2020
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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF ELKHART COUNTY

2020

ANNUAL REPORT

Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County is a force for good.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County is a force for good in the lives of young people in our area. Fostering a sense of belonging in a safe environment has been a priority for more than 65 years. Our team of experienced youth development professionals and caring staff sees potential in every child and teen that walks through our doors. We are here to elevate the youth of our community and let them know that they are capable, worthy and important.

Our programs have evolved and changed over the past six decades, but what hasn't changed is the dedication of our expert staff members. They serve as role models and create lasting, positive relationships with our members.

Our mission is to inspire and empower all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens. That involves opening avenues of opportunity for young people across our community.

A quality Club experience assures success is within reach of every young person who enters our doors. We work with all members to help keep them on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future, equipped with skills needed to have a successful life and demonstrating good character and citizenship.

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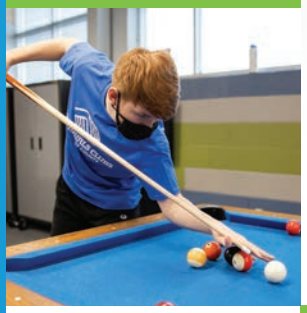
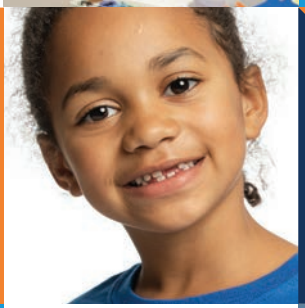




Letter From the President/CEO

Dear friends,

2020 was a year like no other in recent history. We were forced to navigate our way through a global pandemic and were faced with challenges no one had experienced in generations.

But during those challenges, the staff and members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County showed a **determination and resilience** that was truly amazing. When health concerns caused our country to shut down, we went into action. We knew that our most precious resource – our young people – could not be left behind as their world changed dramatically right before their eyes.

Our dedicated team quicky developed ways to keep them connected through virtual technology. We were able to develop programs to help them with remote learning and to make sure they knew that the people they were used to connecting with on a daily basis were still there to support them, even if they were forced to do it at a distance.

Once it was safe to return to Club, we created safe environments to ensure that parents felt secure in returning to work, knowing their kids had a team to help them through the hybrid learning process.

Our goal is to inspire and empower young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential. That never changed during the pandemic and now our attention is focused on building the programs those young people have come to expect and rely upon. We are working hard to prepare our children and teens with the skills they need to be successful in life.

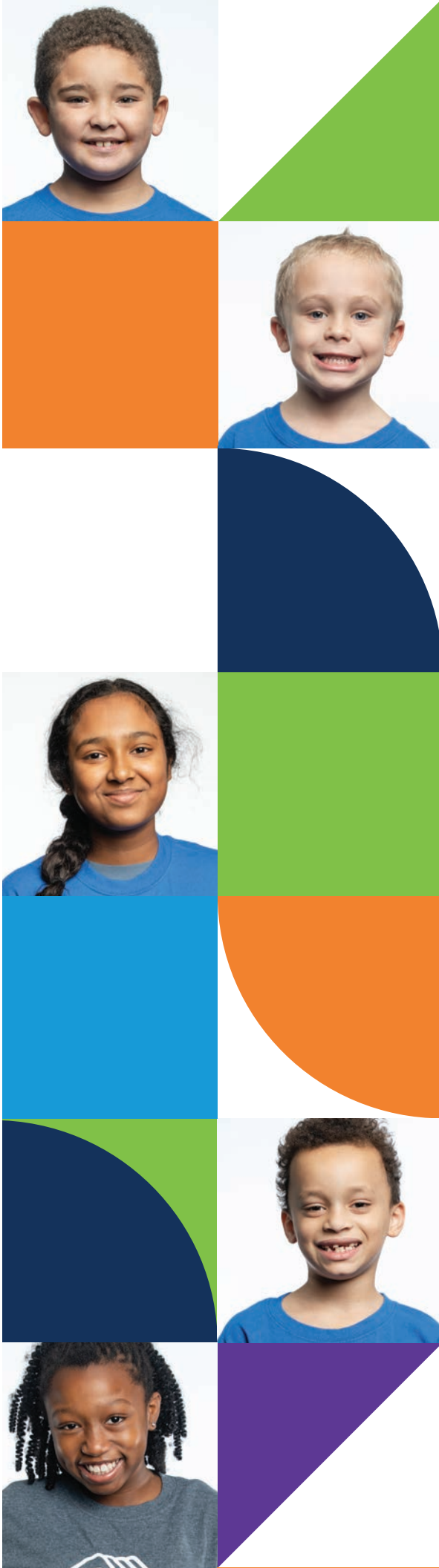
We're excited about what lies ahead. **We will be launching a new teen club in partnership with the Elkhart Schools at the new Freshman Division.** This will be a unique opportunity to reach and engage teens in a new way. We're also developing new programs for workforce readiness to make sure every member leaves our program with skills needed to succeed.

