

FOR MEDIA INFORMATION:
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Boys & Girls Clubs of the Big Bend Common Questions

1. What is the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Big Bend?

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Big Bend provides more than 7,000 children in four North Florida Counties with a positive place to go after school, where they can grow personally and academically in a safe a structured environment. We operate multiple Clubs in Leon, Franklin, Jefferson and Gadsden Counties, which serve kids in the afternoons on weekdays and all day during the summer.

2. What is your organization's mission?

Our mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens.

3. Why is what you do important?

There are so many kids today whose parents work and cannot afford traditional after school programs. These kids need a positive place to go when they would otherwise be unsupervised, where they can learn from strong role models and develop into responsible and successful individuals. More importantly, the Boys & Girls Clubs prevents many young people from making poor decisions and going down the wrong road in life.

4. How is your organization different from traditional after-school programs?

We are more than a typical after-school program in that we administer highly structured programs in five core areas, including character and leadership development, education and career development, health and life skills, arts and cultural enrichment, and sports, fitness and recreation. Our kids learn everything from practical banking concepts to healthy nutrition and eating habits. They also have a chance to improve their artistic and music abilities, as well as their academic and physical fitness levels.

5. How are your programs and services relevant to the issues we're facing in our community today?

Unfortunately in the counties we serve, we continue to see a rise in juvenile violent crime, gang activity, teen pregnancy and low academic achievement. At the Boys & Girls Clubs, we have specific programs that address these issues head on.

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For example, we offer a life skills workshop for girls encompassing drugs, tobacco, alcohol and sex education. For Boys, we offer a program called Passport to Manhood, which is a values-based approach to teaching young teenage boys how to make good decisions. In February, we also committed to an effort called 40 Days of Nonviolence where our kids participated in 40 days of community service projects and learned about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s principles of nonviolence.

Academic achievement is also a major focus of ours. The kids participate in Power Hour every day, which is an hour-long study session, and have access to one-on-one mentors and tutors.

6. How, specifically, does the Boys & Girls Clubs address gang involvement?

We administer a program called Street SMART, which focuses on gang prevention, conflict resolution, positive peer groups, and other situations and issues that affect teens in the area. Some of our staff recently participated in town hall meetings with city officials and community leaders to discuss ways to deal with gang activity in our area.

7. Specifically, how does your organization focus on academic achievement?

Every day, our Club members participate in what we call Power Hour, which is an hour-long study hall where kids can complete their homework and get help with their academic needs. For kids that need extra help, we provide them with additional study time and one-on-one support. We also work with local universities to help our kids meet college entry requirements and assist them with the application and financial aid process.

8. How do you measure the impact your organization has on the community?

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America, of which we are an independent affiliate, has been around for more than 100 years. Its programs are proven to positively impact children and their communities. Nationally, we know that 90% of Boys & Girls Clubs members graduate high school, and more than half say their Club literally saved their life.

Statewide, Florida TaxWatch conducted a study in 2008 that concluded Florida Boys & Girls Clubs save taxpayers millions of dollars associated with high school drop-outs and juvenile offenders. Boys & Girls Club members in our state are less likely to drop out of school and less likely to commit serious crimes. In addition, for nearly every \$1 invested in after school programs like the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Big Bend, taxpayers save \$3 by reducing juvenile arrests, incarceration, grade repetition and other costs to society.

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In the Big Bend, 60% of our members have seen improved academic achievement, 80% saw an improvement in their study skills, and 90% of members' parents or guardians reported improvement in their child's overall behavior.

9. How is your organization funded?

As an independent nonprofit organization, we depend heavily on the financial support of area residents and private sector businesses to ensure we have the resources necessary to serve more than 7,000 local children every year. We also receive a small portion of our funding from the United Way and a larger portion from government and private grants. However, without the continued generosity of individual and private donors, we would not be able to serve nearly as many children or provide the level of quality programming that we are known for.

10. How can people help?

Our organization depends on passionate and dedicated volunteers who want to provide kids with hope for a bright future. Volunteers serve as one-on-one mentors, homework helpers and administrative assistants among other roles. To volunteer, just visit our Web site at www.thepositiveplaceforkids.org and click on Get Involved to download the volunteer application. You can also call our main office at 850-656-8100.

Of course, we could also use any financial support from the community. We do what we can do to fulfill our mission with limited resources, and we could always use monetary and in-kind donations to help sustain us. To donate online, visit www.thepositiveplaceforkids.org and click on donate now. To sponsor one of our programs or make an in-kind donation, call our main office at 850-656-8100.

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