

September 18, 2014

Lawrence City Commission  
City Hall  
6 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street  
Lawrence, KS 66044



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**  
OF LAWRENCE

1520 Haskell Ave.  
PO Box 748  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
(785) 841-5672  
(785) 841-6854  
bgclk.org

Dear City Commissioners;

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 serves approximately 1,400 students. Those remarkably high numbers underline the fact that the Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence is providing safe, positive and healthy places for children at 13 of the city's 14 public elementary schools and one stand-alone Teen Center.

In partnership with the school district, the city of Lawrence, 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.

As evidenced by the success of local teens, Trei Dudley (2012 BGCA National Youth of the Year) and Innocent Anavberokhai, Jr. (2014 Kansas State Youth of the Year) who have attended our program through their middle and high school years, we know the Boys & Girls Club can have a profound impact on the lives of young people who need us most, helping them become productive, caring, responsible citizens. 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 number of middle school members who want to attend. Despite the high demand, however, the Teen Center can only serve 70 of the 2,300 (3%) school district's 6-8th graders on a daily basis, and the impact is even lower for high school students. It is imperative that we commit to providing quality mentorship and guidance to more local teens.

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's 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 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 important 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 10 acres of the land purchased for the new police facility (pending voter approval of the police project) to the Boys & Girls Club for the purpose of building a 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.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colby Wilson'.

Colby Wilson  
Executive Director

**GREAT FUTURES START HERE.**