We could not have made it through this past year without the support of our community. We thank you for your continued support and generosity. It's that commitment that is creating great futures for the young people of Elkhart County.

Sincerely,

Kevin Deary

Kevin Deary
President/CEO
Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County



2020 Challenges

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF ELKHART COUNTY

March 2020 set in motion a series of events that no one could have foreseen.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced businesses and schools to shut down and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County was no exception.

Because of the important service we provide to the young people who need us most, long-term closure was not an option. That's why Club leadership and staff members quickly got to work, finding solutions to maintain the connections that our members needed.

Programming at the Clubs pivoted to virtual offerings. As schools moved lessons online, we offered online homework help, so students had the help they needed – even though they could not come into the physical Club locations.

Our Clubs also offered a variety of regular programs online by launching CLUB at Home. It was a virtual location where members could participate in fun programs and meaningful activities and keep in touch with their leaders and friends.

Stride Academy, MyFuture.Net, read-alongs, art, DIY STEM, career exploration and healthy habits are just some of the programs we ran virtually. Club members were encouraged to take part and earn prizes based on how many activities they accomplished and how many badges they earned in the MyFuture program.

The goal through all of this was to keep members connected and engaged -- to keep their brains learning, bodies active and connections strong.

Because so many of our members rely on Club to provide meals and snacks, the Goshen team worked hard to fill the need. It served more than 400 meals and 400 snacks in a "drive-thru" fashion in just one day!

Meal packs included an invitation for teens to check CLUB at Home and provided safe activities for younger Club members to try at home. Lippert volunteers donated boxes of hygiene and art supplies that were given out with the meals.

The pandemic also impacted our ability to hold fund-raising events. Some of those moved online as well. We canceled the in-venue aspect of the 2020 Bid on a Dream Dinner Auction which raises money for Nappanee's Boys & Girls Club, holding the auction online. We also conducted a trivia night virtually.

As soon as it was safe to reopen our facilities in June 2020, we returned to summer programming. Staff worked to make sure masks and social distancing were in place and created a "pod" system which kept members grouped together based on their school locations.

In the fall, our Clubs mirrored the school districts we serve. Individual Clubs worked to match the hybrid schedule the schools were using – offering a safe place for kids to take part in virtual learning while their parents were at work.

The leadership, staff and members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County lived our motto of doing "Whatever It Takes" to make sure the services we provide are there when young people need us the most.

Whatever It Takes to Build Great Futures.

WHO WE ARE

Opened as The Goshen Boys Club in April of 1956 on Crescent Street, Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County has been a force for good in the lives of youth for more than 60 years. Our team of skilled, caring professionals is experienced in youth development. We see potential in every child and teen that walks through our doors. We are here to elevate the youth of our community and let them know that they are capable, worthy and important.

STATEMENT OF INCLUSION

All belong. Our mission and beliefs fuel our commitment to promoting safe, positive, and inclusive environments for all. Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County supports all youth and teens – of every race, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic status, and religion – in reaching their full potential.

WHAT WE DO

We provide a quality Club experience that assures success is within reach of every young person who enters our doors, with all members on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future, equipped with the skills needed to have a successful life, and demonstrating good character and citizenship.

2020 Club Highlights

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic, there were bright spots throughout the year at each of our Clubs and our KidsCare sites.

