



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

METRO DENVER

fall newsletter
2015



Helping Kids. Building Communities.



"DENVER TAKES GREAT PRIDE IN OUR ACHIEVEMENTS THAT HAVE LED US TO BECOME A CITY THAT WORKS FOR ITS CHILDREN."



"DENVER'S YOUTH DESERVE AND REQUIRE A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT FROM EACH OF US."

-MAYOR MICHAEL B. HANCOCK

DENVER MAYOR MICHAEL B. HANCOCK *reflects on the impact that Boys & Girls Clubs has had on his life and shares the City of Denver's goals for the youth in our community.*

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

I grew up going to the local Boys & Girls Club in northeast Denver along with my sisters and brothers and many friends. This organization has been an invaluable partner to the city and families of Denver for decades. Today, they play an integral role in partnership with my administration to form and implement the Denver Afterschool Alliance. As one of Denver's organizational leaders in data collection and work around providing high-quality afterschool programming, they have been and continue to be a go-to partner when it comes to closing opportunity gaps in Denver's neighborhoods in need.

What are your top goals for youth in Denver?

Overall, my administration is working to help our children compete and succeed in the 21st century economy by providing them – no matter what neighborhood they grow up in – with quality education and afterschool and summer programs from cradle to career. The City and County of Denver has five very specific goals focused around youth development. They include:

1. Increasing the number of children who have access to high-quality early childhood experiences.
2. Increasing the number of third-grade students who can read at grade level.

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A LETTER FROM THE CEO



**"EVERY DAY, CLUB MEMBERS
RAISE THEIR HANDS TO
PARTICIPATE IN BUILDING A
BETTER TOMORROW."**

JOHN L. BARRY
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,

Our Clubs teach young people how to roll up their sleeves, dig in and become active participants in their community. Our leadership and volunteer service programs empower kids to become good leaders with a passion for helping others, and I am continuously impressed by how responsible and caring our Club members are.

Studies show that young people who engage in service do better in school, maintain positive relationships with adults and avoid risky behaviors. Through fun, life-changing programs, like Youth of the Year, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver encourages kids to lead, succeed and inspire.

By the year 2018, Boys & Girls Clubs of America estimates that 1.2 million Club teens will volunteer at least 6 million hours, resulting in a minimum of \$70 million economic impact in our communities. Here in Denver, our Club members volunteered more than 10,000 hours this past year alone.

Every day, Club members raise their hands to participate in building a better tomorrow. We hope that you will continue to partner with us to make the same commitment.

Very respectfully,

Character and Leadership at
Boys & Girls Clubs:

51%
OF CLUB MEMBERS
EXHIBITED POSITIVE
AND ADAPTIVE
LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

ON AVERAGE, TEEN
CLUB MEMBERS
VOLUNTEERED
2X
MORE OFTEN THAN
OTHER COLORADO
TEENS.

10,000+
HOURS OF COMMUNITY
SERVICE WERE
COMPLETED BY CLUB
MEMBERS THIS YEAR.

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

Through our programs and services, Boys & Girls Club members take an active role in their community and develop leadership skills.



Boys & Girls Club members organize and carry out hundreds of projects to lend a hand and make a difference in their schools, Clubs and neighborhoods each year.



When Club members become active participants in their community, they consistently demonstrate positive, productive coping techniques and high levels of responsibility.



Club members can develop leadership skills in many ways, including serving as a peer mentor or participating in the national Youth of the Year program. These experiences promote a lifelong commitment to service.

"IT'S CRUCIAL FOR KIDS IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD TO HAVE CONTINUOUS ACCESS TO QUALITY PROGRAMMING AROUND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT."

3. Decreasing the number of disconnected youth.
4. Increasing the number of students who have access to and complete a post-secondary pathway and obtain employment.
5. Increasing the percentage of children who are at a healthy weight.

How is Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver helping to achieve these goals?

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver provides our youth with a diverse set of programs, many of which provide academic support, athletic and physical fitness opportunities, healthy social-emotional experiences and programming focused on building the skills necessary to become 21st century leaders.

How can we develop the next generation of leaders?

Many youth-serving organizations, including the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver, are on the right path toward developing the next generation of leaders. We need to continue to build partnerships and leverage resources to achieve

both short- and long-term goals that lead to improved outcomes for our kids. Denver takes great pride in our achievements that have led us to become a city that works for its children. Collectively, we are building a workforce for Colorado's future. Preparing our children for academic success and providing access to opportunities that increase their skills and abilities will open doors for the next generation of leaders.

What is the most important thing people can do to support kids in our community?

Denver's youth deserve and require a long-term commitment from each of us, including families, city officials, community and business leaders, educational institutions and other youth-serving organizations. It's crucial for kids in every neighborhood to have continuous access to quality programming around youth development. This requires an increase or expansion in stabilizing funding sources. Whatever we do, we have to get involved and stay involved.

YOUNG MENTOR INGRID HELPS FELLOW CLUB MEMBERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Fourteen-year-old Ingrid is a true social butterfly. On any given day, she can be found floating throughout every corner of the Suncor Boys & Girls Club in Commerce City talking to friends, mentoring younger Club members and helping the staff. The strong relationships that Ingrid has developed with her peers and Club staff have helped shape her focus for a promising future. "The Club has helped me realize my potential and never give up," said Ingrid.

