



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF PUERTO RICO

CHILDREN DO WELL WHEN THEIR FAMILIES
DO WELL, AND FAMILIES DO BETTER WHEN
THEY LIVE IN SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

2006 FAMILY STRENGTHENING AWARDS

A PLACE FOR PARENTS

The Boys & Girls Club of Puerto Rico (BG CPR) is no longer a place just for children. It is quickly becoming a center for families as well, thanks to the addition of programs and services for parents. In its first year, this Family Support Program involved more than 1,100 parents in activities ranging from job skills training and parenting classes to fitness and social events. In addition to gaining new skills for their work lives and home lives, they have started to become part of the fabric of life at BG CPR.

“Involving parents is so important to us,” says Belissa Aquino-Soto, Grants Coordinator. “We cannot build better communities and instill values and leadership in our children without their involvement.”

The main branch, located at the Las Margaritas Public Housing Complex, now features a designated space for family activities, known as “El Centro de Apoyo Familiar, Tu CASA” (The Family Support Center, Your HOME). Las Margaritas also added staff members dedicated solely to parent outreach.



THE FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAM STRENGTHENS PARENTS IN THEIR ROLES AS NURTURERS AND PROVIDERS. THEY NEED AND DESERVE OUR HELP AS THEY LAY A FOUNDATION FOR THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE SUCCESS AND CITIZENSHIP.

—José Campos-Fusté, Executive Director

BUILDING SKILLS FOR WORK & FAMILY LIFE

At Las Margaritas, one of the most popular new Club offerings has been a confectionery workshop, where parents and their children learn how to make pastries, cakes and other baked goods. It gives them positive time together, but it also gives parents a skill they can use to start a family business. “Parents here are on public assistance, and they don’t see much opportunity for themselves,” Aquino-Soto says. “Two mothers have already taken these skills and started businesses out of their homes.”

At the branch in San Lorenzo, nearly 420 parents have improved their word processing and other software skills by enrolling in a computer class offered at the site. They also learned resume-writing and interviewing skills.

In addition to helping adults become successful economically, the Family Support Program is helping them become more successful parents. At the Mayaguez branch, about 160 parents have taken part in the FAN Club, a program designed to help them influence their children to lead drug-free lives. Club members gain direct access to social services, family and leadership activities, and job skills training, including computer classes and nail care workshops.

“Integrating parents into Club life puts us in a much better position to impact the lives of their children,” Aquino-Soto says. “Now that we have completed our pilot year, we look forward to spreading the word, expanding our offerings and getting more parents involved.”

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.

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, and 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 Spillet. "That's why we call our work family-strengthening and generation-changing."

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Award-winning Program: Family Support Program

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