



# 2024 IMPACT REPORT

SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024 AND SUMMER 2024



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF CHICAGO

# INTRODUCTION

## OUR MISSION

Founded in 1902, Boys & Girls Clubs of Chicago (BGCC) is one of the oldest youth development organizations in Chicago. Its mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need us the most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Serving thousands of young people every year, BGCC works to equip members with the emotional, educational, physical, and cultural resources that allow them to enjoy their childhood and thrive in adulthood.

## BGCC AT A GLANCE

**99%** of BGCC members come from low-income households.

Our Clubs provide life-changing programs and services to young people between the ages of 5 and 24, representing more than **97** zip codes.

Our network of Clubs serves the needs of more than **20 communities** throughout Chicago and Cook County.

More than **200** youth development staff work every day to fulfill our mission, supported by hundreds of volunteers every year.

**“My child so enjoys coming to the Club. She learns new things, and is able to participate in many different programs.”**

**- Dina, BGCC Parent**



# EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

To track the outcomes we prioritize, we utilize various tools throughout the year. These include:

## **SURVEYS**

Feedback from youth, parents, and teachers provides first-person insight into the experiences and perspectives of our members and stakeholders.

## **FOCUS GROUPS AND LISTENING SESSIONS**

Group discussions allow us to delve deeper into areas that surveys might not capture.

## **PULSE CHECKS**

These quick assessments provide a real-time view of members' well-being and program effectiveness.

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS**

Third-party assessments give us an objective perspective on our programs.

This framework enables us to continually refine and enhance the Club experience for our members.



# CLUB EXPERIENCE

High-Quality Club Experience and the Five Elements for Positive Youth Development



A supportive, enriching Club experience helps young people build the confidence, skills, and motivation to succeed. When members feel safe, supported, engaged, and recognized, they are more likely to thrive in our key areas of focus: academic success, character and leadership, healthy lifestyles, and social-emotional learning.



## BY THE NUMBERS

**Safety:** Clubs provide settings that are safe and inclusive, where Club members overwhelmingly report feeling safe from harm and safe being themselves.

- **95%** feel safe from harm.
- **93%** feel safe being themselves.

**Relationships:** Youth have the chance to forge supportive connections with adults. Club members report positive relationships and know there are staff members who care about them and help them navigate problems.

- **96%** say adults care about them.
- **94%** say they can talk to an adult at their Club about problems.

**Fun and Belonging:** These are essential elements to programming because they make the club experience enjoyable but also support the holistic development of members.

- **95%** enjoy coming to the Club.
- **94%** feel accepted for who they are.

**Opportunities and Recognition:** Young people have ample opportunities to engage in new, meaningful, and motivating learning experiences. The majority of members report having opportunities at the Club to explore new things and feel like their ideas count at the Club.

- **94%** get to explore new things.
- **96%** feel they will be successful by staff members.
- **96%** feel staff members encourage them to do their best.

# PRIORITY OUTCOMES

BGCC's 100+ youth development and enrichment programs are designed to foster the holistic growth of young people, contributing to positive outcomes in academic achievement, behavior, and social development. By providing diverse opportunities for learning, recreation, and personal growth, these programs address various aspects of youth development—**emotional, physical, academic,** and **social**.

Through structured activities, mentorship, and a supportive environment, youth are empowered to build strong relationships, improve their academic skills, and develop leadership qualities. These programs play a key role in guiding youth to become responsible, motivated, and well-rounded individuals. The outcomes we see — such as improved behavior, increased academic motivation, and enhanced social interactions — are a direct result of the intentional efforts in our youth development initiatives.

These outcomes guide us as we nurture young people who are prepared to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond, helping them to grow into leaders who contribute to the well-being and progress of society.



## FOUR PRIORITY OUTCOMES



**ACADEMIC  
SUCCESS**



**CHARACTER &  
LEADERSHIP**



**HEALTHY  
LIFESTYLES**



**SOCIAL-  
EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING**



# ACADEMIC SUCCESS

BGCC’s Academic Success programs create a well-rounded approach to educational achievement, supporting members’ knowledge, skills, and motivations.

