



## BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF LAWRENCE

# Great Futures Start Here Campaign Case for Support

2014

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

More than 3,000 of Lawrence's K-5th graders belong to the Boys & Girls Club, which represents 63% of all elementary students. On a daily basis, the Club will serve approximately 1,400 students. Those remarkably high numbers underline the fact that Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence is providing safe, positive and healthy places for children at 13 of the city's 14 public elementary schools.

In partnership with the school district and other local agencies, the Club has produced significant academic outcomes for Lawrence youth, including:

- decreasing the achievement gap,
- diminishing summer learning loss,
- improving behavior at school, and
- improved grades and test scores.

Unfortunately, two weeks into the 2014-2015 school year, the Boys & Girls Club Teen Center was forced to establish a wait list because the current facility cannot accommodate the demand of middle school members. Despite the demand, the teen program can only serve 70 of the 2,300 (3%) school district's 6-8th graders on a daily basis, and the impact is even less for high school students.

**The success of the elementary program and the increased demand for teen programs are driving the future plans of the Boys & Girls Club.**

For these reasons, the Boys & Girls Club Board of Directors is eager to create a larger city-wide Teen Center, which will provide age-appropriate supervision and programming and will accommodate the increasing number of young people who would like to be members of the Club. The facility will either be a new building near the school district's administrative building or an east side location that can be remodeled.

To achieve this goal, Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence is testing receptivity for a \$5 million **Great Futures Start Here Campaign**. This Case for Support presents a preliminary plan, which affords the framework for the community to develop and discuss the project. We welcome your feedback. Questions and comments should be addressed to: Colby Wilson, Executive Director, [cwilson@bgclk.org](mailto:cwilson@bgclk.org) or 785- 424-5211.



## Who We Serve and Why

- **All Lawrence Kids** - Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence serves youth, kindergarten through 18 years of age, of all ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- **High Risk Kids** - Sixty percent of Boys & Girls Club members qualify for free or reduced lunch compared to the school district average of 33%.
- **Kids of Color** - In addition to serving a high-risk segment of Lawrence youth, Boys & Girls Club serves a disproportionately high number of minorities.
- **Working Families** - While school hours have remained the same for students, work hours for parents have not. The gap between work and school schedules amounts to as much as 25 hours per week, which presents working parents with the challenge of finding someone to care for their children while they are at work. This economic development aspect of the Club's impact is a big reason the City of Lawrence provides significant annual operational funding to the Club.

Since Boys & Girls Club is in most of the elementary schools in town, it serves a wide range of students, with all different economic backgrounds. That makes our Club unique: it serves all Lawrence kids.

## Our K-5th Grade Program Rocks

The Boys & Girls Club and the Lawrence Public Schools have a strong partnership and will continue to work together to meet the needs of all students in Lawrence. By providing space in all the elementary schools after school and during the summer free of charge to the Boys & Girls Club, the school district is invested in the importance of out of school time. Over the years, the partnership between the schools and The Boys & Girls Club has contributed to some tremendous youth development outcomes.

**The research is clear:** early intervention works. So for the last 15 years, Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence has focused on serving more elementary school children.

**The results are equally clear:** teachers tell us repeatedly that youngsters in our Club have academic success, improved behavior, and better life skills. Their success has been noticed by more and more parents, leading to phenomenal growth of the program.

- The achievement gap between all students and students of color has decreased significantly.
- Boys & Girls Club Summer Enrichment Program diminished summer learning loss by 10-12% for the 1,100 kids enrolled.
- 25% of Club members showed improvement in behavior at school according to teacher surveys.
- 30% of Club members improved their math grades.
- 33% of Club members improved their reading grades.
- At Kennedy Elementary, in the spring of 2012, after completing a full year of a building-wide Positive Behavioral Instructional Support, in which Boys & Girls Club was an active partner, office referrals were reduced by 80%.



# Then What's the Problem?

## Our Middle and High School Students Need Options

The current Teen Center is house within the same building as the administrative offices at 1520 Haskell Avenue. It was originally built as the Odd Fellow Lodge and is simply too small and outdated to provide the quality, interest-based educational programs that middle and high school students need and want.

