With AmazonSmile, your Amazon purchases can support Scouting

As if you needed another excuse to shop at Amazon. Now every purchase you make from the Earth’s biggest online store can support the charity of your choice, including the Boy Scouts of America and its many local councils.

Through its AmazonSmile program, introduced in 2014, Amazon donates 0.5 percent of the price of your eligible purchase to the public charitable organization of your choice.

The BSA and its more than 270 local councils are eligible charities. (Individual packs, troops, teams, posts, ships and crews aren’t eligible.)

So far, purchases supporting Scouting have added up in a big way.

As of November 2016, AmazonSmile has generated $3,806.42 for the BSA's National Council. That's basically free money to support the future of Scouting.

Sure, half a percent isn’t much and won’t replace your Friends of Scouting contributions that help Scouting function in your community. But it adds up, costs you nothing and is a great additional way to support Scouting.

The one-time setup takes just a couple of seconds (instructions below), and you get the same prices, products and service you’re used to when shopping at Amazon. It doesn’t cost you any extra; the only difference is now you’re helping Scouting every time you buy.

How to set up AmazonSmile

Step 1: Go to smile.amazon.com

You'll use this link to register and for all your future Amazon shopping. Even after you’ve signed up for AmazonSmile and selected a charity, shopping through the regular amazon.com won’t benefit that charity. You need to use the smile.amazon.com link from now on. So you don’t forget, use a browser extension (I use the Smile Always Chrome extension) that will redirect you automatically.

Step 2: Sign in using your normal Amazon login
Step 3: Search for the “West Tennessee Boy Scouts”

Charitable organizations must go through a rigorous screening process to be listed here, so you can select with confidence that your purchases are actually supporting your council.

Step 5: Check the top-left corner and start shopping

If you see AmazonSmile in the top left corner and the correct charity in the “Supporting: [Your charity here]” line, you’ve done it right.

Step 6: Double-check that the product you’re buying is eligible

Most items sold by Amazon qualify, but confirm that on the product page. It’ll say “Eligible for AmazonSmile donation.” And this is a good time to triple-check that you see AmazonSmile and the proper charity at the top-left corner.

Step 7: Check out!

This part you should be used to. Purchase the item(s), and smile. You’ve just done a Good Turn for your local council!

Step 8: Check your impact

Hover over the name of your charity at the top of the screen, and click “Your AmazonSmile Impact” to see how much you have generated for Scouting.