



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF SOUTH PUGET SOUND

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Letter from the CEO



In a world of rapid change, one thing remains constant: our young people are the next generation of leaders. For over 80 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound has been dedicated to providing programs that young people can rely on, equipping them with the tools they need to navigate the opportunities and challenges ahead. Your unwavering support is instrumental in shaping these future leaders, and we are deeply grateful for the role you play in their lives, today and for generations to come.

Looking back on the past year, we have so much to celebrate together. Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to provide over 133,000 meals and snacks to young people, ensuring they have the fuel to succeed. Through collaboration with trusted partners and expanding capacity across our Clubs, we've increased the number of youth we serve by nearly 60%. As a result, we've had the privilege of impacting the lives of over 8,000 young people across Pierce, Kitsap, and Mason counties. For those keeping track, that's a growth rate of 200% in the past three years—an accomplishment made possible because of your support.



Our programs engage youth from kindergarten through high school and beyond, giving them the chance to build relationships, make healthy decisions, and prepare for their futures. But, perhaps most importantly, the Clubs give these kids the opportunity to simply be kids.

In 2024, our youth shared overwhelmingly positive feedback about their experience at the Clubs. A remarkable 83% of members feel a deep sense of belonging, which speaks to the warm, welcoming atmosphere we strive to create. Additionally, 92% of members report feeling safe and surrounded by positivity, and 96% say they feel emotionally secure in our programs.

11,499

HOURS OF
PROGRAMMING

133,353

MEALS & SNACKS
PROVIDED

7,095

HOURS OF
VOLUNTEER SERVICE

12

PROGRAM
SERVICE SITES

8,189

YOUTH
SERVED

Letter from the CEO

Our Clubs are not only safe spaces, but also places of fun and connection. 81% of members say their time at the Clubs is enjoyable and engaging. A key part of our mission is making sure every young person feels recognized, and 79% of our members report feeling acknowledged for their contributions.

The importance of adult connections cannot be overstated, and we are proud that 92% of members feel supported by meaningful relationships with adults in the Clubs. Physical safety is always a priority, with 88% of members feeling secure in their surroundings, allowing them to thrive in a nurturing environment.

This feedback paints a powerful picture of a thriving community where young people feel supported, valued, and empowered to achieve their full potential. None of this would be possible without your steadfast support. You are helping to create an environment where kids can grow, learn, and flourish—and that is a priceless gift.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to ensuring our programs are future-ready. Our strategic focus includes expanding mental health services, workforce development, and teen engagement, all while continuing to evolve to meet the diverse needs of our community. The future is bright, and we are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.

Once again, thank you for your generosity. Your support makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our young people and helps to make their dreams possible. Together, we are building a brighter future for all.



Carrie Holden
President/CEO



79%

AGES 12 AND YOUNGER

67%

**BLACK, INDIGENOUS,
AND PEOPLE OF COLOR**

73%

**QUALIFY FOR FREE OR
REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH**

53%

**LIVE IN SINGLE-PARENT
HOUSEHOLDS**

Community Impact



Finding a Place to Belong: How One Mom and Her Son Found Community at the Club

When Cynthea enrolled her son Nicholai at the Eastside Boys & Girls Club five years ago, she didn't know just how transformative the decision would be. Nicholai was only five then—wide-eyed, full of energy, and just beginning to show signs of the unique challenges he would soon be navigating with his family's support.

"I got him in as soon as he was old enough," Cynthea recalls. "He hadn't been to any other Club before that, just daycare. But we were starting to see that he needed something different."

What Cynthea was seeing was more than just a spirited young boy. As Nicholai grew, it became clear that he was wrestling with ADHD and, later, a diagnosis of social anxiety.

"We were still discovering what all of that meant for him," she explains. "But I could already tell he needed a space where he wasn't boxed in, where he could be himself without judgment—but also with the right kind of structure and support."

That's where the Club came in.

For Cynthea, the Eastside Club offered more than just after-school care. It became a place where Nicholai could thrive in a way that wasn't possible elsewhere. "There's definitely structure, but there's also freedom," she says. "Freedom to move, to adjust when something isn't working, to be redirected in a way that still honors who he is."

For Cynthea, the Boys & Girls Club didn't just provide support for her son—it became the answer to a quiet, heartfelt prayer for something much deeper: community.

It was in the fabric of everyday life—Nicholai's after-school pickup, conversations with Club staff, moments of quiet support—that Cynthea began to feel the shift. And it wasn't just support for her son's needs, but for her own healing journey as well.

When Nicholai first started attending the Eastside Boys & Girls Club, it was a shift from the daycare routines he was used to. "At daycare, he was mostly around kids he went to school with," Cynthea explains. "But at Club, he's meeting kids from all over Tacoma—different schools, different backgrounds. It's a real community."



Community Impact

"It's hard work—managing all these personalities," she laughs. "But Club staff do it. And not only that, they make adjustments. They notice when Nicholai is struggling. They don't just throw him in a room and expect him to cope. They ask, 'How's he feeling today? What can we do to help?'"

