

# HOW TO GET MORE BAND PARENTS INVOLVED

Notes from Jeff Troxel

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Marching Arts Education

## 1. What is my purpose?

(Make sure you get things straight in your head first.)

- a. Know what you are here for: Hint: **THE KIDS**
  - b. Know your **official duties in the bylaws** (& those not listed, like boosting the kids moral)
  - c. Know where fun can be inserted (makes recruiting must easier and more successful)
  - d. Know what would be gained by you volunteering (both to the kids and to yourself)
  - e. Know what success means (For yourself and for the band as a whole).
- clear defined purpose, what your work would accomplish
  - know the range of duties and success goals
  - **know where FUN could be inserted** without distracting the student

**Key note - I determined that my mission as Roadie leader was to make the road safe and smooth for directors and students so they could maintain and build a tradition of excellence. And to have as much fun as possible without sacrificing the mission.**

**Understand where your primary role fits into the big picture of the whole organization.**

**So my role was** basically

- A. **labor intensive tasks** - so that the directors could connect and bond emotionally with the kids and teach them the finer more complicated mechanics and art of music expression.
- B. **A hidden rolls** was spreading positivity and encouragement and Boosting directly to the students on behalf of all the other parents.

### **Success Measurements**

My success would be measured

- A. how well the band improved, developed, performed in concert and marching contest as well as how well they sounded overall.

By working alongside students Roadies became **supportive cheerleaders** at times when they were stressed out and had doubts in their minds. We had talented folks that were extremely talented and good at building up and boosting these kids. So we made sure we used these roadies as leaders in moral and fun.

## 2. Make recruiting a big deal!

### Recruiting Statement used at opening a recruiting opportunity like freshman parent orientation

#### Wanted:

- some fun loving supportive parents who care about making a difference in the life of a student.
- willing to join the Cougar Roadie Family and to get to know other caring parents.

This position is part-time but at times it may feel full-time.

This individual or couple needs to be able to handle the tiring demands of physical labor and lots of sweating.

The **compensation for this job** will not be in dollars, but will depend on how much you give of yourself, including your time, hard work and positive attitude. If you choose to invest yourself in this mission, the pay will be in the currency of appreciation and love.

The **side benefits of this job** are probably the most appealing. You will work side-by-side with your children and others laughing and crying and enjoying your time sharing experiences. No doubt, you will be creating life-long memories that your child will appreciate for the rest of their time.

You will receive a multitude of thank yous and appreciation from students that you don't even know, but support 100%.

So yes, if you are a positive, fun loving, caring parent and have no issues with physical labor, then sweet! This job is for you and **you are wanted!**

**Then I continue on introducing myself...**

#### **Keynote: Make you 1st impresion a power one by being prepared**

1. Briefly who am I and a very quick roadie history
2. information sheets that you can hand out to these parents
3. Include your phone number and email
4. Share primary positives and the basic responsibilities of this volunteering opportunity.
5. Ask if they have any questions - no matter how simple or silly they may sound.
6. Tell them to meet you in a corner of the room when the rest of meeting is over.
7. Be honest, show what the sacrifices, positives and benefits of what an investment in time and sweat will accomplish
8. Make sure you are always recruiting and make a big deal about it.
9. Always follow through 1st contact with a followup phone call
10. Be slow to accept "No I can't help, I'm too Busy" as the final answer

11. Make a great first impression by being genuine and being prepared with material handouts
12. Always make the volunteers feel comfortable by supplying the truthful information that they need to make the best decision that is right for them
13. Praise them for even showing interest in volunteering

**Keynote: Share your genuine enthusiasm and positivity for having this opportunity, rather than complaining how difficult it is.**

### **Recruiting opportunities**

- Freshman Parent orientation
- Meet the band (Ask for BBQ help to break the ice)
- at football games and contest
- any opportunity might work even Middle school events
- **Never stop recruiting throughout the year** If parents become impatient with waiting for us to unload the truck after a late football game then give them instructions on how they could make the process go faster and praise them when they join in and help.

### **3. Get to know you prospective volunteers and start to build a relationship**

- a. **Call them** and get to know their abilities availabilities, strengths and weakness
- b. Take respectful notes to remember all that you learned so that it is not a waste of time for you or theirs
- c. Let them know that they are not committing to 12 years just whatever minutes they can offer.

### **3. Take the time to make your new volunteers more comfortable (training and developing of the new volunteers)**

- call them and get to know their abilities availabilities, strengths and weakness
- take respectful notes to remember all that you learned so ask to not a waste of time for you or them
- Assign a mentor/trainer or better yet, do that yourself
- Introduce them to your group and make them feel as important as they are.
- TRAIN YOU PEOPLE

### **4. Stay organized and prepared**

- **Plan for everything but be prepared for anything**
- Plot out every detail that you can as early as you can to make yourself and the volunteers be informed and comfortable. Doing this makes more room for fun to be inserted at any and all opportunities!

