

“Uncle Ralph”
By Hardy Smith

One of my great experiences as a young boy growing up in Talladega, Alabama was to have an opportunity to be a part of Boy Scout Troop 39. Scoutmaster “Uncle Ralph” Bynum was a wonderful, positive, and much needed influence on countless numbers of youngsters in that community for more than three decades.

As young teenagers my fellow scouts and I were more focused on what mischief we could get into during our campouts on Cheaha Mountain in the Talladega National Forest or while hiking the Odum Scout Trail rather than paying attention to whatever scouting lesson Uncle Ralph and his assistant Tommy Huhn were attempting to teach us.

His own sons were scouts but for the most part, 30 plus years of vacation time was devoted to helping guide boys from other families.

While now I can recognize and am certainly grateful for the impact he had in my life, I’m pretty sure at the time not many of his scouts stopped to think about why Uncle Ralph gave the devoted service he did.

Uncle Ralph’s wife Sibyl shared with me the secret of what motivated him. “He felt that all boys who wanted to be a part of what scouting had to offer should have that opportunity. He felt it was his personal mission.”

Organizations struggle with finding and keeping the volunteers they need. Here are two tips that will help you:

- When recruiting, make the effort to find people who feel a connection to your cause. Remember a critical lesson in volunteering. The connection that exists will be there for a reason. The reason will be personal and unique to each individual.
- Make sure you identify what that reason is and understand any personal need that is likely to be associated with it. Make sure the need is being met. Putting personal connection together while helping meet a personal need will help your organization find and keep your “Uncle Ralphs”.

Learn more about Hardy Smith and his ability for helping your organization get results in areas of recruiting, activating, and retaining volunteers by visiting www.hardysmith.com