



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**

METRO DENVER

spring newsletter  
2015



Helping Kids. Building Communities.



# "BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS TAUGHT ME HOW ONE PERSON REALLY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE."



**"I BELIEVE WE LEARN MORE FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE THAN THEY LEARN FROM US."**

HASSAN SALEM  
President, U.S. Bank Colorado

*HASSAN SALEM, President of U.S. Bank Colorado, reflects on the impact that Boys & Girls Clubs has had on his life and shares U.S. Bank's belief that developing and strengthening communities means investing in young people and their hopes and dreams for the future.*

We recently connected with Hassan Salem, President of U.S. Bank Colorado, to discuss U.S. Bank's dedication to community service and their partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver. Both Salem and U.S. Bank have a long history of engagement with Boys & Girls Clubs.

**Q: Describe your involvement with Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver.**

**Hassan Salem:** While I was in college at the University of Arizona, I chaired the philanthropy efforts for an organization I belonged to. I was looking for a nonprofit group in town where we could really make a difference. One of my professors suggested that I check out Boys & Girls Clubs. Having grown up overseas I really had

no idea what Boys & Girls Clubs was, but I quickly learned. We volunteered for a clean-up day to help spruce up a local Club, and, while talking to the kids, learned that they were in need of a soccer coach. I volunteered.

Soccer was the sport I played ever since I could kick a ball, and being a coach at the Boys & Girls Club was about more than just the sport. While the kids were learning about the game, good sportsmanship and building self-confidence, I was learning about leadership and how important it is to give back to the community. Boys & Girls Clubs taught me how one person really can make a difference. That experience has always stayed with me and is in the back of my mind when I talk about being focused in our giving.

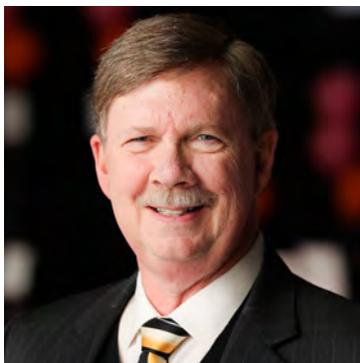
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**"OUR GOAL IS TO BE THERE FOR OUR CLUB MEMBERS AND TO KEEP THEM ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS."**

JOHN L. BARRY  
Chief Executive Officer

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Each year, one in four high school students fails to graduate on time in Colorado. This statistic makes this an especially critical time of year for our academic programs at the Clubs. We know that many Club members face incredible obstacles that can potentially prevent them from accomplishing everything they want to achieve. Our goal is to be there for our Club members and to keep them on the path to success.

Graduating from high school is a major milestone and can make a significant impact on a young person's life. Many of our seniors will be moving on to college or their first real jobs and their high school diploma is not only an outstanding accomplishment, but having a diploma increases job options and overall earning potential. If we can help just ten of our Club members graduate who otherwise would not have, we can add \$2 million to our economy over the course of those Club members' lifetimes.

Through fun and engaging academic programs, we encourage kids to graduate from high school on time – ready for post-secondary education and a 21st century career. Thank you for continuing to partner with us to ensure that all of our Club members are on the path to academic and career success. Together, we are helping close the opportunity gap and enabling our future leaders to fulfill their potential.

Very respectfully,

Academic and Career Success at  
Boys & Girls Clubs:

**96%**  
OF CLUB MEMBERS  
EACH YEAR  
SUCCESSFULLY  
TRANSITION TO THE  
NEXT GRADE LEVEL

ON AVERAGE, CLUB  
MEMBERS ATTENDED

**93%**  
OF SCHOOL DAYS

**100+**  
TEENS WERE TRAINED  
AND EMPLOYED AT  
CLUBS THIS YEAR

## YOUR INVESTMENT MAKES AN IMPACT ON THE LIVES OF OUR CLUB MEMBERS

Through our programs and services, Boys & Girls Club members improve academically and develop valuable career skills.



Each day at the Clubs, kids participate in Power Hour – where staff and community volunteers offer homework help and tutoring in a supportive, non-evaluative learning environment.



Club members now have the opportunity to explore different career fields through Pathways to Success. Participants receive hands-on experience with industry experts and professionals.



