



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

METRO DENVER

spring newsletter
2016



Helping Kids. Building Communities.



"TO THE EXTENT THAT I CAN CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHERS GIVES ME THE SENSE OF PURPOSE TO GIVE BACK."



"THERE ARE SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE TO BECOME ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH."

-LIBBY ANSCHUTZ

Musician and community advocate LIBBY ANSCHUTZ reflects on her involvement with Boys & Girls Clubs and the importance of giving back.

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

I have been a long-time supporter of the work of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver. I have served as a member of the Board of Directors for the past five years.

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

I think it is important to just get people engaged. There are so many opportunities for people to become advocates for youth, donate their time and bring thought leadership to determine how we can solve some of the chronic issues in our education system.

Music is an important part of your life. How do you use music to give back to the community?

I've assembled a band over the past few years. Our name is Tracksuit Wedding and we just released our

first album. We love playing shows that benefit nonprofit organizations and help the community because we get to have fun and give back at the same time!

Your family has a long philanthropic track record, but why do you personally feel it is important to give back?

I was blessed to have loving, supportive parents who nurtured me and created opportunities for me. To the extent that I can create opportunities for others gives me the sense of purpose to give back.

If you were to share a lesson or piece of advice with Boys & Girls Club members, what would it be?

Once you decide what your passion is, become an expert on how to communicate that passion to others. Being able to clearly articulate your personal mission is powerful.

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A LETTER FROM THE CEO



"WE WANT TO MAKE THE HEALTHY CHOICE THE EASY CHOICE FOR OUR CLUB MEMBERS."

JOHN L. BARRY
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends,

We tend to think that the outdoor lifestyle is second nature to anyone living in Colorado and our state is often cited as being one of the healthiest states in the nation. However, research indicates that in the last two decades childhood has moved indoors – even in Colorado. When kids spend the majority of their time inside, they typically engage in activities that require little to no physical activity. For example, the average child spends 44 hours per week staring at the television, phone and other electronic devices.

Boys & Girls Clubs is there for kids during critical developmental stages in their lives. We have a responsibility to inform and educate our Club members in order to help them make healthy decisions that support physical fitness, inspire positive food choices and build mental and emotional well-being. Through our sports programs, field trips and outdoor activities, we give kids the opportunity to be active, spend time outside and reinforce positive healthy behaviors.

It's our job to set every kid on a path towards a great future and being physically active is a critical part of the equation. Through our Healthy Lifestyles programs, we want to make the healthy choice the easy choice for our Club members.

Very respectfully,

Healthy Lifestyles at
Boys & Girls Clubs
of Metro Denver:

74%
OF CLUB MEMBERS
EXERCISE FOUR TIMES
PER WEEK OR MORE.

MORE THAN
800
CLUB MEMBERS
ARE EXPOSED TO
ADVENTURE-BASED
HEALTH PROGRAMS
EACH YEAR.

2,000
CLUB MEMBERS
COMPETE ON SPORTS
TEAMS AT CLUBS
EACH YEAR.

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

With your support, our Healthy Lifestyles programs equip youth with the tools they need to make healthy choices and reach their full potential.



We provide healthy snacks and a balanced meal every day to our Club members. In fact, frequent Club attendees ate unhealthy foods less often than their peers.



Each summer, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver takes 500 kids to Gates Camp where kids connect with the natural world they are too often removed from.



Healthy choices need to be reinforced at home, so we host family cooking classes at the Clubs. The classes help families make low-cost everyday meals in a healthier way.

ANNUAL REPORT

Learn more about the impact of your generous support in our 2015 Annual Report.

Read it online at www.bgcmd.org/AR2015

YOU CAN LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY FOR KIDS

When you support Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver through a planned gift, you will ensure that future generations of Club members will have opportunities to be guided, to be empowered, and to participate in programs that help them grow into healthy, caring, responsible adults. Our goal is to help you leave a legacy in a way that benefits you, your family and young people in our community now and for years to come.

There are several ways you can make planned gifts to Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver and enjoy tax benefits. Here are some options to consider:

Charitable Bequests: Designate Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver as a beneficiary of your assets by will, trust or other instrument. A bequest can be tailored to almost any set of circumstances, and it provides an unlimited deduction for tax purposes.

