

## Awards and Patches

Awards and patches are very important to boys. However, be sure that your special events are not just rewarding the same skills at each event. For example, if your events focus on speed or strength you will find that a few boys will generally win most of the time. Often, these athletic boys are also winning awards in track, basketball, soccer, and baseball at school. So I like to have some events that utilize skills other than athletic skills. Every boy is good at something. But I did have one boy tell me that "This is the first trophy I have ever won" and he was a 6th grader!!



Use your awards to build self esteem. Often it is a good idea to make the modeling judging divisions much larger than the racing competition divisions because there are usually fewer good models. So you may want 13 - 20 boys in each of the divisions for modeling. Generally, I have found that only about 15 - 20 % of the boys will really work hard on modeling. And in general, I have found that the best models are found in the youngest division (more help from the parents) and, then, there is a waning interest in modeling as the boys get older, but there are a few kids/parents that do continue to really work hard on this aspect, so it is good to reward them. I have often seen the following distribution of nice models: 1-3rd graders: 7-10 good efforts out of 20; 4-6th graders: 2-3 good efforts out of 20. But who knows, one of these boys may become a design engineer! So brag on them, build up their self esteem; it costs you little.

### Vests, T - shirts, etc.

It is important to have some kind of simple uniform. Several years ago, I learned the value of having some kind of uniform for a boys club. Our clubs use blue vests with gold trim (or khaki vests, more recently). When we awarded the vests to the boys, I was surprised to see how the boys 'strutted' back to their chair in their new vests. Notice (photo right) the pride of the boy in getting his vest. He is now part of a group, which is very important for boys. The great thing about having a vest, coat, cap, etc. is you have a place to put award patches (and pins). Patch boards are an alternative for older boys who may be reluctant to wear a vest. Alternatively, one can use caps, t-shirts or a complete uniform. Each has advantages and disadvantages.



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Dr. Bob presenting a boy with

new vest in the RA boys club in Hewitt, TX. Notice the pride of belonging on the face of the boy!

## Caps

Depending on the local community, caps can be popular or not. But having caps for your leaders is a good idea. It gives them a sense of belonging and it is free advertising for your group!

I was fortunate to find a local lady who makes embroidery caps (see photo). I included the mascot for our school (greyhound) on the cap and used school colors (red and black).

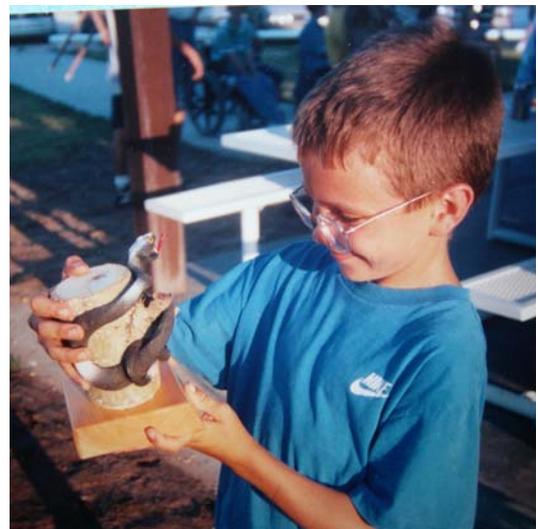


## Trophies

Almost everyone lives in a city where there is a trophy store. Get to know the owner. Trophies are very expensive. But often the owner will recycle materials and give your boys club a good deal. Shop around to see who is interested in your boys club. We are doing a great service to our community and they often appreciate it. If you are running a large boys program, you may want to establish an account with a wholesale trophy parts supplier and build your own trophies.

Some of my most appreciated "trophies" are home-made. Colby Weldon, a boy with an intense interest in fishing, once caught a snake on a lure at our fishing annual boys' fishing tournament. So I bought a plastic snake, mounted it on log and a wood base and put a label on it:

**Colby Weldon, World's Greatest Snake Catcher.**  
No doubt that trophy meant more to Colby than the store bought ones he has previously won in fishing tournaments.



Colby Weldon with his snake trophy.

Other examples of homemade trophies are the trophies for our Chili Cook-Off Competition, I buy big red, dried chili peppers (about 4-6" long) and glue one to a 1" x 4" x 8" wood, add a base and a name plate. The boys actually like these better than traditional trophies. For the hottest chili, I mount a bottle of Pepto-Bismol® or a roll of Roloids® on a block! Trophy labels can be made by printing labels like:

**Best Chili**  
**Chili Cook-Off Competition**  
**Gruver Boys Club**  
**Gruver, Texas, 2009**

**Hottest Chili**  
**Chili Cook-Off Competition**  
**Gruver Boys Club**  
**Gruver, Texas, 2009**

**Most Unusual Chili**  
**Chili Cook-Off Competition**  
**Gruver Boys Club**  
**Gruver, Texas, 2009**

Just print this onto gold colored paper, then either laminate or cover the front (and rear side) with 2" wide clear Scotch mailing tape. Then cut out the labels and glue onto the wood block base using a glue stick. Covering the rear of the label with the clear tape prevents bleeding of glue and discoloration from the rear. Covering the front side gives you a nice shiny finish.



Trophy for Hottest Chili, 2006.



Trophy for Hottest Chili, 2008.

### How many trophies should you give?

Give enough trophies so the boys have a chance to win one, but not so many that it is too easy to get a trophy. As a general rule, I try to group the clubs so that I can give 1st, 2nd and 3rd awards to a group of about 9 -12 boys. Then I give event patches to all the participants for their vests, coats, patch boards, etc. If you are doing a lot of events (4 or 5 or more), it may be more practical to give ribbons than trophies.

### Patches

There are several good places to purchase patches. Three of the best are:

**The Patch Place**, P. O. Box 2648, Chino, CA 91708, (888) 507-2824, [thepatchplace.com](http://thepatchplace.com), you can browse online, or call and get a catalog. Their catalog has hundreds of patches and just looking at them will give some ideas for events. For example, "Kite Flying" patch, doesn't that suggest a great kite building and flying contest?

**Ideal Emblem Inc.** ([idealemblem.com](http://idealemblem.com)) has a nice selection of patches.

**AB Emblems & Caps**, P. O. Box 695, 291 Merrimon Ave., Weaverville, NC 28787, (800) 438-4285, [abemblem.com](http://abemblem.com). This is a good place to get custom made patches. 2" x 3" patches are often less than \$1.50 each in quantities of 100 and less than \$1 for 200 or more

### Ribbons

I find that boys are not too impressed with ribbons, but they may be just the thing for your boys. Ribbons can be bought in bulk, just go on the internet for sources.

### Other Awards:

Often I give camping items as awards (flashlights, compasses, pocket knives, etc.). Usually you can get an assortment of things at Dollar General®, Gander Mountain®, Bass Pro Shops®, WalMart®, etc. Giving things for awards can work occasionally, but because the award is generic, it may have little or no value to the boy in a few years. Awards inscribed with the event, place and date are significant memory makers. I am always delighted to hear that boys still have their Pinewood car trophies, 20 years later.