Kids make you forget who's giving, receiving. Your generosity is so powerful. You create opportunity for those kids who might otherwise be lost to the streets or thrust back into a cycle of poverty. You keep teens safe when school lets out. You make our community a better place. 

Donors like you are remarkable. You step up to help the kids who need us most. And the returns are, well, equally remarkable. “Wow, what a win-win,” says supporter Walter Chapman. “I get so much more from giving than I put into it — so it’s an easy equation to formulate.”

Donor Mark Bachmann says, “There is always someone who needs attention, a hand, a hug. And it is miraculous to me that the more we give, of our time and dollars, the better we feel ourselves. Strange. It has taken me the better part of my life to come to the realization that happiness comes from a focus on others.”

Thank you so much for your support of Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland. We do not take that support lightly. We promise to use your dollars wisely to lift the hopes, opportunities and skills of the more than 7,000 kids who each year find caring mentors, academic help and after-school fun at our Clubs. You make that happen. It is a powerful statement, and we are so grateful.

Sincerely,

Ron Soeder
President and CEO
Kiara Brown has never been one to shy away from trying new things. So you can only imagine what happened when Kiara walked into the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland site in her Mount Pleasant neighborhood and found a menu of activities ranging from sports to art to leadership groups. Kiara tried them all. And she says it is impossible to overestimate the impact it had on her life.

“That place was my home away from home. It helped me grow into the person I am today,” she says.

Kiara, 22, is now an aspiring teacher whose experience studying in Uganda and Senegal has prompted her to encourage people of color to go abroad “to have a transformative experience like I had.” She recently graduated from Ohio State University with a major in international studies and a double minor in art and French. She attended OSU under the Young Scholars Program, which is for first-generation college students.

YOUR SUPPORT INSPIRES AND EMPOWERS THE KIDS WHO NEED US MOST.

Under the guidance of caring adult mentors, youth who are struggling in the classroom become lifelong readers, musicians, entrepreneurs and graduates. Our kids don’t just talk about character and citizenship – they embrace it through service projects such as volunteer leaf-raking to delivering water to Flint, Mich. And youth who belong to Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland learn to adopt healthy lifestyles that include eating well, exercising regularly and reducing risky habits.

You also enable such innovative BGCC offerings as an entrepreneurial farm program, the Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance violence-prevention effort, a Notes for Notes recording studio and a growing career readiness initiative.

This is our blueprint for Great Futures. Every day, you help us make it a reality.

You are... THE HOPE FOR A GREAT FUTURE

Your support inspires and empowers the kids who need us most.
Sports and Healthy Lifestyles

Kids looking to play sports outside of a school setting are finding new and varied opportunities at Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland. BGCC’s Catch Me If You Can Basketball Program, launched with the support of Rick Doody in honor of his late son, Alex, attracted several hundred players in its first year and created the first Club AAU teams. Our partnership with the Cleveland Indians and the Play Ball! Program exposed more kids to the game, and our flag football league, supported by Buffalo Wild Wings, remains very popular.

In addition, members are encouraged to stay fit through such initiatives as the Nestlé National Fitness Competition and our Club-wide Olympics Day.

You are...
Helping Kids Find Caring Adult Mentors

Damarko Haynes does not acknowledge feeling hurt when his father missed his birthday and all eight of his AAU Basketball games in the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland team’s first season. Others were there for Damarko, including his mom and King Kennedy Club Director Richard Starr, who has been an advocate for the family since they moved here from Detroit three years ago.

“He (Starr) treats me like a son,” Damarko says. “I can talk to him about anything.”

Damarko, 14, is one of the hundreds of Cleveland kids who find caring adult role models at our Clubs each year. For Damarko, having such a mentor has enabled him to improve his grades, stay on a positive path and excel in sports, including playing a key role in his AAU team’s 7-1 season.

He is brutally honest when asked how he found the Club – “I was bored” – and equally frank about his experience as a member: “You can do so many different things at the Club,” he says. “We play basketball and other sports, but you can also come here and get your homework done.”

He adds, “The club is really important to me. If it weren’t here, I wouldn’t have all the opportunities I have. It makes me feel like I belong. And I feel safe.”
Arts: Popular with Youth

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland arts program has become a cultural powerhouse in the realm of after-school care. In 2016, a total of 1,872 kids took part in our arts programs, which include band, guitar, fashion design, ballet, African dance and drumming, hip hop dance, drama, graphic design and creative writing.