From the art room, to the gym, to the tech lab – educationally-enriching activities are built on deliberate skill-building to complement traditional academic instruction and spark Club members' passions.

**"WE KEEP OUR EYES ON THE HORIZON, WHEN THESE YOUNG PEOPLE AT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS WILL BE RUNNING THE DENVER COMMUNITY. IT'S VERY EXCITING TO THINK ABOUT THIS."**

## Hassan salem

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When I moved to Denver 25 years ago, I became familiar with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver and have engaged with the organization in a variety of ways. I have always enjoyed, and appreciated, the connection that I have had with the Boys & Girls Clubs.

**Q: Tell us more about the culture you strive to create at U.S. Bank.**

**HS:** U.S. Bank is a place where everyone is welcome. Our company cares about its employees and values their opinions, so we want to hear from every employee. Working collaboratively, being engaged in our community and celebrating our accomplishments are priorities.

**Q: What does U.S. Bank's community involvement look like?**

**HS:** It's vibrant and non-stop! U.S. Bank offers all employees up to 16 hours of paid time-off annually to volunteer in their community. We take advantage of that in Denver. Last year, 539 employees volunteered nearly 9,200 hours for local nonprofit groups.

**Q: Why is it important for business leaders and**

**their companies to give back to the Denver community?**

**HS:** It's vital that business leaders lead by example when encouraging employees to be involved in the community through volunteering.

**Q: How does partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs benefit your organization?**

**HS:** Our employees get out of the office and into the community to spend time with young people. We learn what makes them tick, what their needs and priorities are, how they feel about themselves, their friends, neighborhoods, school and so much more.

As individuals, I believe we learn more from the young people than they learn from us. We take what we learn from them and incorporate it into our daily banker activities – while meeting with customers, developing our products and services or implementing new and enhanced technologies. We keep our eyes on the horizon, when these young people at Boys & Girls Clubs will be running the Denver community. It's very exciting to think about this.

## ASPIRING FUTURE GOVERNOR PETER STRIVES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HIS COMMUNITY



**"I'VE LEARNED SO MUCH ABOUT WHO I AM AS A LEADER AND THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS FOR ME."**

*Upon meeting fifteen-year-old Peter for the first time, it is easy to be captivated by his warm smile that stretches from ear to ear. "I always walk around with a smile on my face," said Peter. "A smile can always brighten a person's day, make them feel calm and safe and allow them to come out of their comfort zone." This is exactly why many Boys & Girls Club members look up to Peter as a leader and role model.*

*Peter was born in Kinshasa Congo, Africa – a land which soon became war-torn forcing his family to seek refuge in Tanzania. In 2006, Peter's family moved to America. The transition was challenging and Peter was being bullied at school on a daily basis. It was not until he found the Noel Boys & Girls Club that he was able to settle comfortably into his surroundings. In the three short years that Peter has been a Club member, he has quickly embraced the Club members and staff as an extension of his family. "My Club is a place where I can truly be myself. I've learned so much about who I am as a leader and the possibilities are endless for me," said Peter.*

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From the time the sun rises to the time the sun sets, Peter can be found in school or his Club. When asked if he gets tired of this routine, he was quick to respond, **“Think of the people in your life that you love. Do you ever get tired of them? Probably not. Because you love them and everything that they do you find interesting. Well, that is what the Club is for me. I love it. The staff is always doing something new and exciting.”** Peter has used his time in the Club to form numerous friendships and build a support system for himself.

## HEART

Peter has transitioned the leadership skills that he has learned in the Club to helping him find success with his feet on the soccer field. Joining the high school junior varsity soccer team as a sophomore, he naturally stepped into the role of being team captain helping lead his team to a winning season. Looking forward, Peter hopes to one day get a scholarship to play soccer in college. **“I work harder to better myself,” said Peter. “My motto is never give up. Perseverance and hard work always succeed in the end.”**

## FEET

**“One of my greatest accomplishments in life is learning how to read,”** said Peter. **“Without an education I would never been able to escape into books when I am sad or depressed.”** Peter credits the Club for helping maintain his academic success. **“Since I met the Noel Boys & Girls Club staff, I have been getting better grades in my classes because the Club provides me with excellent mentors and tutors.”** Once Peter graduates from high school, he plans to study business in college with aspirations to one day start a nonprofit to help the local homeless population or to become the Governor of Colorado.

