



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE TWIN CITIES**

LIFTING OUR COMMUNITIES.

COVID-19 IMPACT REPORT

MAY 3, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Executive Summary

The future prosperity of our young people and the communities Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities (BGCTC) serves depends on our organization's ability to continue mobilizing now to ensure that all young people have meaningful opportunities to succeed in school and life. The mission of BGCTC is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Clubs provide a fun, safe and constructive environment for kids and teens during out-of-school hours. Clubs offer programs and services to help young people succeed in school, develop leadership skills, maintain healthy lifestyles, and build career aspirations for the future.

High poverty levels and academic achievement gaps existed in the Twin Cities community pre-COVID and have grown exponentially over the past year. The COVID-19 pandemic, layered with the deaths of George Floyd, Daunte Wright, and countless others, in addition to the long-overdue reckoning taking place in America around systemic racism and oppression, has magnified inequities with an overwhelming impact. BGCTC recognizes the deep pain and feelings of fatigue over injustices Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities face every day, and we remain committed to fighting against racism and inequities wherever and however they exist. Now, more than ever, the young people BGCTC serves need the tools and support to envision a bright and successful future.

As we continue to navigate our new normal and the hope of a post-pandemic world, there is nothing more important than the safety and well-being of our youth and families. Clubs are a safe space, and we continue to strengthen our commitment to championing inclusivity, equity, and opportunity for our young people. Now, more than ever, we have a responsibility to do better by our young people, to speak up for them, and provide them a platform where their voices can be heard and be part of the much-needed systemic change in our nation. Today, and every day, we stand in peace and unity with the communities we serve.

Continued Supports to Youth and Families

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Boys & Girls Clubs Twin Cities recognized our immediate responsibility to strengthen supports for our families as they faced intensified challenges with school closures, work disruptions, and potential illness and health concerns. A year later, we continue to connect with each one of our families to make sure they have the supports they need while also working in small virtual and in-person teams to strengthen and enhance curriculum, lesson plans, and general Club operations. We continue to work with technical partners to ensure appropriate and equitable access to connectivity, to support our members academics through virtual learning and also provide supplemental relationships and social-emotional support through virtual delivery of BGCTC programs. We also continue to partner with food distributors, grocers, and businesses to provide strengthened food support.

BGCTC's March 2020 – April 2021 COVID-19 response efforts include:

- *Family wellness check-ins.* BGCTC staff members continue to connect with each 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 works diligently with local grocery stores, restaurants and caterers in the BIPOC community to connect our families to additional nutrition resources when needed.
- *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.
- *Two BGCTC Club sites (Mt. Airy & Jerry Gamble)* reopened for a summer session July 6 – August 14 with small-group, full-day in-person youth programming for grades K-5 members identified as high need for focused academic support.
- *Five BGCTC Club sites (Jerry Gamble, Southside Village, Mt. Airy, East Side, and Al Lenzmeier West Side)* reopened September 14 with small-group, full day in-person youth programming for both teen members and grades K-8 members identified as high need for focused academic support.
- *Reopening our Richfield Clubs.* Our Centennial Elementary Club reopened for in-person programming on March 1. The Richfield Middle School Club resumed in-person programming on Wednesdays beginning on February 24, before shifting to full in-person programming on April 8.
- *Increased support for the 2021 Summer session.* To combat the learning loss that school distance learning has created, we are planning on additional academic support as well as skill building for this summer, including focused STEAM enrichment opportunities.



20,000+

total family wellness
check-ins conducted
March 2020 - April 2021



215,000+

total meals provided to
families March 2020-
April 2021



500+

youth supported in
school distance learning
March 2020 - April 2021



10

youth-led social justice
and advocacy events
since September 2020

Advancing Food Security

Family Meal Kits

Beginning April 1, BGCTC offered free weekly meal packages to Club families to address the increased food insecurities kids and families faced with work disruptions and school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This expanded meal program – Family Meal Kits – provided boxes of pre-sorted meal components that were distributed at eight Club locations each Wednesday. From April 1 until the program's end on August 7, BGCTC distributed a total of 167,640 meals.



Southside Village Pop-up Pantry

With many retailers already closed due to COVID, property damage resulting from unrest in the weeks following the tragic death of George Floyd left many Minneapolis residents with reduced access to fresh and healthy food. Stores and retailers closest to 38th and Chicago – the site of George Floyd's death – were most heavily impacted, and the surrounding neighborhoods struggled with a lack of nutritious food options in the weeks that followed.



