



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE TWIN CITIES

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER



Honoring the Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

At Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities, we support the development of discourse and action that seeks to dismantle injustice, inequity, and disparity wherever and however it may exist. This week, we honor the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his fight for justice, equality, and opportunity.



Across our organization, BGCTC participated in a number of Martin Luther King Jr. Day activities as well as acts of service. At our Jerry Gamble Club in North Minneapolis, Club youth and staff held a canned goods drive in partnership with the local chapter of [Jack and Jill of America](#). Many Clubs held a day of observance featuring stories and educational activities focused on the life and legacy of Dr. King. In addition, BGCTC board member Chad Jackson served as emcee of Minneapolis Parks & Recreation's [virtual MLK Day event](#).

As always, BGCTC remains committed to equity for all youth, and to our responsibility to create safe and inclusive spaces for young people to express themselves and become advocates of change.



GIVE *in* GRATITUDE

In our Clubs, young people have the opportunity to develop important skills, explore new things, and develop their own unique interests. BGCTC's Literacy program helps kids in grades K-5 develop their reading skills and promotes a love of reading, writing, and learning. Through our Literacy activities, many Club youth discover an enthusiasm for reading new books and self-motivated learning that persists through their middle and high school years!

Over the holidays, our Jerry Gamble Club received a wonderful donation from a member of the community: Boxes and boxes of brand-new books for youth of all ages! Our young people at Jerry Gamble had the joy of picking out new books to take home and read with their families. We're very grateful for this thoughtful gift, and we always appreciate an opportunity to discover our next favorite read!

Please consider making a gift NOW to help us continue providing valuable support and enrichment opportunities for the young people we serve.

As we move into a new year, BGCTC invites you to ***Give in Gratitude***, empowering young people to achieve bright futures in 2021. **Al & Kathy Lenzmeier** believe so strongly in BGCTC's impact to meet the needs of our youth and families that they are generously offering a **\$50,000 dollar-for-dollar match** on contributions through **January 31!** Your donation is especially critical to help our families experience a safe start to the new year.

Thank you for your continued support of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities. ***Happy New Year!***

Give
Now!

Read More

A Joyful Holiday with Kids Can Give

Although our **Kids Can Give** holiday gift drive looked very different in 2020, we were determined to deliver a joyful holiday experience to every one of our youth and families! Thanks to many wonderful contributions from our supporters and communities, Club staff members assembled gift packages and coordinated safe, socially distanced deliveries to our Club families during the final weeks of December.

A parent whose children attend our Richfield Beacons Clubs shares her appreciation:

"This has been a difficult year for so many families, and this event provided unexpected joy for my children," she says. "It was such a positive experience. Thank you for the time and effort it took to coordinate it. Our family appreciated it!"



Youth & Police Engagement Panel

On December 18, BGCTC youth and alumni participated in a virtual Youth and Police Engagement panel, discussing various aspects of the relationship between youth and police in both pre-COVID and current times, as well as in the context of 2020's civil unrest. Participants included current BGCTC members Yahanna Mackbee and Elsie Quiterio, as well as Patrick Henry Club alumnus Laichia Vang.

YOUTH AND POLICE ENGAGEMENT PANEL
PRE AND POST COVID/CIVIL UNREST
Join us via Zoom
<https://zoom.us/j/9435862493?pwd=NTJhNGU1dGVDdnpaVFh0PjZkZz09>
Friday, December 18, 2020 5 pm - 6 pm
As Youth answer questions relating to the relationship between them & the police.

PANELISTS

- Elsie Carmona Quiterio
Org: Boys & girls club
School: Washburn High School
- Yahanna Mackbee
Org: Boys & girls club
School: Washburn High School
- Gisell Ayala
Org: Minneapolis Youth Congress
School: University of MN-TC
- Chelsea Chingwe
Org: Minneapolis Youth Congress
School: Wayzata Public HS
- Laichia Vang
Org: Boys & girls club
School: St. Olaf College

HOSTED BY:
Ridwan Mohamed
Org: Minneapolis Youth Congress
School: Hamline University

Not Pictured

Thanks for Supporting our Premier Holiday Auction!

In December, our **Premier Holiday Auction** featured exclusive items and experiences, with all proceeds supporting the mission of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities. Thanks to our generous supporters, we raised over **\$30,000** to help us continue meeting the increased needs of our young people and their families during the holiday season!

Thank You to our Auction Partners!

- Caribou Coffee
- Cub Foods
- FOX Sports North
- Minnesota Vikings



- Minnesota Twins
- Minnesota Timberwolves & Lynx
- Polaris Industries
- Tom & Jeanne Schnack
- Three Rivers Park District
- Voyageur Environmental Center

STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Eric Westerman Teen Specialist Mt. Airy Club

Beginning as a staff member at our Patrick Henry Club in 2018, Eric Westerman is now a Teen Specialist at our Mt. Airy Club. Eric's favorite color is purple (although it used to be green), his least favorite food is mashed potatoes, and he can recite the original Lion King movie word for word!

Growing up, Eric's role model was his uncle, a counselor at Cooper High School in Robbinsdale for over 30 years. Eric says that his uncle inspired him to put others before himself and showed Eric that a kind, helpful adult can have a huge impact in the lives of young people.

