and training modules to assist units in its implementation.

Be assured that any member, youth or adult, who in a Scouting setting, engages in or promotes any sexual behavior of any kind will have their membership revoked. Guidelines for consistent application of this policy throughout Scouting will be forthcoming and we ask for your help in its full implementation in this new setting.

For 100 years, the Cherokee Area Council has been serving youth, families, communities, and chartered partners in 11 counties of Tennessee and North Georgia. The impact in our community speaks for itself:

- ✿ Achieved Gold Council status in 2012
- ✿ 6,868 registered youth members
- ✿ 1,586 registered adult volunteers
- ✿ Over 250,000 community and volunteer hours provided in our communities
- ✿ 89 young men achieved the rank of Eagle Scout giving more than 14,115 hours of service to benefit their communities

We are grateful to every Scout, parent, supporter, and volunteer who has reached out to us in the past few months concerning this issue. It is very gratifying to see how deeply people care about Scouting in our communities. We understand that we have some in our Scouting family that are disappointed in the outcome of this vote and we sincerely hope that all in the Cherokee Area Council will focus on our main purpose, the youth we serve.

The leadership and Executive Board of the Cherokee Area Council are committed to fulfilling our mission and remaining one of the top Councils in the BSA. While people have different opinions about this policy, we can all agree that kids are better off when they are in Scouting. Going forward, we will continue to focus on reaching and serving youth in order to help them grow into good, strong citizens. America's youth need Scouting, and by focusing on the goals that unite us, we can continue to accomplish incredible things for young people and the communities we serve.

Sincerely,

Tim L. Spires  
Council President

James L. Barrott  
Council Commissioner

Scott D. Fosse  
Scout Executive