On June 1, BGCTC converted our Southside Village Club into a pop-up free food and supplies pantry serving families who were disproportionately impacted by the confluence of traumatic events and lacked access to grocery stores and transportation. The Club – located at 39th and Chicago – opened its doors each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11am to 4pm. Volunteers assisted each family in selecting essential food staples, personal care, and childcare products. Until its closure on August 7, the Southside Village pantry served up to 100 families per day, serving a total of 2,700 shoppers with the help of over 400 volunteers.



Weekend Family Meal Program

While there was an initial outpouring of community donations to BGCTC and other short-term food distribution efforts in the Southside neighborhood, donations began to trail off at a time when the needs of families were intensified beyond the burden of COVID-related impact. Starting September 18, in response to this intensified need, BGCTC launched a new Weekend Family Meal Program that provided 128 meals per family to 400 families through December 27, offering weekend food security. Following feedback from our families, we resumed the Weekend Family Meal Program in early 2021 and shifted our focus to sourcing meals from BIPOC-owned restaurants and caterers located within our Club communities.

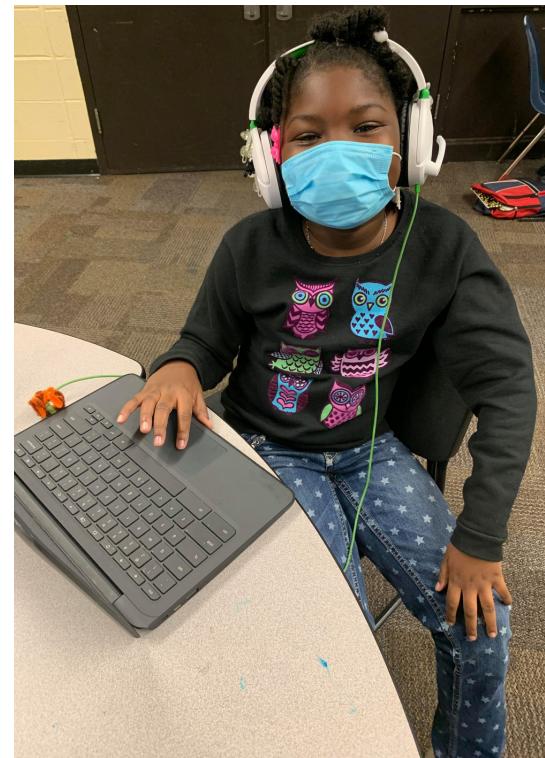


Decreasing the Digital Divide

Virtual Learning

BGCTC launched a virtual learning platform on April 16. The initial phase 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 were distributed to families weekly along with the Family Meal Kits.

Our K-6 Kids and Families virtual programming modules included Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) activities, movement games, healthy meal preparation demonstrations, daily challenges, and family game nights. Teen Pathways virtual modules included online tutoring, social media engagement activities, financial education classes, career and job skills training, and support for distance learning.



Reopening our Clubs

As Twin Cities school districts chose distance learning to start the school year, families needed greater support from BGCTC. School shutdowns and distance learning created increased barriers and challenges for historically underserved populations, including access to remote learning, and the ability for parents/guardians to provide home support. BGCTC leadership and program staff have continued to focus on flexibility and responsiveness toward achieving racially and economically equitable outcomes in education and youth development.

Over the summer, two BGCTC Clubs (Mt. Airy in Saint Paul and Jerry Gamble in Minneapolis, for K-5 Club members), as well as BGCTC's Voyageur Environmental Center, reopened with a full day small-group, in-person programming model with intentional focus on decreasing educational disparities. On September 14, we reopened additional Clubs for full day small-group, in-person programming: Southside Village in Minneapolis and Al Lenzmeier West Side in Saint Paul for K-5 programming, and East Side in Saint Paul for teen programming. Our Richfield Clubs, Centennial Elementary and Richfield Middle School, reopened for in-person programming starting in March 2021.

