



Thank You!

Your support makes a difference. Instead of going straight home from school, kids like Dalvy, age 13, and Eddie, age 10, are dropped off at the Boys & Girls Club. As they walk through the doors, they are greeted right away by staff who know them by name. From there, Dalvy and Eddie head to one of many program areas where they know that in addition to seeing their friends, they will have opportunities to learn and grow.

Eddie says *"I like that the Boys & Girls Club has helped me balance my school work and sports so I can be good at both."*

Because of you, kids at the Club, 95% of whom come from low income families, have access to music lessons, yoga instruction, mentoring and a healthy meal each day after school. Selina, age 10 shares that *"yoga with One for Health made me forget about any bad things that are going on in my life."*

Because you have shown how much you care about their future, more kids than ever are coming to the Club. Thank you for your commitment to the young people of Lowell, they would not have the opportunities they need to start their great future without you. - **Joe Hungler**, Executive Director

Sophia and Serena

Sophia, age 8 and Serena, age 10 were removed from their family early this year and spent the spring and summer months being shuttled through various living situations. In late June they were finally placed in foster homes, but sadly, it was not together. Sophia is living with a family in Lowell, while Serena is with her uncle in Billerica. The sisters miss one another terribly, and the Boys & Girls Club was the one place they got to see one another over the summer. Sophia recently shared

that she loves coming to the Club, where she has made new friends (she is not originally from Lowell). She especially enjoys going to the park, playing games, and "turning cartwheels". When asked which staff member she enjoys most, she smiles and says *"Joey – he is really nice and smart too."* Although Sophia and Serena weren't in the same activity group due to the difference their ages, Sophia says it's really nice to see her sister, because *"I don't get to see her much."* What do they do when they are both at the Club? *"Give each other hugs."*



Sophia, Age 8, poses with her favorite staff member, Joey Banh

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS to our Summer Program Campaign made it possible for these two sisters to spend time together once again. Without your assistance, they would not have been able to participate, as even our low fee of \$30 per week was out of reach for their foster families. Your help ensures that no child is ever turned away from our programs due to financial constraints, and it made the summer special for Sophia and Serena despite all they've been through.

The Open Door

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell • Fall 2016



Teen members put together care packages



Volunteers helped organize storage for the many personal care items donated.

Personal Care Drive

What do you need? A simple question that our staff often ask our members, and that our donors ask our staff. This spring, the answer was “basic hygiene products.” The response was amazing. The *Personal Care Drive*, coordinated by individual volunteers, brought in thousands of hygiene items that are being distributed directly to youth in our Club. Many of our teens cannot afford essential items that most of us take for granted – deodorant, new socks, shampoo... even toothpaste or toothbrushes. It can be embarrassing to admit this, and have others notice that you are not able to properly care for yourself.

Thanks to these efforts, when we are leading programs such as **Girl Talk** – a program for teen girls to learn about and discuss many topics related to adolescence, bodily changes, drugs and alcohol, healthy relationships and body image, or **Sky Program** for the teen boys which covers many of the same topics, our staff can discuss the importance of personal hygiene and bodily changes and give out the toiletries to participants. In addition, staff who notice that a member is struggling with personal hygiene can offer help in a subtle and caring way. ■

ON THE ROAD TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

“You’ve got to go to college if you want to get a good job”- teenagers hear this from adults all the time. But it can be hard to imagine going to college if you have never seen a college campus and if few in your neighborhood have a degree. Last year, with generous donations to our #GivingTuesday campaign (with matching gifts from Align Credit Union and Toyota Financial Services), and gifts to our staff Bike-A-Thon event, a van was purchased to transport Club members on field trips, then a second van was donated for the same purpose. Now, teens participating in our Diplomas 2 Degrees program can visit area colleges. Last spring our teens toured 5 different campuses – UMass Dartmouth, UMass Lowell, Daniel Webster College, Southern New Hampshire University and the College of the Holy Cross. Julian L, age 15, describes seeing these different colleges as kind of a lightbulb moment – suddenly, all the things he’d heard about college made sense, and he could envision himself being at one of these campuses.

GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF GREATER LOWELL**

In addition to college campus visits, having two vans allows our kids to travel many other places they might not have the chance to otherwise. Our Music Clubhouse attended performances in Lawrence, Methuen and Waltham – and performed at the National Park Service 100th Anniversary celebration, Peace in the Park and at a Lowell Spinners Game. Club members were exposed to cultural experiences like a showing of a play at the MRT, the Merrimack Valley Arts Festival, Whistler House museum, and the Lowell Folk Festival to name a few. Teens were able to provide community service at the Lowell MLK Day festivities, Mill City Grows and visit the State House. This is just a few of the many opportunities these vans have enabled our Club members to take part in – something that couldn't have happened this time last year.

Your support of our campaign to purchase a new van means that more kids can participate in travel sports teams, motivating them to work hard. *"I enjoy being able to play different teams from around Massachusetts. We have played basketball in places like Brockton, Waltham, and Salem and it has been really fun"* says Dalvy. The vans will also make a new community internship program possible, providing members much needed experience for their resumes. ■



A group of *Diplomas 2 Degrees* participants at Daniel Webster College



Jose, Age 15, plays at the National Park Centennial celebration at Tyler Park.



A visit to SNHU offers Club members their first look at a college campus.



Ryley, Age 9, enjoying breakfast at the Club this summer



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What's For Dinner?

Ryley started coming to the Boys & Girls Club in the second grade. Now he is in the 4th grade, and just spent his 2nd summer at the Club. He loves everything at the Club, but playing knockout in the gym and four square in the games room are his favorites. A very important part of his Club experience is the Healthy Meals program. *"Sally is really nice, she's a good cook."* he says about Nutrition Director Sally Thayer.

Sally often sees Ryley's mother when she picks him up from the Boys & Girls Club each day after work. Ryley's mother is grateful that she really only has to give him a snack at night which allows them to spend more quality time together instead of having him sit in front of the T.V. while she tries to put a meal together. Ryley's mother has also told Sally that she would love to take cooking lessons from her because all Ryley talks about is how good Sally's food is. In turn, Sally has invited her to participate in the new family Healthy Cooking Workshops that will be introduced at our Boys & Girls Club this fall.

Does Ryley understand that his Boys & Girls Club experience is made possible by people in our community who care about him and the other kids in the Club – "yes" he says quietly with gentle nod. When asked what he'd like to say to our donors, Ryley says a simple "thank you." Without the Club, Ryley says he'd have spent the summer *"sitting inside all day, because my mom works."* Instead, because of you, he gets to enjoy Sally's meals and be influenced by staff like Paul, Chris, Steve, Joey, Ben and Chyna who he says *"...are really nice. They are good staff. They pay attention to the kids and keep us safe."* ■



225 members each day enjoy a nutritious dinner at the Club.

Want to see first-hand how your contributions impact young lives?

Come take a tour – we promise you will be amazed by what you have accomplished.

Call Angel Brunelle at 978-458-4526 ext. 19 or email abrunelle@lbgc.org to set up a time to visit.