Under the direction of Matt Bott and with the support of partners such as Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and the Ohio Arts Council, BGCC’s arts offerings are attracting new Club members and exposing kids to opportunities they would otherwise not receive. For example, we had 133 kids involved in ballet, 122 in graphic design and 106 in creative writing.

Kids also write stories and sell advertising for Club News, a bi-monthly newspaper for members and their families.

YOU ARE...

HELPING KIDS DISCOVER NEW POSSIBILITIES

Those who know Karoline Torres find it hard to believe there was a time when she was shy.

But Karoline, who was born in Puerto Rico and came to Cleveland at age 4, swears it is true. Then one day she joined her older brother when he went to the nearby Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland site. She fell in love with the Club.

“There, I found people to talk to. And I made a lot of friends,” she says.

Today, Karoline, now 13, is one of the most active Club members in Cleveland. The once-shy kid has been a clarinet player in the BGCC Band for four years and went on the band’s musical excursions to Detroit and Chicago. She was president of the Torch Club, a leadership group. She was in a dance group. And she has been a consistent writer for Club News, BGCC’s member-written newspaper.

Tragedy struck her family last year when Karoline’s father died unexpectedly. She says the first people to step up and help her mother were members of the larger Club family, including staffers. “They helped us so much,” she says.

So what does belonging to the Club mean to Karoline? “Sometimes when I do something wrong and my mom won’t let me go to the Club that day, I will be disappointed in myself. That’s how much I like going to the Club.”

Karoline adds, “I don’t think my life would be the same without the Club.”
Making beautiful Sounds

The only Notes for Notes recording studio in Ohio – and one of only 16 in the nation – is located in Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland’s Broadway Club. There, kids have the opportunity to explore, create and record music for free.

You ARE...
CONNECTING KIDS TO MUSIC

Keith Buckhanon, 16, is sitting in a high-tech workstation in the Notes for Notes recording studio at Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland’s Broadway Club. Looking over his shoulder is Ryan Easter, an experienced producer and a regional director for Notes for Notes, a Nashville-based nonprofit. “Eventually, I’m going to show you how to sample,” Easter says.

The studio – a joint venture between BGCC and Notes for Notes – is a safe haven for Keith, one in which he is thriving. Bullied in school because of his smallish stature, Keith lashed out in ways that got him into trouble. “I was hanging out with the wrong crowd, doing things I should not do,” he says. That changed when he found the Club. The son of church musicians, Keith has loved music ever since the time he performed “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” at age 7. So he began hanging around the studio, listening to Easter and producing his own songs. “I know (Easter) can teach me the recording business,” the aspiring rapper/producer says, “and I should take advantage of that.”

And his life experience has influenced his taste in music. “Negativity, it’s not going to help you,” Keith says. “The rappers I like are all about making positive changes in your life.”

Making beautiful Sounds

The only Notes for Notes recording studio in Ohio – and one of only 16 in the nation – is located in Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland’s Broadway Club. There, kids have the opportunity to explore, create and record music for free.

The studio is packed with professional instruments – guitars, basses, drums and keyboards – as well as DJ gear, digital music workstations and full recording facilities. Coordinating the operations is veteran music producer Ryan Easter, the regional director for Notes for Notes, a Nashville-based nonprofit that designs, equips and staffs after-school recording studios inside Boys & Girls Clubs around the country. The Cleveland studio, which opened in 2016, is a cooperative venture between BGCC and N4N, with support from Turner Construction Co. and the Hot Topic Foundation.
Ambus Shephard, 23, is a dad on a new mission: To straighten out his own life and become a positive role model for his four sons. To do so, he is distancing himself from a criminal past – one in which he spent time in prison – and joining a new Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland jobs program.

Shephard is hoping Pathway to Resilience, a pilot initiative created by the Clubs and Resilience Capital Partners, will help him become the father – and the person – he has always wanted to be.

“I am not proud of some of the things I have done in the past,” says Shephard, who learned about Pathway from a friend. “But if I stick with this program and reach my goal, it will change my life for the better.”

For Shephard, it’s a second chance: “I was tired of living on the street. I want a better life.”