Our wrap-around reopen plan involves a structured partnership with parents/guardians and teachers/schools as BGCTC takes on a more significant role in administering a high-quality Club and education experience. Virtual programming will continue to expand our program reach and support children and teens we cannot bring into the Clubs at this time due to COVID-19 safety capacity constraints. As COVID-19 safety allows, we continue to move forward to bring more young people back into the Clubs for in-person programming. BGCTC currently has eight Clubs open for small-group, in-person programming. Our COVID-19 safety daily in-person attendance capacity is 430 youth through the end of the school year, with plans to increase to 540 daily in-person capacity during the summer.

Standing for Equity and Social Justice

In addition to COVID-19, our communities continue to experience the impact of the deaths of George Floyd, Daunte Wright, and so many others across the nation, as well as the resounding call for justice and an examination of how systemic racism has and continues to affect people of color in the United States. The work we do at the Clubs is part of the change that is needed in our country. BGCTC has always been at the forefront of change, and we are committed to providing our young people a platform where their voices can be heard and be part of the solution.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities stands for safety, dignity, and equitable opportunity, and we actively advocate against all forms of racism and discrimination. We aim to bridge the gap of social divide that permeates our nation, and violence has no place in our society or in our Clubs. The disparity and inequity brought to the surface by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing violence against BIPOC individuals and communities demonstrates that we must continue our work to bring full justice for all people in every situation. BGCTC will continue to support direct action and discourse that demands justice and an equitable society for ALL people.

Youth Voice Events

In June 2020, Boys & Girls Clubs across the country began collaboration on a new teen social justice initiative called Be The Change You Want 2 See. On August 5, this initiative scaled up to a national, multi-city Teen Empowerment Town Hall that tackled timely issues of social and racial justice impacting teens in America today.

BGCTC's teen staff and members hosted a series of pop-up events in September 2020 designed to launch the organization's new Social Justice initiative. The events brought Club teens together from around Minneapolis and St. Paul to connect them with partner organizations with strong ties in each community. These pop-ups also created opportunities for youth performers to explore their experiences as BIPOC teens and for young people to meet with representatives from other Twin Cities organizations.

In October 2020, teen Club members directed a virtual Teen Town Hall - One Dream, Many Voices - that centered teen perspectives on police reform and political representation. Our four teen panelists, alongside Club staff and alumni, spoke with Minnesota public officials and community partners to share their opinions, experiences, and visions for the future.

We are very proud of our teens, and Club teens across the country, for making their voices heard and their efforts to listen, share and educate! We look forward to participating in future events and continuing to support avenues of advocacy for our youth.



Looking Ahead

Every day, BGCTC's targeted approach to reduce academic, health, and economic disparities is activated through a comprehensive program model. We have a responsibility to our youth and to our community to deliver holistic programming that makes an impact — one that extends beyond the walls of the Club to shape exceptional adults ready to reach their full potential as healthy, productive, and compassionate citizens. We have invested in a transformational and inclusive program model that supports essential skill building and academic achievement from kindergarten through post-secondary. Providing access and opportunities go hand in hand with setting goals and having high expectations for every young person while ensuring every Club senior graduates on time with a plan for the future.



BGCTC is intentional in our community partnerships and collaborations to promote equity and create systems change. We also realize that a family-centered approach is critical to our work to create systemic change. As an organization, we have moved over incredible hurdles over the past year. BGCTC staff pivoted, collaborated, and found new channels for delivering our work to ensure kids, teens, and families were at the center of focused efforts. Through the challenges, already strong Club relationships with the families have become even stronger.

As our organization moves ahead in 2021 and beyond, we know that we need to increase our resources and supports in building stronger and more equitable program opportunities for an expanding number of young people. We will continue to respond to the changing economic climate and resulting growth in education, health and income disparities by increasing accessibility to high quality experiences, activities, and resources so **EVERY** young person is on target to reach their full potential.

Together, We Are Stronger!

Thank You to our COVID-19 Community Response Partners!

