Insider tips to help your teen get the most out of their participation in a hands-on, fun, career exploration program.

For information, call:

- West of River: 585-241-8558
- East of River: 585-241-8560

Or email us at: joinexploring@senecawaterways.org
Introduction To Exploring

Exploring is a career education program for young men and women (aged 11–20, Clubs are grades 6-8 (age 10-13), Posts are grades 9-College (ages 14-20).

Explorers are exposed to selected careers through real-world, community based activities led by working professionals. Students can choose from a wide variety of Posts in fields such as Law, Culinary Arts, Engineering, Veterinary Medicine, Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS Services, Health Care, or Business. Explorers gain hands-on experience while learning skills vital to success in today’s work place—skills like responsibility, time management, professionalism, leadership, communication skills and teamwork. Best of all, Explorers have fun while learning!

Exploring is an opportunity for your teen, but there is a role and a benefit to parents as well. This guide is for you — an Exploring parent — to give you insights about the Exploring program that your teen may not think about discussing with you.

Welcome to the program! If you have questions about Exploring or other programs offered by the Seneca Waterways Council, please contact the Exploring Office. We will be happy to help you find opportunities that engage and enrich your teen’s life!
What Teens Say About Exploring

“Exploring gives you a chance to learn about different careers while having fun with your friends.”

“You will get out of Exploring what you put into it.”

It is important to attend events, not just the meetings, but any special events your Post may have. Put down your cell phones and join in! Help with community service projects and fundraising activities, go to a Post picnic or to a day “on the job,” and take the time to earn awards by completing extra projects. Volunteer to help with every opportunity there is. You may decide to study something else in college, but you will have made that decision based on real life experiences, not a feeling about what you think a job is like. Or, you might decide that that career is the perfect one for you!”

Remember to thank your Post Advisors!

Advisors volunteer their time to run your Post. They also do a lot behind the scenes that you may not know about. My advisor helped me to earn awards that made me a better candidate for college admission and internship positions. He introduced me to his colleagues so that I could get additional experience with them outside our normal meetings. He even wrote letters of recommendation for me to help me get into college and to earn scholarships.”
What Parents Want You To Know

Exploring is a treasure that needs to be investigated fully! There are obvious benefits to having your teen involved in extracurricular activities that help them have fun and develop into productive, engaged adults. However, there are many long and short term benefits that may not be immediately obvious.

Short term benefits include:

* The chance to “test drive” careers before selecting colleges or post-graduation training programs. Exploring helps expose your teen to possible careers to determine if they would be interested in pursuing that field after graduation. Finding a career path, or ruling one out, can save time and money when selecting colleges and training programs.

* Most Exploring Posts offer opportunities to participate in community service projects. Many high schools require completion of community service hours to be considered for high school honors or to fulfill graduation requirements. Further, college applications ask for evidence of community service as an indication of a student’s interests and commitment to citizenship. Exploring helps time-crunched teens do “double duty,” earning service hours in a fun and supportive environment.
Your teen may earn awards and scholarships that help them excel in college and post-high school training programs.

What Parents Want You To Know

Long range benefits include:

- Measurable achievements build resumes!

Exploring activities span a range of key areas: extra-curricular activities, community service, and the chance to earn awards, honors and scholarships. These areas are of critical interest to colleges, internship sites, potential employers, honor societies, professional associations and clubs. Exploring experiences turn into stories for personal essays and interviews that impress interviewers and review committees.

- Access to scholarships for college and training programs.

Demonstrated achievements increase your student’s chances of receiving financial awards to support their education. Some scholarships are restricted to Explorers. For other awards, participation in Explorers is evidence of the teen’s intention to pursue a career in the field of interest. Ask your Post Advisor or Exploring Executive for scholarship information.

- Development of a confident, experienced young adult.

There is no substitute for the lessons learned through the assistance of mentors and peers. These are lessons your teen will carry for life.
What Post Advisors Want You To Know

This is a Post for the kids, but that doesn’t mean parents can’t attend meetings. If you wish to attend, please ask your teen and Post Advisor first. They will make arrangements for you to sit in.

This is a VOLUNTEER organization; please ask how you can help. Post advisors are volunteers, and they can’t do it alone. There is a significant amount of paperwork and preparation involved in running a program. They may need drivers for field trips, refreshments for a meeting or extra hands for an activity. The possibilities are many; please express an interest in helping. Thank you!

Communication is key. Advisors are there to help your teen succeed in the Post. Making them aware of issues will help them better accommodate your teen’s needs.

Take advantage of the range of opportunities available through Exploring. Inquire about scholarships and achievement awards. Encourage your teen to attend dinner dances, soccer nights, camps, etc. You never know what opportunity will change your teen’s outlook on life and open a door to an amazing experience!

Once your teen makes the commitment to the program, please get them to the meetings. If they can’t attend a meeting or decide to drop out of the Post, please let your Advisor know as soon as possible. Meetings will run on time when advisors know not to wait for your Explorer.

Help your Explorer be responsible. Help them meet their schedules and Post commitments, and to log their volunteer hours and track awards. An advisor can only do so much. If your teen loses their paperwork, please understand that your advisor may not have a duplicate copy.

Encourage your teen to step out of their comfort zone. Encouraging them to learn new skills in the supportive environment of the Post will help them gain confidence and abilities useful in their academic and professional lives. For some teens, taking a risk can be uncomfortable and challenging. An advisor can provide encouragement, but the best support begins at home.

Every Post operates differently. Please refer to the information sheet given to your Explorer with Post- specific details including meeting schedules and information on how best to reach your advisors if you have any questions.

Again, this is a VOLUNTEER organization. Post advisors are not paid and the Post may not have an operating budget. Please keep that in mind when making your yearly donations or when helping out with fundraisers. EVERY little bit counts.
How is Exploring Financed?

When you register your son or daughter into the Exploring program, you pay a yearly $39* national registration and insurance fee. This fee allows your child to be part of the Exploring program and goes straight to our national office to help provide many of the services required for Post Advisors (training courses, magazines and insurance coverage). None of this money stays in the local Council.

* fee may be prorated at time of sign up

Funding for the Exploring program within the Seneca Waterways Council is part of an annual budget of approximately $4.5 million, which must be raised each year from the generous support of friends, families, corporations and foundations. The Seneca Waterways Council budget provides funding for summer camp program subsidies, maintenance and upkeep of three camping facilities, salaries for support staff, newsletters, training courses for advisors and much more. Funds needed to support the Exploring and Scouting programs in the Seneca Waterways Council come from a variety of areas including:

**Friends of Exploring Campaign (FOE):** Each year, our Council conducts a "Friends of Exploring Campaign" to solicit contributions from families and members of the community. It offers families the opportunity to help invest in the future of our Exploring program. Families may donate to Exploring by visiting [www.senecawaterways.org/give](http://www.senecawaterways.org/give)

**United Way:** The Exploring program is not a government agency; hence, we receive no tax dollar support. United Way support accounts a small percentage of our annual budget.

**Popcorn & Camp Card Sale:** Most Units in our Council participate in the annual camp card and/or popcorn sale. Sales from these fundraisers benefit both the Council and those units that participate.

**Special Events:** Each year, the Council conducts a number of special event fundraisers to help raise money to support our programs. Events include: 21 Stories for Scouts, the Youth Power Dinner, Lobster fest and Sporting Clay Tournaments.

EVERY little bit counts. We gratefully accept donations to support Exploring.
To contact your local Exploring Executive:

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