Before COVID, Eric always strived to be a person that youth could feel comfortable sitting down with and talking about anything on their mind, from school and sports to relationships and family. When COVID forced our Clubs into closure, Eric found it much more difficult to cultivate those relationships, so he turned to social media to connect with his Club youth on a personal level.

Since March, Eric has been steadily producing amazing, relatable social media content on Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, with content ranging widely between silly and lighthearted to educational and focused. Eric says he likes to create videos answering random or rarely asked questions, such as "how to apply for credit cards" or "how to get a workout while cleaning". He says his Mt. Airy youth regularly use TikTok, and he often joins his students to burn some energy and get creative with a TikTok video.

Eric's personal philosophy is to always be respectful and kind to young people, even when it may be difficult. "One thing I firmly believe is that youth absorb everything you do or say. Youth remember how you treat them; they remember your words and actions," he says. "I've had students bring up something I said a year ago when I can barely remember what I had for dinner the previous night. I've met adults who remember me as their camp counselor when they were in fourth grade, and lessons I taught them that they held on to. Our youth hold on to the good *and* the bad, so it's important we always treat them with kindness and respect."



UPCOMING EVENT

Cooking With The Clubs

February 2021 (Virtual)
Friday, February 12 (Live Event)

We are very excited to announce that a new ((virtual)) event, **Cooking with the Clubs**, is premiering in February -- a unique and

educational event you will not want to miss! This fundraising event is hosted by our [Associate Board](#), a group of young professionals dedicated to helping the Boys & Girls Clubs expand our supporter base through volunteerism, networking and fundraising.

Cooking with the Clubs will feature popular local chefs, mixologists, breweries, and sommeliers. Attendees will choose from a selection of cocktail, wine pairing, and meal options then will receive a video and ingredient list to prepare the meals at home throughout the month of February. The event will also have one live ((virtual)) program on February 12 featuring an appetizer cooking class and inspiring entertainment from Club teens!



[Buy Tickets Now!](#)

[Learn More](#)

Safety is our Number One Priority

Our Clubs reopened on Monday, January 11 for our 2021 winter session. In accordance with current recommendations from the [Minnesota Department of Health](#), we continue to implement strict COVID-19 protocols to ensure that our Club members, staff members, and volunteers remain safe and healthy.

BGCTC is partnering with [Ecolab](#) for training regarding supplies and equipment usage, cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting procedures, and adherence to DHS and CDC safety recommendations. Our COVID-19 policies and procedures include building readiness (cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting) and operations readiness (health screening, youth to staff ratio, mask and social distance policies, closure and reopen policies, and a youth and staff quarantine policy in case of positive test). We are utilizing a COVID-19 tracking dashboard and have implemented mandatory incident reporting procedures.



In addition to strict COVID-19 protocols, we are also implementing heightened safety and security measures in response to the acts of violence that occurred in our nation's Capitol earlier this month, as well as the increased concerns surrounding the time leading up to and following the Presidential inauguration on January 20.

The safety of our kids and families is ALWAYS our number one priority. BGCTC is doing everything possible to keep our kids, staff, and volunteers safe, healthy, and secure as we continue to navigate through unprecedented times in the history of our nation and the world. For more information, please feel free to reach out to our [leadership](#) or to [a Club location near you](#).

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

[Minnesota Wild](#)

BGCTC and the Minnesota Wild have developed **Wild University**, a year-round virtual career exploration program aimed at introducing Club teens to the business components of live sports and entertainment. Each month, experienced leaders representing different aspects of the sports and entertainment industry will host "Career Conversations" focusing on their core responsibilities, career paths, and career advice. The first session will take place on January 27.



The Minnesota Wild and NHL also donated an EZ Ice Rink to our Voyageur Environmental Center. Voyageur will be able to use the rink to enhance their winter program offerings by adding skating, hockey, and broomball.

How You Can Help

While social distancing measures are currently limiting the types of volunteer opportunities available at our Clubs, please consider supporting BGCTC in the following ways:

- Donate non-perishable food items, hygiene and cleaning supplies, school supplies, games, and activities for Club kids and families
- Sew or donate masks for Club staff
- Promote our organization on social media to build awareness
- Share employment resources for families
- Write encouraging notes to our kids or Club staff
- Make a monetary donation [online](#), by mail, or by texting **OURKIDS** to **243725**



To make an in-kind donation of any of the items listed above within the coming weeks and months, please contact Molly Hemes at mhemes@bgc-tc.org to arrange a drop-off time at one of our Clubs.

Share Your Club Story

Do you have a story to tell about our Clubs? We'd love to hear about your experiences as a member, alumni, volunteer, or partner. Your story could even be featured in an upcoming newsletter or social media spotlight!

We appreciate opportunities to share the stories of our BGCTC family. Please send your stories to jprewett@bgc-tc.org, and we will reach out to you soon. Thank you!



You Can Change a Child's Life

With your support, we can continue to provide life-changing academic, leadership, and healthy lifestyles programming to youth across the Twin Cities.



Give
Now!

Support Us with a Planned Gift



Thank You to our Corporate Partners!

Visionary



Champion



Advocate



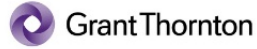
Mentor



Ally



Friend



Become a Corporate Partner

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities | 651-726-2582 | info@bgc-tc.org | boysandgirls.org

STAY CONNECTED