**HERE’S WHAT’S ON THE HORIZON AT BGCC**

- We are looking forward to the first graduates of Pathway to Resilience, an innovative pilot job training program for at-risk teens and young adults. This six-month career readiness and mentoring program combines job skills and literacy instruction with extracurricular activities such as athletics and music.
- The new East Tech Teen Center will enable us to serve more kids in that neighborhood. The Cavs and NBA Cares gave this project a huge boost in 2017 by renovating the space and adding equipment, furniture and technology.
- Our career readiness program, which seeks to prepare teens for good jobs, regardless of whether or not they attend college, is about to blossom. In addition to working with employers, we help kids with soft skills, career exploration visits, internships and summer jobs.
- The independent Cleveland Peacemakers Alliance, a BGCC subsidiary, heads into its second full year with a mission to create safer neighborhoods by reducing gang-related violence. To date, Peacemakers outreach workers have been in contact with more than 900 teens and young adults.
Financial Overview

Operating Revenue

- Save Our Kids Campaign: 21% (2016), 22% (2015)
- Corporations: 12% (2016), 11% (2015)
- Individuals: 8% (2016), 4% (2015)
- Other: 5% (2016), 7% (2015)
- Events: 4% (2016), 4% (2015)

Total Operating Revenue: $4,722,218

Financial Overview

Operating Expenses

- Program: 80% (2016), 80% (2015)
- Fundraising: 12% (2016), 10% (2015)
- Administrative: 8% (2016), 10% (2015)

Total Operating Expenses: $4,861,326

Your Dollars at Work:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland has earned a 4-star (top) rating from Charity Navigator for five consecutive years, a distinction earned by only 8 percent of the U.S. nonprofits evaluated by America’s largest independent charity evaluator.
- A University of Michigan study found that Boys & Girls Clubs provide $9.60 in benefits to the community for every dollar invested. The biggest benefits are from Club members’ improved grades and reduced alcohol use, and their parents’ earnings.
One of the largest Boys & Girls Club agricultural operations in the nation is located at our Broadway Club. There, nine teens are employed in BGCC’s entrepreneurial farm program, in which they learn how to start, operate and grow a food-based business.

Tomatoes, zucchini, onions, garlic, lettuce, peppers, radishes and more are grown in outside beds and in two hoop houses at the Club site. Produce is sold at several local farmers markets, at local butcher Saucisson and at Third Federal Savings’ lunchtime farm stand. Kids in the program also hold trips to food vendors, vineyards and farms to see how they operate. In addition, BGCC partners with culinary professionals.

Antonae Norris, 15, one of the program participants, wants to get a business degree, become a chef and own a restaurant. “I know I want a flourishing restaurant, four to five stars,” she says. “I will cook five-star food.”
**Behind the News**

I’ve grown up in a family of 12 kids and I think very early that the world doesn’t revolve around you. With nine younger siblings I was changing diapers when I was still in diapers myself. There is always someone who needs attention. A hand. A hug. And it is miraculous to me that the more we give, of our time and dollars, the better we feel our selves. Strange. It has taken me the better part of my life to come to the realization that happiness comes from a focus on others.”

Mark Bachmann, Medina
I give because I am grateful. Grateful for all the blessings and advantages that I have enjoyed throughout my life. I am particularly grateful for a good education, fulfilling employment and wonderful family and friends. It is my desire that each Club member enjoy as many of these same advantages as is possible. The Clubs provide and support an environment for each Club member that his or her opportunity to have a happy and successful life. That's why I give.

Carol Rolfs, Member

Why I give...
"I don't feel as if I am donating my time or energy to the Boys & Girls Club. I feel fortunate to be able to spend the time with the fine young people who are members of the Clubs that we operate. All children deserve the opportunity to be a part of an organization that will make them feel safe and secure. All children deserve the opportunity to be exposed to different cultures, countries and professions. Spending time interacting with the young people at the Club warms my heart because the children are so nice, friendly and full of curiosity. I know that if I give..."
Why I Give:

"On giving, wow, what a win-win! I get so much more from giving than I put into it - so many ways of giving that work for me. I truly believe it, when asked how I'm doing, that privilege. I also give because I get tremendous personal satisfaction from knowing that I am making a difference in the lives of many who have less opportunities than me. Many have heard me say: 'It's not just that I give, I truly believe it; when asked how I'm doing, the answer is 'much better than I deserve!'"

Walter Chapman

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BGCC gratefully acknowledges our many donors.

We apologize for any errors or omissions. Please contact Robert Koonce at 216-883-2106 ext. 223 with any corrections.

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The focus of every work day is to inspire and empower our kids.

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Our Vision
Our Vision to provide a world-class Club experience that assures success is within reach of every young person who comes through our doors, with all members on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future, demonstrating good character and citizenship, and living a healthy lifestyle.

Staff
The focus of every work day is to inspire and empower our kids.