In 2004, Ingrid's family dynamics shifted when her parents got divorced. Ingrid had to learn how to cope when faced with this major life change and turned to her Boys & Girls Club for support. "The Club helps me learn from the challenges that life presents," said Ingrid. "It helps me process situations quicker and focus on what matters most."

Aspiring to attend college one day, the notion of never giving up is crucial for Ingrid. As life often presents challenges, over the past twelve years Ingrid has relied on the steady presence of her Club to guide her as she pursues her college dream.

"THE CLUB HAS HELPED ME REALIZE MY POTENTIAL AND NEVER GIVE UP."

With an open heart and a strong sense of confidence, Ingrid warmly welcomes new opportunities and experiences. At only six years old, she walked into the Club for the first time without an ounce of fear. Two years later, she spent a week in the mountains during her first summer at Gates Camp. She loved it so much that she never once got homesick. By age ten, Ingrid began participating in the Youth of the Year competition only to find that she loves what some of the other candidates fear – the rigorous interview process. **“The interviews are fun. The judges ask me a lot of questions and I get to learn a lot about them too!”**

HEART

Finding opportunities to learn across all spectrums of life, Ingrid's feet often carry her into the Club gym or outside to the futsal court. Ingrid enjoys participating in many sports. While shuffling her feet on the basketball court, hustling up and down the soccer field or running around the track, participating in athletics has taught Ingrid the importance of communication and working as a team. She has also learned to never be scared. **“Just enjoy the game and be free,”** said Ingrid.

FEET

MIND

The journey from Ingrid's school to the Club's Learning Center is a mere brisk walk. Taking on a heavier homework load as a freshman in high school, this proximity helps Ingrid excel academically. “During the school year the Learning Center is the first place that I go almost every time I walk into the Club,” said Ingrid. **“I like to get my homework done before I participate in any other programs.”** The Learning Center offers ample resources including guidance from staff members to help Ingrid maintain a high GPA. “The staff helps me with my homework,” recounts Ingrid. “They are always there for me when I need them.”

HANDS

Between balancing school, sports and participating in several leadership programs, Ingrid has her hands full. **Ingrid's long-term commitment to her Boys & Girls Club has positioned her as a leader and mentor.** Both the younger and older members look up to Ingrid and come to her when they need help. As president of Torch Club, a character and leadership program for junior high school students, Ingrid learned how to organize projects and manage her peers to successfully execute a variety of different fundraising events. Over the course of the next four years, Ingrid hopes to become a Counselor-In-Training at Gates Camp to serve as a mentor to younger campers. She also plans to join the Keystone Club, a leadership group for Club teens.

Anatomy of A CLUB MEMBER

EMPOWERING YOUTH TO BECOME AGENTS OF CHANGE

The dawn of the 21st century has sparked great changes to our society and youth culture. On a global scale, we are more interconnected via technology and there has been an increase in the overall pace of life, resulting in a shift in how we communicate and interact. With this shift comes an increased challenge to ensure that all youth have what they need to successfully meet the complex challenges of young adulthood.

To develop future leaders with strong character, educators and policy makers have increasingly turned to civic engagement as a key indicator in the measurement of a child's character. It is believed that service-learning – or working to make a difference in our communities and developing the skills, knowledge, values and motivation to make that difference – is a key strategy for ensuring that children are equipped to become the future leaders who will help to break the cycle of poverty for their communities.

Encouraging civic engagement is particularly vital amongst youth growing up in low-income households as they often lack access to outlets that encourage positive developmental experiences. Poverty-stricken neighborhoods leave youth with fewer opportunities to develop strong, supportive and sustained relationships with adults and peers. As a result, youth are more likely to feel disconnected from their community and have a difficult time adapting to the changing demands of various settings, cultures and expectations.

Research indicates that the positive outcomes of youth engagement – or meaningful participation and sustained involvement of a young person in an activity, with a focus outside of him or herself – are plentiful. During the act of civic engagement, youth develop meaningful

positive relationships with adults in their community and demonstrate better social and emotional development. This creates a sense of belonging and leads to a significant decrease in behavioral issues. Youth who are engaged in their community are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, drop out of high school or be involved in criminal activity.

Thus, the simple act of encouraging kids to engage in their community can help facilitate future upward social and economic mobility to help strengthen communities and create economic resilience. Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver supports this framework through a variety of leadership programs and service-learning opportunities for youth. Club members have the opportunity to develop leadership skills in many ways, including holding a paid job at the Club and learning to work alongside our adult staff members and volunteers from the community, serving as formal mentors and tutors for younger Club members, or organizing and leading community service trips to local homeless shelters and senior living centers. These types of experiences can help young adults transition more smoothly to adulthood and promote a lifelong commitment to service.

Visit www.GreatFuturesDenver.org to learn more on how Boys & Girls Clubs helps to positively shape the lives of youth and communities that need us most.

The above statistics are cited from the following sources:

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YOUTH WHO PERFORMED VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE WERE

19%
MORE LIKELY

TO GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE THAN THOSE WHO DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SERVICE.

YOUTH WITH AT LEAST ONE PARENT WHO VOLUNTEERS ARE NEARLY

3x
MORE LIKELY

TO BE REGULAR VOLUNTEERS THAN YOUTH FROM NON-VOLUNTEER HOUSEHOLDS.

48%
OF METRO DENVER CLUB TEENS VOLUNTEER ON A MONTHLY BASIS.



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Program Support Center

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Michael B. Hancock*



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