Staff members worked hard to create a new sense of normal to keep our members safe, but were also able to incorporate the activities that members and their families expect from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County.

Throughout the school year, our team ensured members had their needs met academically. That included talking to teachers and social workers, reaching out to school counselors, sending emails to parents, and driving to members' homes to pick up iPads and workbooks.

BGC Academy assisted members with e-Learning during hybrid school schedules, creating a safe place for members to learn while parents were working.

To meet the needs of parents returning to work, KidsCare opened two new sites in 2020. Locations opened at New Paris Elementary in New Paris and Eastwood Elementary in Sturgis, Michigan.

This was the first time that KidsCare expanded to a location outside of the county and state. Staff worked to secure these new locations over the course of the previous two years through the building of relationships with superintendents and community members.

We partnered with the Sturgis Area Community Foundation to secure funding to help in the first year of our program in Sturgis. The funding provided reduced weekly fees for parents, supply expenses and staffing costs. We averaged around 20 kids in both the before and after-school programs, which is impressive for the first year.

Middlebury Club continued to offer hands-on programs about Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. While the pandemic limited the volunteers that normally help with the program, staff filled in the gaps and several members took part every week.

Elkhart Club worked with Sean Cale from Lippert to educate our teens on workplace efficiency. He led the youth through the strategy used by Lippert and provided examples. Members created simulations using legos to provide the members hand-on opportunities to see the strategies play out.

Goshen Club hosted special Teen Nights for members who couldn't come on a regular basis during the pandemic. At one event, members were able to watch the screenplay Hamilton, while enjoying a popcorn cart. The play prompted discussions about issues like racism, immigration, choices and how those things relate to our world today.

Nappanee Club found unique ways to keep members occupied while maintaining social distancing. And they may have created some future sportscasters in the process. Because the kids were divided into Club pods, it impacts the number who could be together for gym time.

Members who were waiting their turn provided play by play calls as their peers enjoyed time outside.

All of our Clubs took special steps to make sure special events were remembered.

Nappanee Club celebrated Halloween with "parties in the pods". Members dressed up in their favorite costumes and walked in a costume parade, participated in several themed activities, decorated pumpkins and received a goodie bag on their way home. Our team also dressed up as characters from the Wizard of Oz.

Because some families were not able to get together for Thanksgiving, Middlebury Club prepared a meal for members. Board members volunteered to serve food and help sanitize between each school pod. The extra food was given to a Club family that was in need for their Thanksgiving celebration.

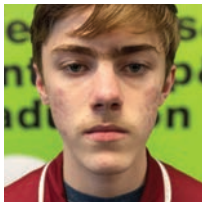
In Elkhart, local businesses helped provide families with household necessities, gifts for the children and food during the holiday season. Torch Club members created a centerpiece that was donated to the Salvation Army for an auction. They also hosted a donation drive for the local Humane Society.

2020 2021 YOUTH of the YEAR

ZAYRIS

SYDNEY

KRISTINA


CARSON

Even a pandemic couldn't stop Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County from recognizing the best of the best. Each Club had one member who was chosen the Youth Of The Year.

Carson Simmons represented the Middlebury Club, Sydney Hamsher represented Nappanee, Kristina Petkova represented Goshen and Zayris Dillon represented Elkhart. Dillon also won the county-wide competition.

Petkova impressed others with her ability to build rapport and to connect with ease. Attending Club since she was in first grade, she describes Club as "a magical land where you can be anything" and one does "not have to worry about what people think of you."

A member of Torch Club, Secretary of 4H and a coach for Girls on the Run, Petkova knows the Boys & Girls Club Elkhart County as the "place where I can express myself and truly feel like I belong."

As the Goshen Youth of the Year, she lives into the mission of becoming a "productive, caring and responsible citizen."

Simmons values the leadership opportunities he has been afforded during his seven years at Club. He reflects that while he came to Club as a youngster because "he had to," and it was a place to access WiFi, he now comes to Club because he wants to connect with others and explore new opportunities.

He values his time in Torch Club, the service Club that expanded his connections to the community. He contributes to Club by finding "new ways to make things better, like caring for video gaming equipment."

