



## **Boys & Girls Clubs of America – Fact Sheet**

The following information has been assembled by the National Scouting and Youth Services Committee to assist chapters with their interaction with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America had its origins in 1860 in Hartford, Connecticut, but it was not until 1906 until the national movement was initiated with the affiliation of several clubs into a single organization. The initial organization was called the Boys Club Federation of America. The first name change occurred in 1931 when the organization became known as the Boys Clubs of America and more recently in 1990, the name was changed to Boys & Girls Clubs of America to recognize the involvement of girls within the cause.

BGCA now serves some 4.8 million girls and boys through membership and community outreach at more than 4,000 affiliates in the United States, and on military bases in Europe and Asia. Though served by a national organization, Boys & Girls Clubs affiliates across the nation are independent organizations managed by their own boards.

A primary focus of Boys & Girls Clubs is to provide a positive place for kids. Club programs and services promote and enhance the development of boys and girls by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging and influence. Often clubs are located in disadvantaged community areas.

Boys & Girls Clubs maintain clubhouses within their communities. Four key characteristics define a Boys & Girls Club. All are considered critical in exerting positive impact on the life of a child:

1. Dedicated Youth Facility - The Boys & Girls Club is a place comprised of an actual neighborhood-based building that is designed solely for youth programs and activities.
2. Open Daily – Clubs are open every day, after school and on weekends, when kids have free time and need positive, productive outlets.
3. Professional Staff - Every Club has full-time, trained youth development professionals, providing positive role models and mentors. Volunteers provide key supplementary support.
4. Available/Affordable to All Youth - Clubs reach out to kids who cannot afford, or may lack access to, other community programs. Dues are low, averaging \$5 to \$10 per year.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America offers a number of nationally recognized programs that address today's most pressing youth issues, teaching young people the skills they need to succeed in life. National programs are available in the areas of education, the environment, health, the arts, careers, alcohol/drug and pregnancy prevention, gang prevention, leadership development and athletics.

A current initiative of the national Boys & Girls Clubs of America organization, along with several other leading youth-serving organizations, is to establish the third Saturday in September each year as Boys & Girls Clubs Day for Kids. Created as a day to foster relationships between adults and children, the mission of BGC Day for Kids is to establish a day to celebrate and honor American children through the gift of meaningful time. Research shows that when adults spend meaningful time with kids it helps them develop a positive self-image and a sense of belonging, usefulness and purpose.

To locate a Boys & Girls Clubs affiliate in your area, visit: <http://www.bgca.org/clubs/>

To learn more about the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, visit: <http://www.bgca.org/howweare/>

To learn more about the programs offered by BGCA, visit: <http://www.bgca.org/programs/>

To learn more about Boys & Girls Clubs Day for Kids, visit: <http://www.dayforkids.org/index.html>