## What are the challenges facing the Lawrence community?

- There are very few affordable, structured programs available for middle school youth after school and during the summer. The middle and high school years are critical times for young people who are making decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Experimenting with drugs and alcohol, gangs, poor choices in school, unhealthy eating and exercise habits, and premature sexual activity are all potential behaviors that middle school students can develop when they are not in a safe, positive environment after school and during the summer.
- While there are sports, jobs and other activities in which some middle school students participate, there is still a large number of middle school youth going home alone after school or hanging out with friends in mostly unsupervised places.
- Local police report increased nuisance calls and criminal activity by middle school youth in Lawrence during after school hours, especially on Wednesdays when middle schools release early.

# What's the Answer?

We need to look no further than our Youth of the Year participants to understand the impact of remaining active in the Club through middle and high school. The Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence has produced five state Youth of the Year champions and one national winner. All of our Youth of the Year members credit the Club with helping them overcome obstacles, setting goals for their futures and understanding the importance of giving back to their communities.

We need to build on this strong legacy of youth development and support more teen members. Boys & Girls Club leaders plan a facility tailored to be inspiring and appealing for middle school and high school students, which will include:

- a quiet, larger study space for homework and tutoring
- a commercial kitchen with cooking stations where kids can learn to make healthy meals and dinner at the Club
- a performing arts studio for members interested in dance, theater and acting
- a technology center filled with the latest tools for educational enrichment, career exploration, fun, interactive gaming and movie making
- a music studio for creative expression
- a full size gymnasium for indoor activities that promote exercise and fitness
- outdoor space for gardening and physical activity
- efficient administrative space
- other multi-purpose indoor and outdoor space



## Really?

### Why not partner with existing facilities?

The partnership between the schools and the Boys & Girls Club is key to the long-term sustainability of the Club, as there would be no way the Club could serve 1400 youth everyday without the in-kind space the district provides. The Boys & Girls Club also has excellent partnerships with other youth-centered organizations such as: Lawrence Parks and Recreation, the Lawrence Police Department, Lawrence Public Library the Lawrence Arts Center, and will continue to coordinate efforts to serve youth.

Lawrence needs a new Teen Center because no facility currently exists that provides all the spaces and programs needed to make an impact on the youth we need to serve.



- Sports Pavillion Lawrence at Rock Chalk Park is a great sports complex, but it doesn't offer quiet rooms for homework help and tutoring, computer labs, or art and music rooms. Rock Chalk Park is also a 30 minute bus ride each way for many of our high-risk youth.
- Similarly, neighborhood recreation centers do not offer the diversity of programming needed for the Club to meet its mission for local teens.
- The Club has tried operating after school programs in middle schools in the past, but found that middle school kids do not want to stay in the same school all day. Middle schools also lack consistent access to high-demand spaces like computer labs, theater and the gym during after school hours.
- The new public library and the Lawrence Arts Center are dynamic facilities, but again don't provide consistent access to space or meet the recreational and social requirements of the Club's programs.

**“ USD 497 is committed to the on-going partnership with Boys & Girls Club. They provide an invaluable resource for our youth. The middle level students would greatly benefit from a facility specifically designed to meet their needs.”**

**- Dr. Rick Doll, Superintendent**

## A new Teen Center will help:

- **Increase graduation rates:**

While the overall graduation rate (90%) in Lawrence is above the 80% national rate, not all our youth succeed. Below are some examples of groups that are not as successful:

- Hispanic males - 70%
- Hispanic females - 83%
- African-American males - 77%
- Males on free lunch at school - 66%
- Females on free lunch at school - 80%

- **Improve the local economy:**

If just 10 Club members graduate who otherwise would not have, we will add \$2,000,000 to our economy over those members' lifetime. The economic impact of healthy, productive high school graduates is astounding, and it's within Lawrence's reach.



- **Inspire life goals:**

Young adults with bachelor's degrees earn more than twice as much as those without high school diplomas and 59% more than those with high school diplomas.<sup>1</sup>

- **Decrease youth obesity:**

Nationwide, 33% of high school students are overweight or obese and 75% of them are not physically active for at least an hour each day. Over a lifetime, the medical costs associated with childhood obesity total about \$19,000 more per child than those for a child of normal weight.<sup>2</sup> Boys & Girls Club addresses this by providing exercise, fitness and healthy eating opportunities every day.

