

This year, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and its vital programs will reach nearly 4.5 million young people and their parents in 3,700 neighborhoods and rural communities. BGCA's professional staff will support and engage parents as their school-age children learn character and leadership development, vocational training, healthy behaviors and benefit from a wide range of academic and cultural pursuits. "We not only change the trajectory of a young person's life today but also the trajectory of their children's lives tomorrow," says BGCA President Roxanne Spillett. "That's why we call our work family-strengthening and generation-changing."



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF BELLEVUE

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Award-winning Program: Clubs in Public Housing
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CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2005 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

LEARNING TO DO MORE

Since 1952, a clubhouse in the middle of Bellevue, Washington, has been headquarters to Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue (BGCB). Three generations of children and parents have walked through the clubhouse doors to seek the guidance, support and resources they need to find family success, even as the needs of the surrounding neighborhood and families have changed dramatically.

“What hasn’t changed is that the families we serve struggle to get by and need more help to succeed,” says President/CEO Kathy Haggart. “The parents, like all parents, worry tremendously about their children’s welfare and do whatever is necessary—sometimes working many jobs and odd hours—to give their families a chance at financial stability and a better future. Over the years, we’ve learned how to help them move forward.”



THE CLUBS LINK PARENTS TO NEW
RESOURCES THEY CAN IMMEDIATELY USE
TO SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN’S—AND THEIR
WHOLE FAMILY’S—SUCCESS.

—Kathy Haggart, President/CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue

BUILDING ON TRADITION

As they have always done, BGCB provides young people with a safe after-school environment, filled with opportunities to play sports, get involved in community service projects, and find help with homework or computer learning. But today, parents are just as likely to be logged on at the Club’s computer center, gaining technology skills or even searching on-line for a job. “We’ve learned we have to help parents develop skills, so they can do better for their families,” Haggart explains.

Through community partnerships, BGCB offers ESL, job training, and parenting classes for parents and supports them with access to affordable health care and counseling and education in drug, alcohol and domestic abuse prevention.

Sometimes, making a difference for families means responding to parents’ requests for help. When parents in East Bellevue, an extremely low-income neighborhood with a large immigrant population, wanted support as they banded together to deter gang activity and crime, BGCB partnered with the King County Housing Authority to open a community-based Club in Eastside Terrace public housing. The new Club created a positive center, where family members of all ages could pursue their aspirations.

“Within three months, crime dropped 33 percent,” reports Haggart. Using the model to open Clubs in two additional public housing projects, the Clubs called on Bellevue Community College to translate a brochure listing parent classes and resources into all 22 languages spoken in the new service areas. Says Haggart: “It was our responsibility. Supporting whole families is the only way to change the odds for the next generation.”

FAMILIES COUNT FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

Through a joint venture of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the FAMILIES COUNT Family Strengthening Awards recognize Club programs that work to give children what they need most—strong, capable and economically successful families. Responding to the varied needs of the families they serve, these organizations improve the economic prospects of working men and women and create the services and networks of support that all families need to realize their aspirations for themselves and their children.