That kind of care makes a world of difference for a child with ADHD and social anxiety—especially after a long day at school. "The staff, they can tell right away—if he's had a rough morning, if he's bursting with energy, or if something's off. And they make space for that."

Nicholai, in turn, has learned to make space for others. Sometimes, when he's placed with younger kids, he rises to the occasion. "He's become a helper," Cynthea says proudly. "He steps into a leadership role, and carries that confidence with him."

To Cynthea, it's another reminder that the Club isn't just a program—it's part of their village. "I always say to the staff: thank you for being part of our village."

"Club staff know Nicholai well at this point," she laughed. "He loves basketball, but it's more than just the sport. It's the people, the structure, the care. That's what really matters."

Because of the timing and support the Club provides—including transportation, meals, and supervision—Nicholai has had the chance to explore activities like basketball, flag football and baseball. "These are sports he wouldn't have had access to without Club, because of our schedule and limited transportation."

When asked about staff members who've made the biggest difference in Nicholai's life, Cynthea replied "It's really all of them. Each staff member has connected with him in different ways at different times—but they all know him. They notice the little things. They support him like family."

"Nicholai's interactions with other students, and even adults, have improved," she shared. "At Club, he has space to learn how to manage himself, how to engage with adults, how to self-regulate."

"I literally cannot express how much this has meant to our family. Any chance I get to share our story, I take it—because Club has been a huge blessing."

And to the donors and organizations that support Clubs, she has a simple but powerful message:

"This is what your donations are doing. You're giving kids like mine a safe place. A creative space. A home away from home. You're helping me parent better, live better, breathe easier."



Academic Success

Local Boys & Girls Clubs are encouraged to create and carry out programs that reflect the specific needs of their communities. At the same time, the national organization provides proven, research-based programs that support the overall development of young people. By combining local flexibility with nationally recognized strategies, Clubs work to ensure every member graduates on time, prepared for further education and a successful future.

21st Century Community Learning Center



The 21st Century Community Learning Center is dedicated to fostering student success by enhancing academic performance, promoting social-emotional development, improving school attendance, and providing valuable college and career exploration opportunities. This is accomplished through daily personalized tutoring and homework support, teaching essential social-emotional skills, engaging enrichment activities, and empowering families to nurture a love for learning at home through dynamic 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.



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“Supporting our youth in their academic success through after school 21st Century Community Learning Center programs not only increases their confidence and ability to succeed in their goals within and outside of academia but helps youth to build the foundation of stronger communities of the future. We create programs that meet individual members where they are at and help them push to strive for the next level in all facets of their abilities.”

- Mabel Thompson, 21st CCLC Assistant Program Manager

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**

86% of Club youth said they can stand up for what is right, and **88%** of Club youth reported that as a leader, they make sure everyone feels important.

Youth of the Year

Youth of the Year is Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier youth leadership and recognition program, celebrating the extraordinary achievements of Club members. Candidates embody the values of leadership, service, academic excellence and healthy lifestyles. They exemplify the critical impact Clubs have on the lives of young people. Judges score each candidate based on their essays, interviews, public speaking and overall application.

Torch Club

Torch Club is a "club within the Club," helping to meet the special character-development needs of younger adolescents at a critical stage in their life. A Torch Club is a powerful vehicle through which young people develop and strengthen their 21st-century leadership skills, giving them a firm foundation of good character and integrity.

Keystone

Keystone Club is The Boys & Girls Club ultimate teen program. Keystone Clubs provide leadership development opportunities for young people ages 14 to 18. Youth participate in activities in three focus areas: academic success, career preparation and community service. With the guidance of an adult advisor, Keystone Clubs aim to have a positive impact on members, the Club and community.



Youth of the Year: Riya Richardson



Riya Richardson: A Voice for Youth, A Light for the Future

At just 17 years old, Riya Richardson has already become a beacon of leadership, creativity, and service for her community and beyond. A proud member of the Eastside Boys & Girls Club, Riya was named the 2024 Youth of the Year for the Boys & Girls Clubs of South Puget Sound—a recognition that merely scratches the surface of her accomplishments. Driven by a deep compassion for others and a belief in the power of young people, Riya has not only achieved personal success but has inspired her peers to recognize their own capacity to create change.

As a dedicated student at Tacoma School of the Arts and a participant in the Running Start program at Tacoma Community College, Riya has consistently shown excellence in academics while simultaneously serving her community in countless ways. For two years, she contributed her voice and vision as a member of the Mayor's Youth Commission, helping to shape youth-focused policy for the city. Her service has consistently reflected her values: listening deeply, advocating fiercely, and leading with humility and heart.