- **Decrease juvenile crime rates:**

Nationwide 29% of all violent crime committed by juvenile offenders occurs between 3-7pm. Violent crimes by juveniles peak in the afternoon between 3-4pm, the hour school is released.<sup>3</sup> By providing a safe, positive environment after school, we minimize opportunity for teens to commit crime.

**“We see a new Boys & Girls Club Teen Center as a great opportunity to engage and encourage a large group of kids that currently have no supervision after school. This is a vital service the Boys & Girls Club is providing and we are excited about the possibility of this Teen Center being close to our new police facility”.**

**Tarik Khatib , Chief of Police**

- **Decrease costs by preventing crime:**

Correctional facilities in the US spend \$241 per day per incarcerated youth.<sup>4</sup> By keeping Lawrence’s youth productive and safe, Boys & Girls Club is preventing juvenile crime and associated costs. Operating the new Teen Center is projected to cost only \$10 per day per youth served.

- **Promote civic engagement and volunteerism:**

Boys & Girls Club improves character and citizenship in young people. When compared to their peers, youth who participated in civic engagement programs were:

- less likely to become pregnant and use drugs
- less likely to drop out and more likely to graduate from high school
- observed to have higher rates of school engagement and attendance
- more likely to attend college
- more likely to have positive attitudes toward work
- more likely to vote as young adults<sup>5</sup>



## Yes!

The proposed new Teen Center will be located at McDonald Drive across from the Hallmark facility on the same campus as a new police headquarters, possibly a family fun center, school district administrative facilities, and a new park. This site is selected because preliminary discussions indicate the City of Lawrence may graciously agree to donate the land.

The McDonald Drive site is a central location that allows for reasonable drive times to all parts of the city. Our buses will pick up and return youth who need transportation to all four middle schools. We currently operate four buses and can transport more than 200 students per day.

The facility will be designed with teen interests and needs in mind. We are surveying all middle school students in the district and plan to have Club members involved on fundraising, design and construction teams. We will hire and train professional staff to create a quality Club experience that will include:

- a positive and safe environment,
- supportive relationships,
- opportunities and expectations,
- recognition,
- and lots of fun so the students who most need our support will have it as they develop healthy life skills.

If, for whatever reason, we are unable to build on the McDonald Drive site, we will pursue a remodel of our current site on Haskell Avenue. This option is less appealing because it’s not centrally located and the size of the site limits our ability to design the “ideal” Teen Center.

At any site, we are committed first to providing programming to teens at a modest fee. We currently charge an annual membership fee of \$25 but will not turn anyone away because of an inability to pay. The Board of Directors is taking special care to anticipate both capital and annual operating expenses so that we do not “over build” something we cannot afford to maintain.

**Our first commitment is to Lawrence kids and to expanding our proven success to reach more teens.**

## **Project Budget**

<b>New Teen Center Construction</b> 22,500 sq ft at \$200 per sq ft	<b>\$4,500,000</b>
<b>Teen Center Operating Support</b> \$100,000 per year for five years (50% of staff, maintenance, and supplies)	<b>500,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,000,000</b>





**Lawrence, Kansas is a great community that has repeatedly demonstrated commitment to youth. All its youth. That's why we say: *Great Futures Start Here***

**For more information, contact Colby Wilson, Executive Director  
cwilson@bgclk.org  
(785) 424-5211**



## Board Members

Al Hack	Insurance Executive
Anna Stubblefield	HR Director - USD 497
Angie Rexroad	Former Educator
Carl Kurt	Retired KU Professor
Doug Dawson	Business Owner
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Sue Olson	Therapist
Ranelle Fisher	Banker
Brandon Graham	Business Owner
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Keri Lauxman	High School Teacher

### Notes

1 - US Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 7, 2014, [http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep\\_chart\\_001.htm](http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_chart_001.htm)

2 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - United States, 2013" <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>

3 - OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book

4 - The Costs of Confinement: Why Good Juvenile Justice Policies Make Good Fiscal Sense. Petteruti, Velazquez, and Walsh)

5 - [http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Child\\_Trends-2002\\_10\\_01\\_RB\\_CivicEngagement.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Child_Trends-2002_10_01_RB_CivicEngagement.pdf)