Power Hour provides daily after-school homework help and tutoring, offering individualized academic support that reinforces classroom learning. This focused environment helps youth stay on track, build effective study habits, and improve overall academic achievement.

Money Matters program equips youth with essential financial literacy skills, teaching budgeting, saving, and responsible money management. By gaining confidence in financial decisions, young people build foundational skills that reinforce discipline and problem-solving, which can enhance their academic focus and life planning.

STEM programs introduce students to science, technology, engineering, and math concepts through hands-on activities, sparking curiosity and engagement in these critical fields. Exposure to STEM fosters analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities, strengthening academic performance across subjects, especially in math and science.

Summer Brain Gain combats summer learning loss through engaging activities that keep youth academically active during summer break. This program prevents the regression of skills, particularly in literacy and math, helping students return to school prepared and confident.

### Youth Aspirations and Expectations

- **96%** aspire to post-secondary education.
- **94%** enjoy learning.

### STEM

- **96%** like to participate in science projects.
- **93%** are curious to learn more about STEM.

### Homework Completion

- **83%** of teachers noted better homework submissions, meeting deadlines.

### Classroom Behavior

- **85%** of teachers observed improved behavior.
- **86%** saw increased engagement in class.

### Home Behavior

- **94%** of parents reported that Club members either had no disciplinary issues or showed improvement in behavior.



# CHARACTER AND LEADERSHIP

BGCC helps youth understand the value of service, responsibility, and positive influence in their communities.

The Youth of the Year and Junior Youth of the Year programs empower young people to develop resilience, confidence, and leadership skills by encouraging them to share their personal stories, goals, and achievements. Through mentorship and opportunities for public speaking, participants cultivate self-awareness, responsibility, and the ability to inspire others.

Torch and Keystone programs are leadership-focused groups that provide young people with opportunities to lead community service projects, organize Club events, and make decisions that impact their peers. By actively participating in service and leadership roles, members learn the importance of empathy, teamwork, and accountability.

## Character and Leadership

- **93%** try to help others they see in need.
- **77%** volunteer in their communities.
- **84%** feel they can make a difference in their community.
- **88%** see themselves as effective leaders.

**“My participation in Youth of the Year helped me grow as a person. The staff saw that each of the finalists was a different kind of leader, and how they continuously worked to support all of us all the way up to the event was truly admirable.”**

**-BGCC Youth of the Year finalist**





## HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

BGCC creates a holistic approach to a healthy lifestyle, equipping youth with the knowledge and habits to live healthy, active lives.

SMART Girls and Passport to Manhood programs guide young members through age-appropriate discussions on health, wellness, and self-respect, empowering them to make informed choices about their physical and emotional well-being.

Through Triple Play and Sports Leagues, youth improve physical fitness while developing teamwork, sportsmanship, and goal setting skills.

### Healthy Habits

- **80%** are physically active for 60 minutes at least three times per week.
- **87%** avoid risk behaviors such as violence and substance use.

### Social and Physical Benefits

- **89%** improved decision-making skills.
- **91%** engaged in positive recreational activities.
- **77%** are able to stay calm when stressed.
- **83%** know specific ways to calm themselves down.





## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Our Clubs create a safe, supportive environment where young people can develop social-emotional skills that are crucial for building resilience and making positive choices. By integrating a trauma-informed approach, we foster mental well-being, teaching youth healthy ways to manage stress, navigate emotions, and strengthen coping skills.

Our staff also receive specialized training to recognize and respond to the unique needs of each child, creating a space where youth feel seen, valued, and empowered to grow with confidence. These social-emotional skills apply to all areas of life, supporting academic success, healthy relationships, and career readiness, and equipping young people with the emotional tools to overcome obstacles, collaborate effectively, and pursue their goals with determination and empathy.



### Problem-Solving and Self-Awareness

- **92%** work to improve when things go wrong.
- **92%** recognize how their feelings influence their actions.
- **91%** think of new ways to solve challenges.

### Empathy

- **91%** want to help when they see someone having a problem.



## ACADEMIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: ARTS

BGCC's arts enrichment programs foster creativity, build self-confidence, and encourage self-expression. Through activities like drawing, painting, music, dance, and theater, youth learn to communicate their thoughts and emotions in ways that may be more comfortable or impactful than words alone.

