

# ANNUAL REPORT



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF SOUTH PUGET SOUND



# 2023

## OUR MISSION

To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.



# Letter from the CEO



2023 is in the books. Because of your support we more than doubled the number of youth served this year, reaching more than 5,100 young people. We also increased the number of teens we welcomed into our programs by 57% compared to last year.

Behind the numbers are programs, partners, staff members and volunteers providing opportunities for kids and teens to build resilience and explore new skills. One of our innovative programs, in partnership with Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, is Teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA). The program helps teens learn how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges in their friends and peers, and when to engage trained specialists if they or a friend need extra support.



Our younger members love their S.T.E.A.M. programs with hands-on experiences full of building, coding, electricity and the arts, too. These programs, and many more, are a key part of the future our young people are building. Sometimes though, the magic is in the here and now. Our Clubhouses and programs hold space for making memories and experiencing the joy of childhood fun. At the end of the day, kids just having fun connecting with each other face to face without a screen and building relationships is truly special.

I can't thank our community of supporters enough for the inspiring impact we achieved this year. Our donors, partners, volunteers and staff members help make magic everyday for our amazing Club members and their families.

HOURS OF  
PROGRAMMING  
**12,905**

MEALS & SNACKS  
PROVIDED  
**117,752**

HOURS OF  
VOLUNTEER SERVICE  
**4,284**

PROGRAM  
SERVICE SITES  
**13**

YOUTH  
SERVED  
**5,152**



# Letter from the CEO

I am also excited to share that in the Spring of 2023, in consultation with our community of supporters, staff and Board, we finalized a five-year strategic plan for the organization with three priority areas:

## Future-ready programs:

Programming that is high-impact and youth-centered; teen programming that prepares teens to be competitive in their career of choice in a rapidly changing world; Club members strengthen their mental and behavioral health through social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care.

## Commitment to equity:

Youth voice is central to our work; our staff, Board, and volunteers mirror our communities, and we are continuously learning and growing.

## People & resources to deliver for kids and teens:

Having sustainable funding, leveraging strategic partnerships, and having a strong Board and staff who are our most valuable assets.

These three priorities will help us focus our work in the years ahead to deliver on our mission: to enable young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential. Together, we are enabling more young people in our community to reach their full potential. Thank you for your dedication and generosity. I am inspired and excited for the year ahead!

With gratitude,



Carrie Holden  
President/CEO



**81%**

Ages 12 and Younger

**71%**

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

**76%**

Qualify for Free or Reduced-Price School Lunch

**52%**

Live in Single-Parent Households





**Lucas [Club Kid]**  
with his Mom, Sandy Pérez

In the summer of 2018, my 11-year-old son and I moved to Tacoma. As the school year approached, the familiar, but exhausting chore of finding the right fit for Lucas' education began as his disability often poses challenges to access inclusive settings. Lucas landed at Stanley Elementary, but as a single mom with no family support in the area, finding after-school care became a source of added stress.

I soon learned of an after-school program next to Stanley at Al Davies Boys & Girls Club.

I approached them tentatively and skeptically: Would they open their doors to Lucas? Would the staff treat him as “different” and “other”? Would the kids be unkind? Would the staff allow it? The Club's branch manager, Makenzie, shared similar concerns as she considered the kids' reactions to Lucas who wears his disability on his face and struggles with his speech, and whether the Club's staff could effectively meet Lucas' needs.

*“Day-by-day, between foosball games, shooting hoops, arts and crafts, and other seemingly uneventful kids' activities, Lucas' fun-loving, outgoing nature and the staff's commitment to fostering a culture of INCLUSION and ACCEPTANCE, created genuine relationships and mutual learning.”*

-Sandy Pérez





## Lucas

with Makenzie White,  
Al Davies Branch Manager



When I draw on an example of the impact this community has made in our lives, an incident during an otherwise typical day in middle school stands out. Lucas was riding the bus route to the Club when a Club kid noticed a classmate bullying Lucas. It was an experience parents of a child with a disability fear most, and yet Lucas didn't face him alone. The Club kid and others fiercely rallied around Lucas and stood up to the bully. I still have a heart full of gratitude, both for the pint-sized heroes who banded together to keep Lucas safe, and for the opportunity to experience the spirit and metal of the Al Davies community.

It's been 5+ years since Lucas first walked through the doors at Al Davies, and he is now a **THRIVING** Club member who is engaging his peers in the teen center and assisting the younger kids with activities. He has matured and grown increasingly independent, showing greater self assuredness and confidence. As a sophomore at Tacoma School of the Arts, Lucas has started to volunteer at Al Davies in preparation for an internship because, "It's my favorite place to work," Lucas said. "I want to cook with Ms. Laurie to serve kids food because I love helping kids."

Makenzie credits Lucas with helping her grow as a leader and paving the way to make the program accessible to all kids, **offering those who need us most the opportunity to reach their full potential.** Lucas' experience at Al Davies is the mission in action, so when Makenzie asked if I'd be interested in joining the BGCSPS Board to provide my perspective as a parent, my answer was an unequivocal YES.

I am grateful to have an opportunity to be a voice for parents, and to give back and pay forward to an organization that is helping shape the trajectory of Lucas' future, which looks brighter every day.

***"My goal is to help ensure we as an organization enable young people to realize their full potential."***

*-Sandy Pérez*



# Academic Success

While local Club organizations are encouraged to develop and implement programs that best meet the needs of their communities, the Boys & Girls Clubs offer nationally recognized programs that closely align with the developmental needs of all young people. These programs are designed to ensure that all Club members graduate from high school on time, ready for post-secondary **education** and a 21st-century career.



