Introduction: The Westchester Putnam Council Special Needs Committee was formed four years ago to provide all scouting units full support for all youth with any special needs and or disabilities.

Our mission is to support and encourage all scouting youth with special needs and their families and to offer equal opportunities for these scouts to participate to the best of their abilities in a rewarding scouting experience. Our mission also includes providing training to Scouts and Scouters so that they have the tools to offer a spirit of inclusion.

The Special needs Committee carries out its mission in many ways. This first annual report will summarize the many activities the Special needs Committee performs in order to meet the goals of its mission.

Disability Awareness Challenges (dAC): The Special Needs Committee provides multiple dAC’s throughout the year. The purpose of these challenges is to provide understanding to scouts, their friends, leaders and families through the opportunity to experience what it would be like to perform basic tasks with specific disabilities. Cubs learn to understand and appreciate differences in themselves and others while having fun. At the 2017 Thunderbird Games the Special Needs Committee ran 10 challenge stations. Two hundred twenty-five scouts participated in this past years Thunderbird games. These challenges also offer opportunities for scouts to earn community service hours as well as earning a requirement for disability awareness merit badge. This past year the Special needs committee offered dAC at three council events: The Thunderbird Games, the Weblos Klondike Derby, and Family Camping Weekend. A mini dAC was also provided to Cub Scout Pack 1 from New Rochelle. A total of 466 hours of community service was provided by scouts and scouters this year to run the dAC’s.
**Special Needs Survey:** The Special Needs Committee requested all units to fill out the Special Needs Survey. The Survey has multiple purposes. It assists the committee in identifying resources and training needs, it generates awareness among unit leaders to help them identify and therefore better plan for any scouts in their units with specialized needs. It also tracks how units make accommodations for scouts with specialized needs.

This year 71 percent of troops and 54 percent of packs responded. Our goal is to have 75% of all units responding. Fourteen percent of Boy Scouts were reported as having specialized needs (196 scouts) while nine percent (175 Cubs) of Cub Scouts were reported to have one or more specialized needs. The survey identifies scouts with visible as well as invisible disabilities. Please see full report to be located at [www.wpcbsa.org/SNScouting](http://www.wpcbsa.org/SNScouting).

Well over 200 work hours have been utilized to construct, distribute, collect and analyze the data from the survey.

**Training:** The Special Needs Committee had its own college at this year’s University of Scouting. Five courses were offered including:

- Introduction to Ability Awareness for Jr. Leaders *(New)*
- Generating an Atmosphere of Inclusion: How to promote disability awareness in your unit. *(New)*
- Introduction to Special Needs Scouting Resources
- Special Needs Scouting Advancement
- Panel Discussion on the Invisible Disabilities (Double session)
The Special Needs Committee Website (www.wpcbsa.org/SNScouting) contains videos and PPT’s of its Special Needs College Courses.

Special Needs Committee also offers Introduction to Special Needs Resources to SM, ASM as well as Cub leaders seeking Baloo Training. This training was offered six times this past year. (Approximately 60 leaders received training)

An Introduction to Ability Awareness was offered at NYLT and to Camp Read Summer Camp Staff. (Approximately 100 youth leaders received training)

Special Needs Committee Members have also made presentations at all four district roundtables including topics on advancement and how the special needs committee can be a resource to a unit.

Special Needs Committee Members have written several articles for the council newsletter which are posted on The Special Need Scouting Website.

Consultation:

- The Special Needs Committee assisted three families seeking a unit that would best accommodate their cub scout aged child.
- Committee assisted five scouts requesting clarification about advancement.
- Committee members provided on call coverage for the staff of Camp Read in case any issues regarding specialized needs should occur.
- Committee provided Cub Scout Camp leadership with suggested questions for parents to better identify scouts with specialized needs.
- Committee assisted two units seeking assistance with behavioral issues.
- Committee supported pack 535 Pinewood Derby. Pack 535 is the only unit that is solely made up of scouts with specialized needs.
Committee participated in several meetings with BOCES (Rye Lake Campus) in order to set up a new Pack made up with children who have specialized emotional needs. (Committee provided approximately 60 hours of consultation)

**Advancement Reviews:**

- The Special Needs Committee reviewed and approved two scouts who were seeking to extend eligibility beyond their eighteenth birthday. Committee informs the scout and family as to BSA’s requirements that are utilized and the necessary documentation. Committee gathers the necessary documents from the family and then reviews the documents for whether they meet BSA’s criteria. Recommendations are then forwarded to the council registrar.
- The Committee is receiving documentation on two other scouts seeking to extend eligibility beyond their eighteenth birthday.
- Twenty work hours were devoted to these tasks.

**WPC Special Needs Committee Membership:**

Kristine Kingsley- Mulder, Steven Owen Committee Co-Chairs

Thomas McCandless Chair Emeritus


Mohican: Lindsay Buttenschon, Paxton Louis, Steve Owen, Donna Rugusa, Dominic Venturini, Jay Warner, Bill Lacey, Christine Baric
Muscoot: Crystal Kennedy, Christine Zirkelbach
Manitoga: Kathleen Kaiser, Cindy Rubino & Dawn Kessler
Professional Advisor: Tiffany Deygoo

**Special Needs Advisory Members:**
Gayle Cratty, Robert M. Tudisco, Judy Gillett, Evan Latainer, Anna Masopust, Paul Rowe & Tricia Zarro

Annual Report Respectfully Submitted,
Steven Owen Co-Chair Special Needs Committee