

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 INDIANAPOLIS

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Award-winning Program: Family Support Program

Rick Whitten, Executive Director

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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

BRIDGES TO OPPORTUNITIES

Boys & Girls Clubs of Indianapolis has always been about creating a safe passage through the present and a better path to the future for children and youth. In 2004, the Clubs developed the Family Support Program to strengthen children's greatest asset in achieving these goals: their families. In the program's design, the Clubs responded to the requests of parents themselves.

"These parents know we're there for their children, so they asked us to be there for them," says Jeff Small, director of program development. "Eighty-nine percent of these families are below the poverty level and two-thirds are single parent households. Resources are scarce for all of them. They asked us to build bridges to success."



WE'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT
STRENGTHENING FAMILIES STARTS
WITH STRENGTHENING PARENTS. NOW WE
HAVE A NEW OPPORTUNITY TO DO MORE FOR
PARENTS, SO THEY CAN DO MORE, AND BE
MORE CAPABLE, FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

—Rick Whitten, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of Indianapolis

RESOURCES FOR SUCCESS

All nine Boys & Girls Clubs of Indianapolis now reach out to parents and families, using the Family Support Program and crafting it to meet the specialized needs of their communities. Parents can build their skills through ESL classes, basic and advanced computer training, and financial literacy courses. During Family Nights, which bring entire families together for recreation, guest speakers discuss topics that range from parenting tips and advice for healthy cooking to planning for college, opening a savings account and creating a savings plan around a family goal.

At the annual Agency Fair, an all-out carnival may be what brings families through the door. Parents leave with new resources after they visit booths where they can find free medical screenings for themselves and their children, enroll their children in health insurance plans, find job resources and ask questions of an attorney.

"Resources are at the center of what we've learned to do for parents and their families," Small says. "We make a huge effort to link as many parents as possible to the services and supports that will make them more successful at home and in the workplace. To date, more than 2,100 parents have participated in our family programs. That's a lot more kids in our Clubs who now have brighter futures."

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.