



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF THE TWIN CITIES

# INSPIRING HOPE.



## MAY 2020 NEWSLETTER

Volume 21 | May 5, 2020

Through our long and rich history, experience, and expertise, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities continues to lead transformative change in the opportunity equation for Twin Cities youth. We believe that every young person deserves the chance to realize their full potential and achieve a great future. On a daily basis, BGCTC also serves as a critical support system as many of our kids and families have limited resources and are often experiencing job instability, food insecurity, and a lack of permanent housing. Evolving data shows the COVID-19 outbreak will have disproportionate health and economic impacts on the communities we serve.

Although Clubs are currently closed for in-person youth programming, BGCTC has a responsibility during this time to increase supports for our families as they now face additional challenges. We are currently keeping all staff employed to support the needs of youth and families with family wellness check-ins, connection to and distribution of food, virtual delivery of youth development programs, and planning for reopening our Clubs and Voyageur Environmental Center.



The safety of our kids and families is ALWAYS our number one priority. BGCTC continues to do everything possible to keep our kids, staff, and volunteers protected from the spread of COVID-19. During this time we continue to monitor needs in our communities and increase supports for our youth and families as they now face additional challenges with school closures, work disruptions, and potential illness and health concerns. We have activated with an increase in services:

- **Family wellness check-ins.** BGCTC staff members continue to connect with each one of our families to make sure they have the supports they need during this difficult time. These calls focus on immediate needs related to shelter, food, technology needs, and medical care.
- **Connection to and distribution of food.** BGCTC has been working diligently with food distributors, grocers, and restaurants to provide weekly meal packages (11,000+ meals) for our families and connect families to additional nutrition resources.

- **Delivery of youth development programs as a distance learning model.** This includes K-12 academic support, ensuring digital connectivity and distribution of education materials and supplies to youth and families.



**4,429**

*total family wellness  
check-ins conducted  
March 18 - April 24*



**55,240**

*total meals served  
April 1 - 29*

### Family Meal Kits

BGCTC is offering free weekly meal packages to Club families to address the increased food insecurities kids and families are facing with work disruptions and school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This expanded meal program – Family Meal Kits – provides nutritious family-style meals and is part of BGCTC's multi-faceted response plan and ongoing commitment to provide resources that support caregivers as well as children.



The Family Meal Kits program launched April 1. Boxes of pre-sorted meal components are distributed at eight Club locations each Wednesday, with each box containing enough food to provide five dinners for a family of four. Households with more than four members will receive additional boxes. Families can sign up to receive a Family Meal Kit by [contacting a Club location](#) in their community.



**1,529**

*meals served in Clubs  
per week prior to  
closures*



**660+**

*families served per  
week since April 1*



**11,000+**

*meals served per  
week since April 1*

BGCTC launched a virtual learning platform on April 16. The first weeks of this new programming channel via Google Classroom focused on welcoming and engaging youth and families, orientation to virtual learning opportunities and communicating virtual learning expectations, along with providing daily academic support. Additionally, education packets and education supplies are distributed to families weekly along with the Family Meal Kits. We will roll out additional virtual learning program modules in future weeks.



**253**

*Kids & Families  
virtual experiences  
March 18 - April 29*



**207**

*Teen Pathways  
virtual experiences  
March 18 - April 29*

[Learn More](#)

[View Impact Report](#)

## CLUB HIGHLIGHTS

### Patrick Henry Club

Staff and students of our Patrick Henry High School Club have enthusiastically adapted to our Clubs' transition to virtual programming by creating a lively community on their brand new [Facebook page](#)! Club staff members post original content to the page multiple times a day, including contests, tutorials, activities, challenges, local job openings, and more.



### Little Earth Club

Each Monday and Tuesday, Little Earth Club staff team up with our Southside Village Club to pack, load up, and personally deliver our Family Meal Kit food boxes to families in South Minneapolis communities. Little Earth staff are also finding fun and innovative ways to stay engaged with Club teens, including online challenges, virtual basketball activities, and the new ["Pride of the People"](#) youth podcast.



### East Side Club

St. Paul's East Side Club is working hard to meet increased needs in the community with



their weekly food distribution. Club staff run an outdoor food pickup each Wednesday, coordinate deliveries, and organize larger-scale group pickups to serve families who are unable to physically attend. The East Side [Facebook page](#) is also full of quizzes, riddles, and funny photos that keep us smiling even at a distance!



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## STAFF HIGHLIGHT

### **TJ Valtierra** *Program Director* *Little Earth Club*

TJ Valtierra has served as Program Director at our Little Earth Club for nearly five years in addition to prior volunteer experience at the Club. He is a basketball enthusiast and has coached the Little Earth Red Bears 18U basketball team for the past three seasons. He also loves sports, video games, and music, and he performs as a rapper under the artist name [2Braidz](#).



Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, TJ has worked long hours to support youth and families in the Little Earth community. Each week, he delivers Family Meal Kit food boxes to numerous Little Earth households and conducts wellness checks to ensure that basic needs are being met. TJ also leads "Pride of the People", a Little Earth youth podcast focused on teen perspectives, and he creates daily original content on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to stay connected with teens in the community.

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## Find your Club on Facebook!

Contacting your local Club is now easier than ever! To support our transition to virtual programs in a time of social distancing, every single one of our Clubs is now on Facebook. Please reach out to us for info on virtual experiences for youth, local food distributions, and more resources in your community.



### **Minneapolis Clubs**

- [Jerry Gamble Club](#)
- [Patrick Henry High School Club](#)
- [Olson Middle School Club](#)
- [Southside Village Club](#)
- [Little Earth Club](#)

### **St. Paul Clubs**

- [East Side Club](#)
- [Al Lenzmeier West Side Club](#)
- [Mt. Airy Club](#)

### **Richfield Clubs**

- [Centennial Elementary Club](#)
- [Richfield Middle School Club](#)

## How You Can Help

While social distancing measures are currently limiting volunteer engagement at the 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
- 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](mailto:mhemes@bgc-tc.org) to arrange a drop-off time at one of our Clubs.



## 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!**

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities | 651-726-2582 | [info@bgc-tc.org](mailto:info@bgc-tc.org) | [boysandgirls.org](http://boysandgirls.org)

STAY CONNECTED