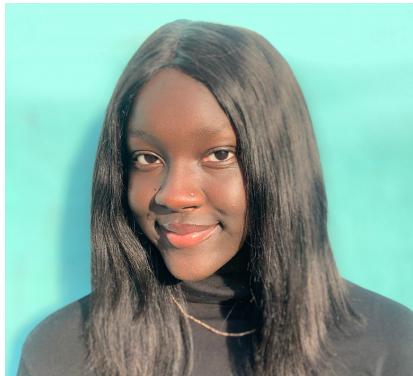
- A1 Landscaping
- Asian Foods/Sysco
- Aspen Waste
- Best Buy Foundation
- Bobby & Steve's Autoworld
- Capital Maintenance
- Concrete Coating
- Cub Foods
- Ecolab
- Fixed Assets
- Fountain of Life Church – Minneapolis
- Grandma's Bakery
- Harminder Mashiana
- Harry & Jan Sweere Foundation
- Harvard Maintenance
- International Brotherhood of Teamsters
- Jerry & Diane Carlson
- Jim and Sue Franklin
- The Joel & Teresa Pfister Foundation
- Kellogg's
- Kowalski's Markets
- MATTERbox Snack Packs
- McNeely Foundation
- The Minneapolis Foundation
- Minnesota Timberwolves Head Coach Ryan Saunders and wife Hayley
- Minnesota Vikings and the Wilf Family
- Otto Bremer Trust
- Papa John's Pizza
- Polaris Industries
- Pratt Industries & Minnesota Corrugated Box, Inc.
- Reinhart Foodservice
- Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation
- Sonance Foundation
- Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
- T-Mobile
- Teamsters Local 320
- Teamsters Local 471
- Union Pacific Foundation
- US Foods

Youth Highlights



Kou Her | East Side Club

Kou Her was named BGCTC's 2021 Youth of the Year on March 11, 2021. Kou first came to the Clubs as part of a volleyball partnership in the summer of 2019. In just two years, Kou has grown into a passionate leader who is always looking for ways to help in his community. During the summer of 2020, Kou worked part-time at the East Side Club, helping coordinate weekly food distributions to local families in need of additional resources and support through the COVID-19 pandemic.



Nyagach K. | Southside Village Club

Nyagach, a teen member of our Southside Village Club, serves in her community as an organizer, builder, and coordinator. Following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020, Nyagach participated in major community actions, leading local teen activists in organizing demonstrations and raising funds for businesses affected by the uprisings. Nyagach is an incredible speaker and poet, and she was also honored with a Changemaker of the Year award from Minnesota Women's Press in December 2020!



David S.* | Jerry Gamble Club

Middle school student David* has been a member of the Jerry Gamble Club for nearly eight years. David loves the Club culture and is always willing to get involved in Club activities. Although he had a tough time with the COVID-19 restrictions, he adjusted to his distance learning and is worked hard to excel in his education. Even though he missed his classmates and playing sports at school, he agreed that being careful and staying safe is the right thing to do during these challenging times. *Name changed for privacy.



Katy W.* | Mt. Airy Club

Katy*, a second grader at our Mt. Airy Club, has worked hard to excel in her distance school work since the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdowns. Katy loves being a leader for her fellow Club members when they ask her for help. Although Katy finishes her distance school work before her peers, she is considerate and waits patiently for her friends to finish their course work so they can play games and enjoy activities together. Katy has a great attitude and is happy to participate in any Club activity! *Name changed for privacy.



Ke'la Scuefield | Patrick Henry Club

Ke'la Scuefield, an alumni member of our Patrick Henry Club, was nominated as Patrick Henry's Youth of the Year and later became BGCTC's 2020 Youth of the Year. She also won the title of 2020 Minnesota Youth of the Year during a virtual presentation, following the cancellation of in-person Youth of the Year events due to safety concerns surrounding the growing COVID-19 pandemic. Ke'la is currently attending Morgan State University, a prestigious HBCU in Maryland, to pursue a career as a social worker.

How You Can Help

While social distancing measures and COVID-19 safety recommendations continue to limit traditional volunteer engagement at the Clubs, please consider supporting BGCTC in the following ways:

- Donate 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

To make an in-kind donation or to inquire directly about current volunteer opportunities, please contact Molly Hemes at mhemes@bgc-tc.org.

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Find our Clubs on Facebook!

Minneapolis Clubs

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

Voyageur Environmental Center

St. Paul Clubs

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

Richfield Clubs

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

Visit [boysandgirls.org](#) to learn more about how we continue to support our communities.

Ways to Give

Your support helps ensure that BGCTC can provide ongoing supports for our youth and families as they continue to face these challenging times. Join us to support Great Futures for the young people we serve!

- Online: <https://boysandgirls.org/give/>
- By mail:

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Twin Cities
690 Jackson St.
Saint Paul, MN 55130

Visit our website for more giving options:
[boysandgirls.org/ways-to-give](#)