## MIND

## HANDS

With a strong handshake and a big smile on his face, Peter will introduce himself to just about anybody. Peter is a people-person at heart, excelling in a multitude of leadership and mentoring roles around the Club including participating in Peers Against Drunk Drivers and Students Working Against Tobacco. Peter can also often be found helping other students with their homework and is very involved with the community. He finds true joy in making a difference within his community. He has already completed over 300 volunteer hours. He is also participating on a committee for My Brother's Keeper Youth Summit, a program launched by President Barack Obama to create more opportunities for young men of color. **“I want to be on the front line fighting for a better understanding of black culture,” said Peter. “I want to spark the flame for change.”**

# Anatomy of A CLUB MEMBER

# POVERTY IS A COMPLEX STRESSOR WHICH INHIBITS EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

From a very young age, many young people are taught to believe in the American dream in which anyone – no matter what circumstances they were born into – can ‘make something of themselves’. For those young people who grow up in low-income households, however, the journey up the socioeconomic ladder is a much longer, harder and steeper climb than their wealthier peers have to make. Therefore, it becomes even more important for those of us who are in the business of helping low-income youth succeed, that we use every tool at our disposal: research tells us that a quality education and success in the classroom have the power to propel any child on an upward trajectory.

However, poverty is a complex physical and emotional stressor which has been proven to undermine academic performance. Children from low-income households often don't get the chance to go to preschool, which puts them on unequal footing when they enter kindergarten. What's worse is that the achievement gaps between these students and their peers only widens and becomes more difficult to close over time, as low-income students often go without positive educational reinforcement from parents, participation in extracurricular activities and exposure to a variety of subjects and careers that might spark their passion.

In Colorado, obtaining success in the classroom can be even more challenging for youth living at or below the poverty line. Still suffering from lingering effects of the most recent economic downturn, cutbacks in Colorado's spending on education have reduced high-quality professional staff, led to increased class sizes and left some schools with a lack of learning materials necessary to help children succeed. The gap between Colorado's per-student funding

to the national average has continued to grow; by 2012, this gap widened to more than \$2,700 per student. Given these conditions, some schools within metro Denver school districts are struggling to keep their students – especially the low-income students – up to speed.

Earning a high school diploma is a critical step to breaking the cycle of poverty. In Colorado, nearly one in four high school students fails to graduate on time, diminishing their future job prospects and economic security. In 2013, the median annual income for high school graduates in Colorado was nearly \$9,000 higher than the median income for those who did not graduate from high school or earn a GED.

By expanding the opportunity that low-income kids have to keep learning and growing after the school bell rings, we can begin to close the achievement and opportunity gap in our community. Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver is proud to partner with schools, other community based institutions, and foundations and businesses to keep all kids on the path to graduation and future success.

*“There is nothing smarter than investing in our children and youth from the day they are born to the day they are employed,” said Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock. “A world-class city needs an educated workforce to build and sustain its economy. Helping our young people graduate is essential to all our future success.”*

*Visit [www.GreatFuturesDenver.org](http://www.GreatFuturesDenver.org) to learn how Boys & Girls Clubs provides the necessary programming to help youth achieve academic success.*

The above statistics are cited from the following sources:

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BY 6TH GRADE, LOW-INCOME KIDS LIKELY HAVE MISSED OUT ON MORE THAN

**6,000**  
HOURS OF  
LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

LIKE SUMMER CAMPS, BEDTIME STORIES,  
FAMILY DINNERS AND TRIPS TO MUSEUMS.

**1** in **4**

COLORADO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS  
FAILS TO GRADUATE ON TIME.

**“HELPING OUR YOUNG  
PEOPLE GRADUATE IS  
ESSENTIAL TO ALL OUR  
FUTURE SUCCESS.”**

**-MAYOR MICHAEL B. HANCOCK**



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**

**METRO DENVER**

*Helping Kids. Building Communities.*

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President of U.S. Bank Colorado*



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