Life Insurance: A gift of a life insurance policy,

or simply naming Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver as a beneficiary of your bank account, allows you to make a major gift for a modest cost.

Retirement Accounts: By designating Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver as the beneficiary of all or a percentage of your IRA or any other qualified retirement account such as a 401(k), 403(b) or pension account, you can make a substantial gift while avoiding income and estate taxes.

Artwork and Other Personal Property: You may receive gift credit and an immediate charitable income tax deduction, typically for the appraised value of your gift.

There are many other ways you can invest in your future and the future of our members. Please contact us to determine the best planned giving options for you and your family. For more information, contact legacy@bgcmd.org or 303-446-6802.



CLUB MEMBER AARON SETS A POSITIVE EXAMPLE OF DETERMINATION AND RESPECT



"KIDS NEED A PLACE TO TURN TO WHERE PEOPLE CARE. AND FOR ME, THAT PLACE IS BOYS & GIRLS CLUB."

Within the span of three short years, everything in Aaron's life changed. At the age of ten, Aaron lost her mother to a terminal illness. With few coping resources to help her deal with something of that magnitude, it did not take long for depression to sink in. Shortly after her mother's death, Aaron's father uprooted his four children and moved to Denver for a fresh start and new opportunities. This transition also marked the end of her home school era when Aaron and her siblings were enrolled in public school. Aaron began seventh grade in a different school environment in a new city with no friends.

Depressed and lonely, it was not until Aaron found the Johnson Boys & Girls Club that her life in Denver started to improve. "Before I started going to the Boys & Girls Clubs, I was taught to never trust strangers," said Aaron. "And yet from day one at the Club, in this strange building filled with complete strangers, the staff actually cared about me. They helped me realize that I was worth it and that I was not the only one who had bad things happen to them in life."

Now, five years later, Aaron looks forward to going to the Club every day. It is the one place that she knows she can go and not be judged. The Club has helped Aaron cope with her losses and overcome her depression. Now, she participates in a plethora of programs that are helping her excel in school, develop leadership skills and explore future options.

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Aaron is wildly passionate about many topics. Striking a chord deep within her heart, perhaps her main passion is promoting equality. Aaron has been a victim of bullying and has experienced what it feels like to be isolated and judged. These tough experiences have motivated her to advocate for equal rights. Aaron uses her role as a Peer Leader at the Club to encourage her fellow Club members to treat each other with respect. **“It is important to celebrate people that are different from you,” said Aaron. “I teach the younger Club members to have acceptance and tolerance for all people.”** Seeing the ripple effect of these lessons and how the Club members interact with one another is one of the most rewarding experiences for Aaron.

HEART

MIND

Throughout Aaron’s childhood, her mind has been shaped from a myriad of educational outlets. Her academic foundation was built by her father, who home-schooled Aaron until she was 13. Aaron then started attending public school where she was exposed to different teaching styles and social scenes. Now, as a junior in high school, Aaron is tackling college classes and she often turns to the Club’s Learning Center to get homework help and stay ahead of the curve. She is currently exploring her future options, which she hopes will include a college education, work and travel. **“I want to be sure that I am passionate about what I choose to pursue in my studies,” said Aaron. “You can learn a lot through trial and error and seeking different life experiences.”**

Just one conversation with Aaron makes it immediately evident that she is poised and fit for the stage. What better place to take her first steps on stage than at the Club! Aaron got her feet wet in the acting world when she played the Cowardly Lion in the Club’s production of *The Wizard of Oz*. Aaron then played the Snow Queen in a play adapted from the movie *Frozen*. In spite of her apparent confidence on stage, she admits that her hands clench when she looks out into the audience before the curtain rises. When the nerves sink in Aaron said, **“I usually start jumping around to try and shake the nerves away. Then I find a spot that I can sit up high and strike a ‘boss pose’ to assert a sense of confidence.”**

FEET

HANDS

Aaron never hesitates to lend a helping hand in the Learning Center – one of her favorite rooms in the Club. Tessa, the Club’s Education Specialist, has had a tremendous impact on Aaron as a mentor, educator and accepting friend who has created a safe space for all Club members. **“Kids need a place to turn to where people care. And for me, that place is the Boys & Girls Club,” said Aaron. “It is clear that the Club staff is here because they truly want to spark a change.”** Inspired by the staff, Aaron mentors younger Club members in the Learning Center and helps them with their reading and homework. Aaron’s dedication and hard work helped her become the Johnson Club’s 2016 Senior Youth of the Year winner.

