



# The Open Door

GREAT  
FUTURES  
LOWELL



## Reading accomplished

The latest post from the [Blue Door Blog](#)

Do you remember your favorite childhood book – that one that you read over and over until the cover wore down? Who were the characters that you loved so much that you imagined living in their world?

Here at the Boys & Girls Club, we know that reading regularly as a young person supports academic success, and is one of the best ways to develop empathy. Stories can introduce children to a diversity of people, places, cultures and ideas – broadening their understanding of the world around them. **Reading helps them imagine the adult they might become someday – and the adventures they might like to have.**

Access to reading materials has gotten easier for Club members with the recent partnership with Education



The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell is on [TikTok!](#)

Follow us at [@Bgcgllowell](#)

You will find Club member generated content, which is sure to be entertaining as well as informative!

Comes First.

Read More



Our annual Youth of the Year Celebration is taking place on March 21st. [Click here](#) for more information.

## More than a Game



*“Basketball players, like people in the world at large, must navigate shared space. In so doing, they must closely observe and successfully understand each other... In basketball (as opposed to other team sports), players switch between offense and defense in an instant; there’s no separate unit to do one or the other.”\**

When asked her thoughts on this, Sports & Fitness Manager (and our Travel Basketball Team’s head coach) Devonna “D” Williams agrees, saying “Absolutely. I am the person I am today because of basketball” (Read more about D [here](#))

D goes on to share this about her approach to coaching the Boys & Girls Club travel basketball team “I am focusing on three things - leadership, accountability and communication. I tell my players that I am selecting team captains based on what they bring to the table as a person, as a player and as a team member. This is helping them see that they do have leadership potential, even if they aren’t scoring the most points each game. They are starting to believe in themselves as leaders, starting to take more risks and aren’t as afraid to make mistakes. These are valuable life lessons that these players will carry with them into adulthood.”

*“(In basketball) no one is prohibited from going*





Peace League is a signature BGCGL basketball league for teens, founded by William "Billy G" Gilmore. For more than 15 years, over 100 youth from Lowell come out to compete in the Peace League in the summer. You can follow the Peace League on Instagram at [@lbgcpeaceleague](https://www.instagram.com/lbgcpeaceleague).

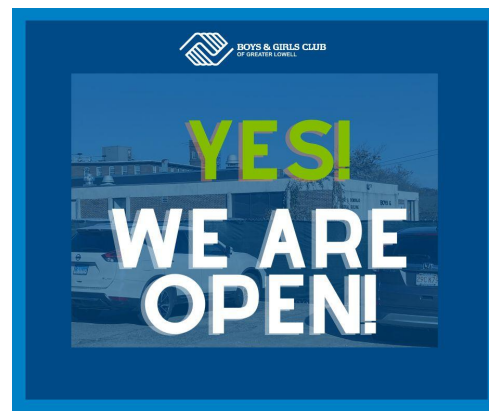
to any particular place on the court, or doing more or less than anyone else. In basketball, everyone on the court is intimately—in a relational and spatial sense—tied to everyone else.”\*

At the Boys & Girls Club, being part of the basketball team is more than practice and games. Players must also participate in MVP (Motivation, Vision, Preparation), a program designed to help support their academic success as well as help them make a plan for their future. By focusing on the whole player, Club staff help members practice responsibility (showing up for practice and MVP), as well as how to become better citizens.

Stay tuned as we plan to dive deeper into how basketball is more than a game, but a way to teach young people valuable life skills that can change their lives and the lives of those around them.

\*From the article ["How Basketball Can Save the World" \(NYU Professor David Hollander Explores the Possibilities in New Book\)"](#)

*It was an intentional choice to keep the Club open during the construction and renovation project. The [project architect](#) and [General Contractor](#) both designed and planned the project knowing this would be the case. It was important that service be interrupted as minimally as possible (meaning, that we didn't close the Boys & Girls Club during construction) and the search for an alternative, temporary space did not yield a site that was large enough and flexible enough to accommodate the volume and breadth of services provided at the Club.*



Last November, we announced a big change at the Boys & Girls Club (one of many over the past several years). Construction on the exterior of the building had begun, and the front entrances would no longer be accessible. While excited that the plan to expand and improve the Club had begun, staff were faced with the challenge of figuring out how to create a smooth and safe drop off and pick up process for Club members and families now that the main entrance was to be closed off.



Due to the scope of the project, one entrance was now available to the main Club building, the new door to the Community Center and Cafe (currently used as a multipurpose room). This entrance is only accessible by a small, city street called Eagle Court. Clearly this posed a challenge to figure out how to safely and efficiently manage member drop-off and pick-up.

A flurry of brainstorming and discussion took place, and a plan was communicated to all staff and Club families. Club members would arrive and depart at the top of Eagle Court, and be met by Club staff who would open the locked door upon their arrival. Additionally, caregivers would be asked to wait at the top of Eagle Court for their child to be dismissed, in order to limit traffic flow down Eagle Court. A staff member is now positioned at the top of Eagle Court each day between 3 and 6 PM to assist caregivers, greet members during drop off, and ensure that members safely travel to and from the entrance.

A request for patience and understanding was well received, and while the first few days were slightly bumpy - our members, parents, bus drivers and staff quickly adapted and turned what could have been a very challenging situation into a new routine. These are just a few of the many adaptations staff, Club members and families have gotten accustomed to over the past few years while we work to expand and improve the Club. Sometimes it can be hard to even remember how we 'used to do things' - being able to shift and change is a key skill set for anyone working with youth or in any organization. It is when we get stuck in "how we've always done things" that we lose the ability to innovate, meet people where they are at and move forward into the future.

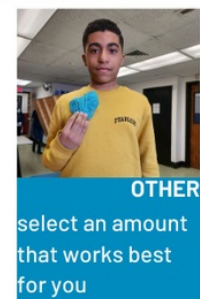
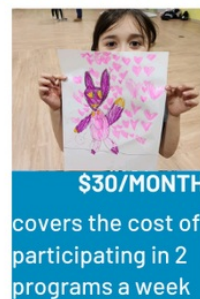
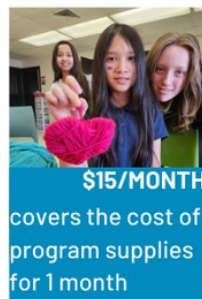


## Become a Club Ally! You'll love increasing your impact ♥



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF GREATER LOWELL

Your ongoing support bridges the gap between what our Club members pay and the actual cost of providing Club Services. Membership dues are \$30 per child (and only \$5 for teens).



[lbgc.org/make-a-donation](https://lbgc.org/make-a-donation) and choose "recurring donation"

Join Club Allies today



Planning for the 2024 Youth of the Year Celebration is currently underway! Club Teens are hard at work gathering community and Club recommendations, writing their essays, preparing for interviews, and practicing their speeches.

We hope you can join us at [Lenzi's Catering & Function Hall](#) on **Thursday, March 21, 2024**, to hear candidates deliver their speeches. One Club Teen will be selected as the [Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell](#)'s 2024 [Youth of the Year](#).

Learn More

STAY CONNECTED



Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell | 657 Middlesex Street, Lowell, MA 01851

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