

Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica Organization Information Summary

History

In 1944, thirty Santa Monica civic leaders decided to open a club for boys to provide positive alternatives and keep them off the streets. Thus in 1946, they opened the Boys Club of Santa Monica. By 1958, the Founding Board Members raised enough funds to build and open the Club's current facility on Lincoln Boulevard. Since then, approximately 150,000 youth have participated in Club programs. On October 16, 1990, the Club announced that it would extend its services to include girls and became the Boys & Girls Club of Santa Monica, a 501(c)3 non-profit public benefit organization. In 1993, the Club expanded its services further by beginning school outreach programs, offering after school activities at school sites throughout Santa Monica.

The main branch of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica is located at 1238 Lincoln Boulevard. We also have eight satellite sites at local schools: Santa Monica High School, Malibu High School, John Adams Middle School, Lincoln Middle School, McKinley Elementary School, Roosevelt Elementary School, Grant Elementary School and Edison Elementary School. Members pay a \$10.00 annual fee to participate in all of our programs. We currently have a membership of over 4,500 youth ages 7-18. Our members come from all over Los Angeles County, largely from Santa Monica, Venice, West Los Angeles and Inglewood. Our diverse membership is: Caucasian - 42%, Latino - 24%, African American - 22%, Multi-Racial - 9% and Asian - 3%. Our web address is www.bgcsantamonica.org.

Mission

Our Mission is to inspire and enable all young people to realize their full potential by developing the characteristics and qualities needed to become caring, responsible and confident citizens.

Overall Activities

The main focus of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica is to provide positive activities for youth during the hours they are not in school. The Club offers a variety of programs in the following areas: education, athletics, technology, arts, leadership development and career preparation, social recreation, and skateboarding and rollerblading. Specialized programs such as *Project Learn*, *Leaders in Training*, *Keystone Club*, and *SMART Moves* (Skills Mastery and Resistance Training) promote members' awareness of their environment and themselves. Programs are offered in a variety of formats including drop-in activities, special group clubs, sports leagues, specialized classes and ongoing instruction. Each department is led by trained youth development professionals and assisted by volunteers in their respective departments. Positive adult role models and adult interaction are a critical aspect to the club. Staff and volunteers must undergo background checks. Our programs are designed to help members develop socially, succeed in school, stay physically active and prepare for positive futures.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica Proposed Activity for Requested Grant

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica seeks a \$10,000 grant from Citigroup Foundation to fund *Project Learn*, a Boys & Girls Clubs of America national program focusing on educational enhancement.

Statement of Need

It has been widely reported that the most critical time each day for children is the after-school hours between 3 and 6 pm. Communities with meaningful after-school programs experience a lower incidence of child crime, gang participation and high school drop-out rates. The shortage of quality after-school activities for children has proven critical in the Santa Monica and West Los Angeles community.

The need for strong educational enhancement programs is greater than ever. It is an unfortunate fact that many of the students who come to the Boys & Girls Club are behind in school. These children come to the club every day and work diligently on their homework. However, if they do not understand concepts, or have not mastered basic skills, no amount of hard work will be enough on its own. These students need individual attention over an extended period of time. Because most of our club members come from low-income, single-parent homes, it is not practical to leave the task of finding tutors and getting children caught up in school to their caretakers. With the proper staffing and support from the community, both financial and in the form of volunteers, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica can provide the educational programming needed to help our members not only to catch up, but also to get ahead.

Use of Funds

It is our philosophy that all children are capable of success. With this in mind, we provide programs geared to ensure that none of our members are left behind academically or socially. One such program is the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's educational enhancement program, *Project Learn*, which has a proven track record for helping students in need. A 30-month study funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and performed by Columbia University showed that in comparison to youth participating in generic after-school programs, *Project Learn* participants showed a 15% higher overall grade point average as well as a rate of truancy reduced by 66%.

Project Learn is made up of five different components (taken from the Project Learn Resource Guide), which are intended to reinforce the skills and knowledge youth gain in school:

- **Homework help and tutoring**—enable Club members to develop the daily habit of completing homework and class preparation in a safe, quiet, allocated space with staff and volunteer encouragement and five to six hours of tutorial assistance weekly.
- **High-yield learning and leisure activities (HYLA)**—help youth practically apply what they learn in the classroom. Clubs encourage youth to make positive and productive choices about how they spend their leisure time at the Club and at home.

- **Parents are encouraged**—to support their children in school and receive parenting information and general direction about family and community activities. The Club actively promotes a positive family environment that supports education.
- **Collaboration with schools**—enables Clubs to work with teachers to develop individualized plans for Club members to build their competency in challenging subjects.
- **Incentives are provided**—to reward Club members for positive academic participation and to encourage family involvement in the Educational Enhancement Program.

All activities from puzzle games and art projects to using the internet and tutoring enhance a child's learning experience. As an educational program, *Project Learn* bridges gaps in knowledge and learning skills. One of the most important results of the project is the benefit our members receive by having guided, attentive help with their homework. Subsequently, our members develop a better appreciation for their own educational goals. Self-directed learning enrichment and practical application of classroom lessons are some of the benefits of High Yield Learning Activities such as writing, leisure reading, discussions with knowledgeable adults, helping others, and games that sharpen cognitive skills.

Budget

The budget for *Project Learn* for one year is \$100,000. This includes salaries, training, supplies (includes books, games, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, dictionaries, etc), field trips and incentives. All of these elements are critical to the success of *Project Learn*. Most of these funds are put towards the Learning Center where the members do their homework and receive tutoring, but because *Project Learn* involves the entire club, they are also distributed in other departments such as the Games Room and the Art Shop.

Impact Evaluation

The success of this program will be measured in several ways. We will perform a case study of the performance of a select group of participants. We are in close contact with the parents of all participants to gather feedback from their own observations of their children. Finally, we have relationships with the schools of our members and their teachers, who provide excellent assessments of how our members are performing. By surveying the schools' teachers, parents and principals as well as the district's superintendent, we will assess our performance based on their satisfaction level.

Conclusion

The research shows that *Project Learn* works. As well, the staff and volunteers here at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Santa Monica have seen firsthand that *Project Learn* works. We are confident that the continuation of this program in all of our locations, including our planned new stand-alone site at John Adams Middle School, will ensure continued success for our members. We invite Citigroup Foundation to join us in this unique and exciting effort that will provide meaningful activities for a group of students very much in need by granting our request.