Anatomy of A CLUB MEMBER

RECONNECTING YOUTH WITH THE OUTDOORS

With over 300 days of sunshine forecasted in Colorado each year, the draw to spend time in the great outdoors is insurmountable. Unfortunately for some youth, access to quality, safe green spaces and outdoor recreational opportunities is not always readily available in metro Denver neighborhoods. With less than a third of U.S. youth meeting federal physical activity aerobic guidelines, this poses as a major public health dilemma. The issue deepens for low-income and ethnic minority children as studies have shown that this population receives even less contact with nature than white middle-income children. But why? Not for the lack of quantity of parks, but for lack of quality.

For hundreds of years, city planners have developed neighborhoods to include open spaces, urban greenery and parks. However, disadvantaged neighborhoods often lack those health-promoting and activity-inviting environmental resources. The parks found in low-income neighborhoods are often neglected by maintenance crews and they tend to have fewer amenities like tables, fountains and cycling paths. Parks in low-income neighborhoods are also perceived to be less safe due to higher crime rates in surrounding areas.

In recent decades, amidst changing technological and social landscapes, youth are spending incrementally more time indoors leading to inactivity and epidemic levels of childhood obesity. By spending more time inside, kids are not capitalizing on the important health benefits gained through participation in outdoor recreational activities. Studies have shown that repeated contact with nature helps foster mental and physical health among young people. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has also revealed that with enhanced access to safe outdoor green spaces and parks, physical activity levels increase with 25.6 percent of people exercising three or more days per week.

Reconnecting youth with outdoor environments is critical to the health of future generations.

Community leaders and organizations have started to increase their efforts to make outdoor environments more accessible for kids and families. For example, Denver's city planners have begun to target several disadvantaged neighborhoods, like Sun Valley where more than 70 percent of residents live below the poverty line, for environmental-friendly redevelopment projects that including building better parks and open spaces. Various youth organizations throughout Denver have also continued to collaborate and create affordable, accessible and enticing reasons for youth to commit more of their free time to being outside.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver (BGCMD) is partnering on several initiatives to develop green spaces and give more youth opportunities for outdoor connection. One example is the Youth Development Sports Park in Adams County which will be built adjacent to the Suncor Boys & Girls Club. Upon completion of construction, the sports park will serve as a multi-use field for both Club and community members with the intention of encouraging kids to live an active and healthy life.

Another example is Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver's partnership with Lincoln Hills. The two organizations have teamed up to create opportunities for kids to venture outside and enjoy nature. BGCMD's Outdoor Education Program offers youth year-round opportunities including gardening, back country adventures and a week-long outdoor immersion at Gates Camp, a residential summer camp. Partnering with BGCMD, Lincoln Hills provides funding to support this programming including one full-time outdoor education staff member, three school buses to be used for transportation and annually welcomes Club members into their Lincoln Hills Cares Outdoor Education Program.

Through these programs, Boys & Girls Clubs aims to empower kids to live healthy lives and become lifelong outdoor adventurers.

The above statistics are cited from for following sources:

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The Youth Development Sports Park was funded in part with proceeds from the Adams County Open Space Sales Tax. The Adams County Open Space Sales Tax was passed by Adams County voters in 1999, and reauthorized in November 2004, to be extended until December 31, 2026.

LOW-INCOME
NEIGHBORHOODS ARE
50%
LESS LIKELY
TO HAVE ACCESSIBLE
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
IN THEIR COMMUNITY.

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN
CHILD SPENDS
44 HOURS
PER WEEK
STARING AT SOME KIND OF
ELECTRONIC SCREEN.

27%
OF KIDS DO NOT SPEND
TIME OUTSIDE BECAUSE
THEIR NEIGHBORHOOD
LACKS ACCESS TO
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

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Up close with Libby Anschutz



Reconnecting youth with the outdoors



Meet Club Member Aaron - role model, advocate and Club mentor