He recalls a time when he had difficulty with interactions due to a "short fuse and temper." Through the Club he was able to connect with a skills trainer who talked to him, providing new strategies for his strong emotions. Simmons states that he has been able to overcome his anger "to a point where people would not even recognize me as an angry person."

Hamsher reflected on the challenges of eLearning during the Spring of 2020. She found herself struggling with anxiety and depression.

She relies on her organizational skills to plan and adjust to the demands of remote learning. Hamsher wants to make it "easier for young adults to be organized" and to develop organizational skills so "they can feel better about who they are as a person."

Hamsher credits the Nappanee Club for preparing her for the future by providing programs like Level Up, Keystone, Torch, Junior Staff and STEM Mentoring. She looks forward to applying the skills she has learned in completing a job application, ways to find a job, professionalism and money management.

In front of three judges, Dillon shared about the first time he arrived in Elkhart County. He was far from his home in Mississippi and his family's only connection to this area was his aunt.

Without friends and in a new school, the move was difficult. He was developing behaviors that didn't help him: experimenting with smoking, alcohol and drugs. When he discovered the Boys & Girls Club in Elkhart, a whole new world of opportunity opened for him.

> "I was surprised when the adults and younger kids thought of me as a leader... I realized I had more things to learn and to try to be a good influence for those younger than me."
> - Zarius Dillon

Sports became a meaningful outlet, particularly football. By his freshman year in high school, he was in the starting lineup at Elkhart High School. He gives credit to his father and grandfather for their guidance in his decision-making.

They encouraged him to make his own decisions and to learn valuable lessons from his mistakes. "I have learned to become responsible and ... that I have a great support system within my family, school, and Boys & Girls Club. Experiencing such support, this became a major turning point in my life."

Program Pillars

Academic Support

Summer Brain Gain, Level Up, STEM programs

Workforce Development

Junior Staff, AmeriCorps

Social/Emotional Wellness

Passport, SMART, BGCA mentoring

Good Character & Citizenship

Torch Club, Keystone, Youth of the Year

Letter From
The Chairman

As I look back on the challenges of 2020, I'm amazed, but not surprised, by the resilience that we saw in our leadership team, our amazing staff and the young people who attend the Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County on a daily basis.

The ability to shift our programming virtually to make sure that our young people maintained a connection with the programs they depend on was simply amazing. And when we were able to bring our members back into the Clubs, our team went above and beyond to make sure that members who weren't ready to come back in person didn't get left behind. There were virtual check-ins and care packages delivered to individual households to make sure that no one was left out.

I've been proud to lead the Board of Trustees during this time and I'm excited about what the future holds as we return to a sense of normal. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Elkhart County never lost sight of the mission before us and we'll continue to inspire and empower the young people of this community! Thank you to everyone who supports this mission with their financial support and thank you to the parents who entrust us with their most precious children.

