



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

METRO DENVER

SPRING 2020



FINDING NEW WAYS TO SERVE OUR COMMUNITY

COVID-19 Organization Update

Dear Friends,

Our dedication to young people and their families does not waver in times of crisis, such as the pandemic we are facing today. Though the news is quickly changing, our commitment to our Club kids and families is steadfast – just as it has been for nearly 60 years, and as it will be for the next 60.

The importance of our work is more evident now than ever before; we serve as a vital resource to a vulnerable population that often lacks access to proper healthcare, food choices and transportation. That's why we are leading with innovative, solution-focused strategies to meet the needs of our Club kids and families, in real-time.

Right now, we are focusing on three primary areas: virtual programming, essential resources for our Club kids and families, and mental health supports.

As schools offer remote learning, we are complementing the school day by offering virtual afterschool programming to all Club members. In April, we began distributing essential items like food and hygiene products for our families with the greatest need.

Our six social workers are supporting our families virtually, providing mental health support and resource navigation during this time of extreme pressure. While providing direct services, our mental health team is also gaining an understanding of the most pressing needs in our community, so we can adapt and respond accordingly.

Thanks to you, our donors, partners and volunteers, who remain committed to our Clubs during this time. With your support, we will continue to serve the children who need us, both now and in the months and years ahead.

Sincerely,

Erin Porteous
CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver



OUR KIDS REACH NEW HEIGHTS!

World-Class Rock Climber Kevin Jorgeson Opens Our First Climbing Wall



Professional climber Kevin Jorgeson cuts the ribbon on Boys & Girls Clubs' new climbing wall.

"When you put in something like a climbing wall, it's only as successful as the people who are enthusiastic about it and are going to be working with it every single day," Jorgeson said. "So, I think this program is in the best hands that we could ask for."

The climbing wall will be a wonderful and thrilling addition to the Owen Club. Boys & Girls Clubs' outdoor education team will also be able to transport kids from other Clubs across the city, so every member will have access to the wall.

For many of the families we serve, activities like camping, skiing and climbing are out of reach. Through Boys & Girls Clubs, our members have access to outdoor education, including hiking, white water rafting, camping, snowboarding and skiing. And now, our Club kids can add indoor rock climbing to that list!

Sincere thanks to 1climb and our partners who made it possible for us to provide this incredible opportunity for thousands of kids. And who knows? It's possible the next Kevin Jorgeson is one of our Club members, just waiting for the chance to soar.



Our Boys & Girls Club members have another way to reach for the sky: through their brand-new rock climbing wall! Installed in late 2019 at the Owen Boys & Girls Club, our first climbing wall now offers kids the opportunity to develop character, leadership skills, social-emotional skills, self-confidence and physical fitness.

The climbing wall was installed as part of a partnership with The 1Climb Foundation, a non-profit organization founded by professional rock climber Kevin Jorgeson. 1Climb aims to introduce 100,000 young people to the sport of climbing, and they have made significant progress towards this goal by partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs. The new wall was donated by El Cap, one of the largest operators of indoor climbing facilities in the U.S. At the grand opening, our Club kids got the rare opportunity to climb with Jorgeson, who shared his own excitement about the day.



The Power of Community

One of the first challenges Sierra had to overcome was shyness.

"I couldn't even talk with people," recalled 15-year-old Sierra, but support at her Boys & Girls Club changed that. "Everyone here pushed me to be more outgoing. Now, I have lots of friends here. We've become like a big family."

Sierra joined the Club when she was 8 and loved it right away. She became a regular in the art room, and she attended daily "Power Hour," a Club program with homework help, tutoring and activities that helped her earn good grades. But her daily routines also included medical challenges, and a few years ago, doctors told her she needed an operation.

"Surprisingly, I wasn't scared about the surgery," she said. Sierra says years of hospital visits made her comfortable, even in the operating room. "I was more worried about missing activities and the toll on my social and academic life."

But after the operation, Sierra was greeted with a surprise. "My mom came in with a box filled with letters from my friends from the Club. The letters carried messages of support and motivation to get well soon. It was really sweet. I was overwhelmed by how much people cared for me."



Sierra says the Club staff and community supported her family throughout the entire time. Sierra came back to the Club, enjoying activities with her friends again and giving back by helping younger members with homework in the Learning Center. She plans to keep helping others.

"I want to be an occupational therapist. I don't know where I'd be today without their help. They made me feel successful. I want to help other people in the same way."

When you visit a Boys & Girls Club during normal circumstances, you'll see kids running in our doors after school. You'll see teens lacing up for a basketball game while younger kids run off the court after a game of dodge ball. You'll see kids focused on their projects in the STEM Lab. You'll see creativity coming to life in our Art Room.

But, in the spaces in between these activities are things you can't see. Many of our kids carry invisible stories with them. They are growing up with trauma, hunger, stress and other adverse childhood experiences.

We help kids with academics, sports, character-building – *and* we know they also have needs when it comes to their social, emotional and mental health.

We addressed this by training our frontline staff on social-emotional skills they can incorporate into daily programs. After a successful one-year program, we now have six social workers integrated into the Club teams. They offer individual and group therapy, social and emotional learning programs and support Club staff to prevent burnout and secondary trauma.

Our vision is that our mental health services will continue to expand – providing accessible, culturally-competent, affordable and trauma-informed care. This includes making sure every Club member has access to a social worker.

So that, on any given day, what you don't see is just as important as what you do see. Between games, homework, sports and art projects, those invisible spaces are filled with the mental and emotional supports that allow kids to truly thrive.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

METRO DENVER

Helping Kids. Building Communities.

Program Support Center

2017 West 9th Avenue, Denver, CO 80204

IN THIS ISSUE:



Reaching
New Heights



The Power
of Community



The Spaces
In Between

Groceries for You. Boys & Girls Clubs for Them.

Support **Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver** everytime you shop at King Soopers at no additional charge!

Here's How:

1. Sign in or create your King Soopers account at kingsoopers.com/signin
2. Under the “**Save**” menu, select “**King Soopers Community Rewards.**”
3. Use the “**Find an Organization**” field to search for **Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver** or search for **CI271**.
4. Click “**Enroll**” to support our Club kids every time you shop.



GreatFuturesDenver.org



@BGCMD



@BGMetroDenver