Nicky Gilstrap

**“We acknowledge that one size does not fit all in learning and bringing excitement around participation is building on their positive academic identity and encouraging willingness to grow.”**

-Nicky Gilstrap (Senior 21st Century Program Coordinator, Lakewood Branch)



**ACADEMIC  
SUCCESS**

**94%** of Club kids plan to graduate high school or pursue an advanced degree

## 21st Century Community Learning Center Program

Our 21st Century Community Learning Center program helps increase academic achievement, social-emotional learning, school attendance, college and career experiences, and family engagement. We provide daily supportive tutoring/homework help, teaching social-emotional skills, enrichment activities, and empowering families to support the values of education at home for students through family events.

## Power Hour

Power Hour is designed specifically to help kids and teens with homework, this program is available after school at Clubs. Dedicated youth development professionals and volunteers supervise each session and help youth members complete their assignments for the day.





# Character & Leadership

At Boys & Girls Clubs, **character and leadership** means helping youth become responsible, caring members of our community, and acquire the skills needed to participate in a democratic society. They also develop leadership skills and provide opportunities for goal setting, decision-making, and contributing to community service.



**GOOD CHARACTER  
& LEADERSHIP**

**85% of Club  
kids spend  
time helping  
people in their  
community**



Sarai with BGCSPS staff

## Keystone

Keystone Club is a program that gives youth ages 14 to 18 a leadership development experience that encourages engagement both in and out of the Club environment.

## Torch Club

Torch Club is a powerful vehicle through which young people develop and strengthen their leadership skills to be competitive in the workforce, giving them a firm foundation of good character and integrity. Both programs implement projects in four focus areas: service to their community; education; health and fitness; and social recreation.

## Youth of the Year

The highest honor for youth within Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide is becoming a Youth of the Year. Selected youth compete to receive a scholarship to support their futures.

**“At first, Sarai [Club kid] had a hard time in the Teen Center. Sarai has since become one of the members you see holding her peers accountable for their actions, encouraging them to do better and overall bringing a positive outlook to the Club environment. It has been really amazing to see her grow into herself over the last few months, and I cannot wait to see what she will do next!”**

-Mabel Thompson (21st Century Community Learning Center Coordinator, Henry T. Schatz Branch)



# Healthy Lifestyles

Our Healthy Lifestyle initiative develops young people's capacity to engage in positive behaviors that nurture their own well-being, set personal goals, make healthy choices, and become self-sufficient adults. From healthy meals and snacks, to youth sports and athletics, to social and emotional care, our holistic approach nurtures all areas of a child's development and offers critical support for our Club kids.

## Social, Emotional & Mental Wellbeing

At BGCSPS, we know how important mental health, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Trauma Informed practices are. In 2023, we increased our knowledge, training, and staffing to support our communities. Our trained, caring staff provide trusting relationships and an open dialogue with kids and teens, including Teen Mental Health First Aid, ensuring they have the skills they need to manage their emotions and build resiliency.

*"As a country, we are seeing rates of anxiety and depression skyrocket in our youth. As an organization, we have been ahead of the game in prioritizing these important aspects of our members and we are committed to this work."*

-Dianna Sullivan, Director of Safety and Behavioral Health



HEALTHY  
LIFESTYLES

**98%** of Club  
kids feel  
emotionally  
safe here



## Family Support Services

We offer one on one check in's, family nights, success plan meetings, and parenting workshops for our members. Our Club staff is trained to mentor members through the hardships they face, such as peer pressure, poverty, academic struggles and bullying.



# Healthy Lifestyles



## Youth Athletics

Our athletics programs provide high quality sports leagues and everyday physical activity that gives young people opportunities to have fun, build character, learn to practice sportsmanship, and develop skills and characteristics that will help them have happy, healthy lives. Our Clubs provide daily gym and outdoor recreation activities to our members.

In 2023, our Youth Sports program served 927 sports participants and provided more than 3,000 hours of athletics programming. Our youth sports program is also a great community engagement initiative, where we had 64 volunteer coaches provide 936 hours of volunteer service for our athletes. Our program featured partnerships with Metro Parks Tacoma and the Seattle Kraken; sports clinics including hockey and basketball; a Summer Wilderness Camp featuring camping and sailing; and sports leagues including baseball, basketball, flag football, soccer and volleyball.

## Nutritional Food Program

Through our partnership with USDA, we provide healthy meals and snacks, which helps to fill nutrition gaps outside of school. We also teach Club kids about nutrition and healthy habits to fuel their mind and body.

In 2023, we provided 113,851 meals and snacks, and 76% of our members received free or reduced meals.





# Thank You for Supporting Our Youth

## About Us

Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound supports young people in reaching their full potential by providing safe places, caring mentors, and high-impact out-of-school programming throughout the year. Our holistic approach nurtures all areas of a child's development and offers critical support for kids and our community. We operate Club locations and program services in Pierce, Kitsap, and Mason counties that enable children and teens to learn, create, play, be themselves and attain their best in academics, healthy lifestyles, and character and leadership. All of this comes with affordable membership for all. We also operate programs beyond our walls, providing youth sports, extended learning opportunities, and licensed child care at schools in partnership with school districts and community organizations.

## Equity & Inclusion Statement

Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound is an anti-racist youth development organization that works to break down barriers and stand against injustices that have held individuals back for so many years, in particular people of color. We have policies, standards, and systems in place for each child, staff, Board member and volunteer to follow, that reinforce the celebration of diversity, the pursuit of equity, and inclusion of all. As a youth development organization, we believe that every young person, no matter their race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic status, and religion, can become productive, caring, responsible humans, and we are committed to providing access to the resources and opportunities that each need to reach their own great futures.

## Our Formula for Impact





# Get Involved



**Become a Club Member**



**Donate**



**Volunteer**



**Join Our Staff**







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OF SOUTH PUGET SOUND

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