Perhaps one of the most unique chapters in Riya's story is her role in the development of Pixar's blockbuster animated sequel, *Inside Out 2*. As part of a diverse advisory group of teens invited to guide the film's creative process, Riya provided firsthand insights into the emotional world of today's youth. According to the film's director and writers, Riya's perspectives helped shape major story elements and even inspired the creation of a new character based on the emotion of nostalgia. Her involvement exemplified how youth voices can meaningfully influence mainstream media, helping millions better understand the nuanced inner lives of adolescents.

Beyond her artistic and civic achievements, Riya has become a powerful storyteller and advocate for the Boys & Girls Clubs movement.

Whether speaking at fundraising events or mentoring younger members at the Eastside Club, she uses her platform to elevate the impact of safe, supportive spaces where young people can thrive. Her speeches, delivered with grace and conviction, emphasize the importance of empowering youth through mentorship, community, and opportunity. Riya's journey is a living testament to what's possible when young leaders are heard, seen, and supported.



Youth of the Year: Riya Richardson

In May 2025, Riya was formally honored by the City of Tacoma for her extraordinary service and leadership. At the recognition ceremony, city council members and Mayor Victoria Woodards praised Riya for her maturity, emotional intelligence, and steadfast dedication to others. "You have a commitment to service," the mayor said, "and we couldn't be more proud of the young woman you are." Council member Scott added, "You're walking on a path that is really beautiful." Riya, expressed gratitude to her mentors, family, and the Eastside Club for shaping her into the leader she is today. "Youth in our community are changemakers," she said. "And I'm grateful to stand among them."

Riya's story reflects the heart of the Boys & Girls Clubs mission: to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Her accomplishments are remarkable—but even more inspiring is her commitment to lifting others up as she rises. Riya Richardson reminds us all that youth leadership isn't something to wait for—it's already here, and it's transforming our world, one voice, one story, and one dream at a time.



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, youth sports, and social and emotional care, our holistic approach nurtures all areas of a child's development and offers critical support for our Club kids.

As part of our Healthy Lifestyles initiative, we also offer Boys & Girls Clubs of America's award-winning Triple Play program, which focuses on three key areas:

Mind: This component helps Club members develop the knowledge to make healthy choices, such as understanding portion sizes, making smart food choices, and preparing balanced meals. We have enhanced this initiative by implementing cooking and nutrition classes with USDA-certified chefs, teaching kids how to eat healthier and providing valuable life skills for their future.

Body: We encourage youth to stay physically active through fun daily fitness activities, games, and challenges. These fitness challenges help kids of all ages engage in movement, build endurance, and develop a love for physical activity. At the Club, staff lead physical warm-ups before structured activities to ensure that everyone is moving and ready for the day's program.

Our trained and 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.



Social-Emotional: This component fosters social recreation programs that strengthen interpersonal skills, promote good character, and encourage positive relationships. It helps Club members build self-confidence, develop a sense of self-worth, and cope effectively with both positive and negative situations. Staff lead structured programs, including team games, that foster teamwork, communication, and respect for rules, helping children develop strong, well-rounded character traits.

Clubs also offer Family Support Services. Club staff are trained to mentor members through the hardships they face such as peer pressure, poverty, academic struggles and bullying.



Healthy Lifestyles



Our Nutritional Food Program provides free meals and snacks to address the nutrition gaps children may face when school is out, recognizing that many youth return to empty homes after school and lack access to healthy food.

According to Child Trends Data, inadequate food intake in children is linked to serious health, behavioral, and cognitive challenges; food insecurity increases the risk of poor health and developmental delays and, paradoxically, can also lead to a higher risk of obesity.

As a key part of our Healthy Lifestyles initiative, the program helps youth develop healthy behaviors and lead active, balanced lives. Offered Monday through Friday, both after school and during the summer, it ensures consistent access to nutritious food so children are well-nourished, prepared to engage in educational and recreational activities, and supported in a healthy, growth-oriented environment.

Our Youth Sports program provides a high quality sports experience that gives young people opportunities to have fun, build character, learn to practice sportsmanship, and develop skills and characteristics that will help them become responsible adults who can lead happy, healthy lives. Our program is open to all children of various ages, abilities, backgrounds, family circumstances, and economic status.

The priorities of our youth sports program are to ensure that the needs of children are our primary focus; that youth sports provide safe and positive experiences for children; that our program is administered in a professional manner; that coaches, volunteers, parents and others associated with the program are held accountable for their actions and behavior; and that appropriate training, facilities, and equipment are provided.

We offer a variety of youth sports throughout the year to meet their needs and interests. Youth have the opportunity to participate in our flag football, soccer, basketball, and baseball leagues—as well as various athletic camps and clinics throughout the summer!





BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF SOUTH PUGET SOUND

To join a Club, donate, volunteer or join our staff visit bgcsp.org!

You can also call us at: (253) 502-4600, **email:** info@bgcsp.org,
or **visit us at:** 3875 South 66th Street, Suite 101, Tacoma WA 98409



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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, expanded learning opportunities, and licensed childcare at schools in partnership with school districts and community organizations.