These programs also teach critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills as participants work on projects, often requiring them to experiment, make decisions, and adapt creatively.

### PROGRAM SURVEY

- **95%** are more interested in art.
- **93%** understand art-specific language.
- **93%** feel encouraged by the Club to be creative and try new ideas.
- **93%** feel the Club supports art that reflects their family, community, and culture.



## ACADEMIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: TECH AND COMPUTERS

BGCC computer and tech programs provide essential skills for the digital world, such as coding, problem-solving, and digital literacy. Our Clubs use up-to-date technological equipment and fast, reliable Wi-Fi, resources that many youths might not have access to otherwise, ensuring they can fully engage in these learning opportunities.

Tech programs foster collaboration and communication skills, often involving teamwork on projects. They open doors while helping young people become confident, adaptable, and skilled in an ever-evolving digital and career landscape.

### PROGRAM SURVEY

- **100%** are more confident in their technological abilities.
- **100%** find the technology program fun.
- **91%** feel more comfortable learning new or advanced technology.



## PROGRAM ENRICHMENT HIGHLIGHT: AQUATICS

Offering aquatics classes to BGCC members addresses critical barriers faced in accessing safe swimming instruction, including limited access to pools, high costs of swim lessons, and a lack of culturally accessible swim programs. This gap in swimming skills has serious safety implications, as Black youth ages 10–14 are over five times more likely to drown in pools than their white peers. By providing free or low-cost aquatics classes, programs like these offered at BGCC not only teach essential water safety skills but also help build confidence, promote fitness, and offer valuable recreation in communities where public pool access is limited.

### PROGRAM SURVEY

- **100%** of members surveyed enjoyed participating in Learn to Swim.
- **95%** members surveyed feel like they can take all swimming programs that they want to take.
- **100%** feel that the aquatics staff makes them feel safe and welcome.



## SUMMER CAMP

BGCC's summer camp offered a safe, structured space for over 2,200 at 22 sites across Chicago for youth to explore, learn, and thrive during a season when positive activities may be limited.

With engaging activities like sports, arts, STEM projects, and field trips, combined with mentorship and peer connections, campers build confidence, resilience, and essential social-emotional skills that support healthy decision-making.

### PROGRAM SURVEY

- **93%** feel more optimistic about their lives because of their experience at summer camp.
- **73%** learned new skills at camp.
- **72%** felt proud of their accomplishments over the summer.



## LIFE AND WORKFORCE READINESS

BGCC staff are dedicated to guiding youth as they explore different career and educational paths, offering personalized support through mentoring, skills-building workshops, career exploration activities, and college tours. They help set and pursue goals, connect with internships, and access resources like test preparation, resume assistance, and interview preparation to ensure every youth has a strong start on their post-secondary and professional journey.

The STAR program begins with younger members, laying the groundwork to explore interests, understand career options, and build essential skills. This creates a natural pathway into programs for high schoolers and older youth focused on college and career applications. By the time they reach high school or college application age, these students have a clearer sense of direction, a stronger foundation of skills, and greater confidence in pursuing their goals.

The Great Opportunities (GO) program includes several initiatives like Chicagobility, Youth Employment Program (SYEP), Chicago Youth Service Corps (CYSC), Illinois Youth Investment Program (IYIP), and Workforce Innovation Act (WIOA). These programs support youth ages 16 to 23 throughout the year, except for Chicagobility, which serves 14- to 15-year-olds in the summer only. In FY24, the GO program had 685 participants and reached 2,536 more youth through events like job and resource fairs.

### COLLEGE PREPARATION:

- **95%** applied for a post-secondary educational opportunity.
- **94%** applied to a four-year university.
- **33%** applied to a two-year college.
- **12%** applied to a skilled trade school.

### PROGRAM SURVEY:

- **100%** feel confident in skill sets and strengths.

- **100%** have goals and a plan for their future.
- **100%** have identified a post-secondary education or career path.
- **100%** feel informed about how to be successful in chosen pathway.
- **92%** have participated in a college preparation program at the Club.
- **100%** have developed skill sets that will help them be successful in school.

# BGCC.ORG



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