

Christian Alternative to Boy Scouts Hosts First-Ever 'National Backyard Campout'

Boys adventure movement Trail Life USA () today announced its first-ever "National Backyard Campout," encouraging families to "make memories" during the COVID-19 lockdown.

At a time when "outward bound" has become "homebound" for families across the nation, Trail Life USA is inviting America's families to take a break from their valid preoccupation with the COVID-19 crisis and have a camping adventure in their own backyards April 17.

"Our resourceful troops have held their meetings online for the past few weeks during self-isolating," said Mark Hancock, CEO of Trail Life USA, which has more than 30,000 members in 830-plus troops across all 50 states. "But this is a time when cabin fever sets in—and boys especially need to get outdoors in a safe environment."

While many parents will look back on COVID-19 as a time of uncertainty and anxiety, it's an opportunity for boys—and girls—"to remember this time at home with positive memories," said Hancock, author of *Let Boys be Boys* and *5 Critical Needs of Boys*.

"Anything we can do as parents to help re-cast this tense time is good for our kids," he said.

Organizers hope the National Backyard Campout will bring together families "virtually" across the nation via a live web broadcast, including story readings. Trail Life USA has posted suggestions for games, activities and outdoor cooking recipes on its website at .

Sharing Magical Moments

Families will also have the opportunity to share their own magical moments with others via photo and video posts.

“It’s going to be a lot of fun,” said national event leader Steve Padgett. “This is a great opportunity for families to spend time together, and create memories and habits that will continue long after this homebound time is over.”

Families are urged to respect all emergency restrictions in their area—including self-isolating and social distancing from non-family members, Hancock said.

Launched six years ago, Trail Life USA describes itself as a “Christ-centered, boy-focused, character, leadership, and adventure organization,” with troops meeting at local churches nationwide.