## 5. Nurture the team

(Create feelings of united purpose with your group)

- Make event entry badges and/or name tags (as needed at the beginning)
- Make T-shirts with images and words that fits your group purpose
- Pay them praise at any and all opportunities

## 6. Know how and do what it takes to earn the trust of your directors and administration

(So that they can make it easier for you to be successful in your roll)

- Always leave borrowed equipment better than you found them.
- Visit with them and ask them for advice for making things better
- Keep directors informed of any problem you are having or anything outside of normal
- Make sure to prioritize safety and to take care of the business first by making sure your volunteers are qualified with completed background checks as required by your school

## 7. Communication - Make volunteering easy, fun and rewarding all.

- Make sure you regularly meet with your group and listen to suggestions that they have that might make improvements to any/all aspects of your mission.
- Use every opportunity to communicate efficiently and spread positivity.

**(Key note - Understand that negativity is your biggest enemy and that creativity can make all the difference. Also communicate at the detail level that is appropriate for you audience - Be mindful and respectful of your volunteers time)**

### Weekly update emails - What worked well for us:

During the busy football season I would consistently send out **2 to 4 update emails a week**. I would gather all the detailed information from the directors and from the internet of what was coming up that week. On Sunday afternoon I'd develop a detailed Roadie plan based on the Director's timeline. I'd adjust the directors plan to fit Roadie Group making sure to account for all the the necessary to keep the roadies ahead of the band schedule allowing just enough time for problems that might popup. I'd share share this Roadie informational group email A.S.A.P. with my group. By Monday morning my group had the information they needed to make their personal schedule plans for that coming Friday game or Saturday Marching Contest.

Note: These emails became more useful as time passed on because my directors started supplying more planning information sooner.. This made my planning more accurate and comfortable for my roadies.

### Planning emails Included

**Intro:** Pouring on heapfuls of appreciation on what efforts and sacrifices people did that week before. Positive thoughts of what we did right! Showing how we met or exceeded our goals for that previous week and what was learned. Thank yous to those who sacrificed. How we continued the tradition and how we were filling our mission. Lessons learned, Improvement plans were used there too explaining how I plan to do better this week. And If I could not find a humorous way to do it then I was not doing my job well. Appreciation for Directors, Band improvement was a constant ingredient in that 1st email of the week.

**Note:** Never discuss individual shortcomings here, instead call them and talk to them privately and apologize for not training them better. This was rarely necessary.

**Facts about the next events:** Including the date, band meet time, game time, locational details, Google Maps route link, weather forecast, direction visuals or diagrams of where to meet at any one time of the event.

**Expected Event Detailed Timeline** was very helpful for me and those joining us in the middle of the event

Sharing carpooling opportunities or room in the school truck (1st come - first opportunity)

This school truck pooling was a great way to meet and share knowledge for the newbies in the group

Detailed Job opening for that event including how many needed for each duty (1st come first opportunity) i.e.

- Yardline markers
- Ladder duties (details for that)
- Props
- Pits duties
- Sometimes adding other opportunities to help in non roadie way like concessions and bus chaperones
  
- Your phone number and email
- Include a schedule at the bottom with upcoming season event that roadie help with be needed

**2nd and 3rd updated weekly emails** would keep everyone up to date as to what jobs or opportunities remained open and relay more accurate info. I would try to get everyone to respond to these emails letting me know what they could help with and commit to that week.

**Communicate with a good communication App** (like “Group me” and/or a walkie talkies) for those last minute updates and plan changes. The “Group Me” App allowed everyone to see the same info quickly.

## 8. Pay you staff - Recognize them consistent or above the normal service

This can be done many ways

1. directly face to face
2. roadie group gathering
3. the next day following a tough contest of late night football game
4. or in a long tense booster meeting  
or all the above.

## 9. Other great hints

**Cross-Train** you volunteers to make you group stronger and more stable

**Know there likes** Get to know what you people enjoy helping with or don't like doing.

**Yourself - Do the jobs that others don't want to do.**

**Ask you group & directors what you can do better!**

- A. After an event talk to your people, your directors and even students at times to figure out what worked well and what worked poorly.
- B. Learn the acceptable procedures and approaches that make your roll stronger and more successful.
- C. Improve the Equipment to be safer and easier to be a roadie

**Roadie Party - Celebrate & reward people** for successful season or year. The weekend after the last football game worked well for us. Roadie Awards or Senior Parent Tributes

**Trailer food at games - sharing our favorite party food recipe.** If time allowed this was a huge deal and helped keep our morale and energy up!

For me volunteering was a huge blessing and I still continue to enjoy the skills I learned, relationships made and wonderful memories of the fun we created. Most of all I enjoyed helping make the path to success smoother for the entire The Cougar Band. I hope the tradition of excellence continues long into the future. I also hope these shared ideas and lessons can help others find their mission and make volunteering fruitful and successful. It's a big deal!

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