

July 21st, 2014

City of Lawrence Commission

Commissioners:

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Lawrence is very interested in the idea of building a new Teen Center and Headquarters on part of the property on McDonald drive that the City is considering purchasing for a new Police Headquarters.

Increasing and improving services to middle school and high school youth is our top priority in our strategic plan. Our current space is at capacity at 60 youth a day and we believe that with a larger facility designed with teens in mind, we can serve 150 to 200 teens a day. As evidenced by the success of local Teens, Trei Dudley (2012 BGCA National Youth of the Year) and Innocent Anavberokhai (2014 Kansas State Youth of the Year) who have stayed with our program throughout their teen years, the Boys & Girls Club can have a profound impact on the lives of young people who need us the most, helping them become productive, caring, responsible citizens. It is imperative that we commit to providing quality mentorship and guidance to more teens.

We are still in the initial phases of capital campaign planning, but we envision a 20,000 square ft building that will provide a more quality Club experience and better prepare our teens for the future. Guided by examples from successful Boys & Girls Club teen programs across the nation, the building could include a full size gymnasium, a commercial kitchen and cooking stations, a technology and learning center, a performing arts room, a high school room, multi-purpose indoor and outdoor space, and other office and meeting space. We anticipate needing 5-7 acres depending on parking, outside space, etc. Development and design will include input from key partners (City, Schools, other non-profits) who are also committed to youth development.

The city has been investing in our programs for many years, providing money to support safe, quality afterschool programming for disadvantaged youth and alcohol and drug prevention programs for all of our 3,000 members. We could not do this work without the City's support, and we are very appreciative. In addition to this ongoing annual operating support, we would like the City to consider donating the land and site prep required for building this new Teen Center. This investment will help ensure that more young people in the Lawrence community will graduate from high school on time with a plan for the future.

Please contact me if you have any further questions about our plans or our need for a new facility.

Sincerely,

Colby Wilson
Executive Director
Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence