

Boy Scouts Alternative Rises With Sexual Purity Focus

A conservative group said Tuesday it will form a rival alternative to the Boy Scouts of America, in the latest sign of backlash against the Scouts' recent decision to admit gay youth.

The splinter group, , said the new organization will offer an outdoors-oriented character-development program for boys similar to that of the Boy Scouts, while also focusing on "sexual purity" and adhering to "a standard statement of Christian values."

The new organization, which has yet to be named, stopped short of banning gay children but said it would bar any members who "openly flaunt sexuality."

"We have heard directly from over 30,000 people that recommended a need for this organization," said Rob Green, a former top Boy Scouts leader in South Carolina and now interim executive director of 's new program. "There is an organization existing now that is in line with your values."

is a group of parents, Scoutmasters, Eagle Scouts, and other Scouting leaders formerly associated with the Boy Scouts. Last spring, lobbied the Boy Scouts to maintain their policy barring gay youths and adults from the organization. In May, the Scouts voted to lift the ban on gay youths, angering many conservative members. The Scouts retained a prohibition on gay Scoutmasters and other adults.

The Boy Scouts declined to talk about the new organization. "We remain focused on reaching and serving youth in order to help them grow into good, strong citizens," said Scouts spokesman Deron Smith.

The rival group will be modeled on the American Heritage Girls, a Christian youth organization for girls, said, and its name will be announced at a national convention set for September 6 in Nashville, Tennessee. The group hopes to launch across the United States in January.

Gay youths will be allowed join, but members can't "openly flaunt sexuality," said John Stemberger, founder of . "There is not going to be any acting out, nor is there going to be a witch-hunt," said Stemberger. "We wouldn't expect any flaunting, innuendo, gestures or speech," he said, citing as examples advocating for gay rights or waving rainbow flags.

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