Sincerely,

Brent Carrick

Board Leadership

2020 TRUSTEES

Brent Carrick, *President/Board Chair*
Dr. Toni Pauls, *Vice Chair*
Shaun Mawhorter, *Treasurer*
Jeff Lund, *Secretary*
Jason Bontrager
Shelly Fidler
Steve Fidler
Dawn Fisher
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Theresa Gunden
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Dan Oakley
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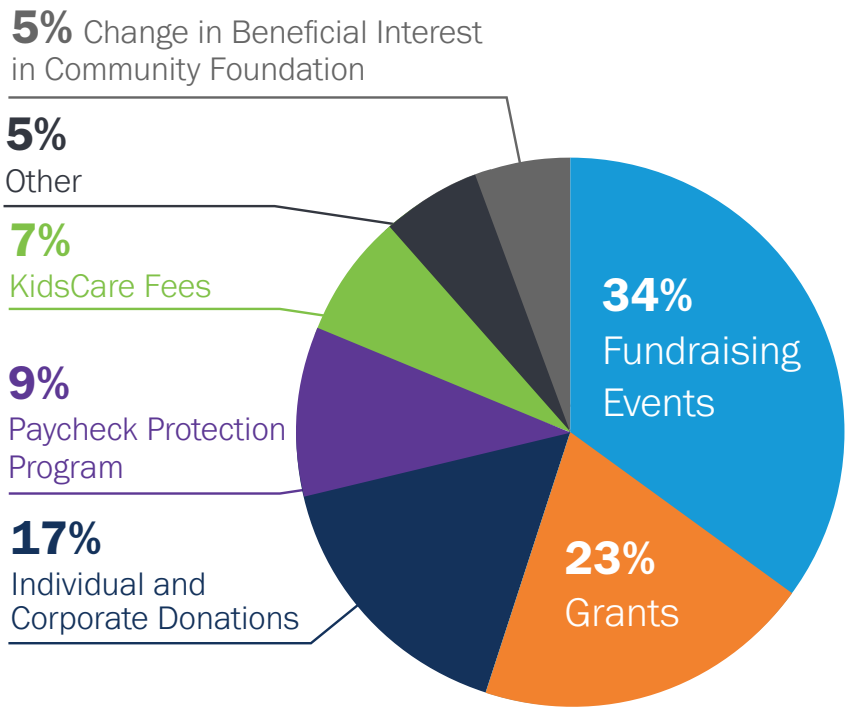
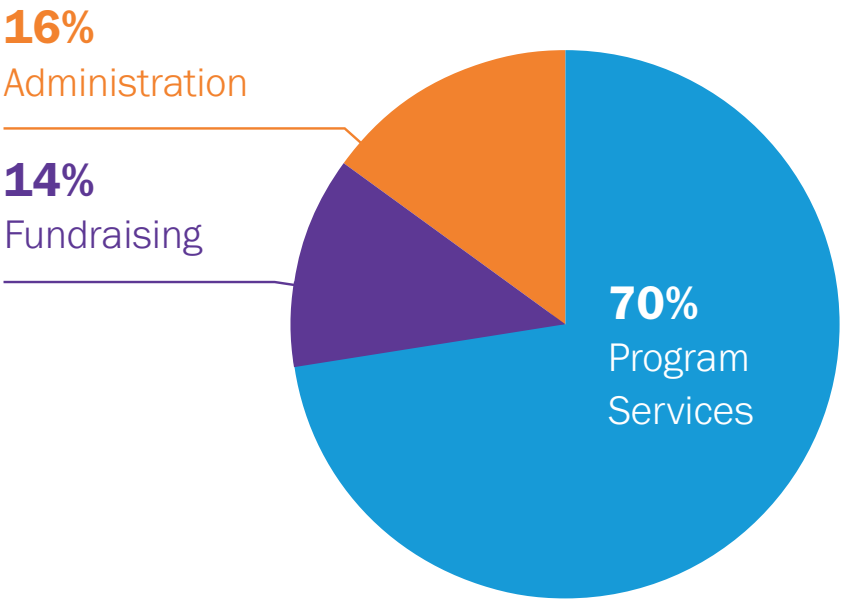
BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF ELKHART COUNTY

Financial Information

To make sure that the youth who need us most can afford our services, Club members pay an annual fee of just $30. This nominal fee opens the door to year-round programs that cost more than $1,300 per child. Thanks to the generous support of our funding organizations and individual donors, we can afford to empower and inspire every young person, regardless of their means.



REVENUES



EXPENSES

Member Profile Stats

2,744
MEMBERS SERVED IN 2020
(75% OF REGISTERED MEMBERS)

3,672
MEMBERS REGISTERED IN 2020

10,581
MEALS & SNACKS SERVED FOR REMOTE LEARNING
(GOSHEN CLUB IN APRIL & MAY)

77% AGE 6-12
23% AGE 13-18
MEMBER AGE BREAKDOWN

52%
BOYS

48%
GIRLS

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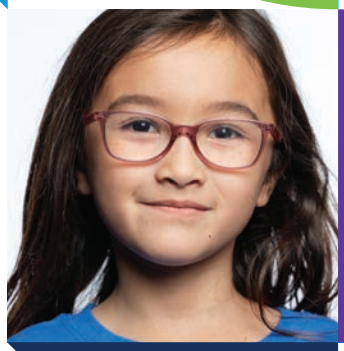

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GREATFUTURES.CLUB

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