



Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney
Councilmember

202101625

April 28, 2021

MOTION

WE MOVE that City Council allocate \$300,000 from the American Rescue Plan Act to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Cincinnati branch, in order to provide tutoring for Cincinnati's children who have fallen behind academically during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the total allocation, \$50,000 will help to fund the 2021 summer tutoring programs, and \$250,000 will fund year-round tutoring programs.

Councilmember Jan-Michele Lemon Kearney

STATEMENT

Preliminary studies indicate that the missed in-person school days during the COVID-19 pandemic have negatively affected academic achievement. Therefore, a strong tutoring program for our students is essential, and we are grateful that the Boys & Girls Clubs' CEO Bob Bresser, came to City Council with a viable plan.

The Boys & Girls Clubs serve more than 5,000 youth in 10 Clubs in Greater Cincinnati, taking a holistic approach of engaging and developing young people by providing them with the tools and support they need to reach their full potential. The materials state that service to youth includes "consistent, frequent engagement, and strong commitment to our program model. We think of ourselves as an extension of their family and together, we make it possible for our young people to graduate, be better prepared for life, and stand ready to serve their community. Armed with these core life skills, our members complete the transformation from at-risk youth to productive adults who contribute to our community."



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF GREATER CINCINNATI

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April 14, 2021

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Dear Councilmember Kearney,

Thousands of Cincinnati Public School students have fallen behind their peers in other communities due to a year of virtual school. This represents the single largest challenge Hamilton County and the City of Cincinnati is facing in the wake of COVID-19. Utilizing American Rescue Act dollars to fund agencies that know how to bridge this gap is imperative. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati (BGC GC) is the premier youth service organization in the region, bridging learning gaps and serving at-risk youth age 5-18 for over 80 years. We were named the best Adolescent/Youth Counseling Agency in Cincinnati by Cincy Magazine in 2020 and we continued to serve our families throughout majority of the COVID-19 crisis. In fact, our Cincinnati sites in Price Hill and Avondale have been open since last June and throughout the entire school year serving youth in-person.

The COVID-19 crisis disproportionately affected at-risk youth. Virtual school created a major challenge for our families. Most of the households we serve are single-parent and considered low-income. Most of our parents are employed and could not provide the childcare necessary to support at-home virtual learning. Moreover, most of those families did not have adequate technology (devices, Wi-Fi) to support their child's academics. BGC GC combated this by providing the following services to nearly 200 youth in Hamilton County and over 400 youth regionally in 2020:

- Instead of operating for five hours after school, BGC GC opened 7:30am-5pm Monday-Friday to provide a safe place students can log on to virtual school and to allow parents to work.
- Hiring 20 extra part-time employees to staff the expanded hours to support the academic needs of students.
- Increasing our Wi-Fi capabilities to ensure all students could log on to school.
- Serving breakfast, lunch, dinner and two snacks daily to students.

In 2020, these additional, unplanned expenses (namely PPE, capital technology expenses, and additional staff) cost BGC GC over \$175,000. We received \$120,000 in Hamilton County CARES Act funding and \$15,000 through ODJFS to support these expenses in 2020, but these expanded services have extended into 2021 and new challenges like combating learning loss are on the horizon.

The learning loss phenomena is most pronounced in underserved youth, the youth BGC GC serves. The learning gap has been widened by COVID-19 as most of the youth BGC GC serves did not attend school in-person for most of the school year while their peers in other communities had that opportunity. Add in the two months of school lost at the end of the 2019-2020 year and the summer learning loss that always exists and the youth we serve are facing a crisis.

BGC GC already knows how to bridge these gaps. For over 80 years we have conducted comprehensive after school programming and a summer program that runs through the end of July, typically a month longer than other youth service summer programs. We quantify success and track progress using AIMSweb reading and math assessments. We track social/emotional skill building



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(often referred to as “soft skills” by employers) utilizing the Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment. At BGGC:

- 76% of our students increased their ability to read the last full school year we operated.
- 78% of our students increased their ability to do math the last full school year we operated.
- 88% of our students have the social/emotional competencies necessary for success in school and life in 2020.
- We served 37,923 meals and 17,829 snacks during the pandemic.

BGGC also maintains 1:15 staff to student ratios and train our staff using the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) methodology developed by the Weikart Center for Program Quality. Quality programming is our primary focus and the YPQI model focuses on safe environments, supportive environments, engagement, youth centered policies and procedures and high expectations for youth and staff.

To combat the learning loss our students are experiencing in the wake of COVID, the Boys & Girls Clubs is not looking to create new programming but expand upon what we know already works. **We are asking the City of Cincinnati for \$50,000 for summer programming and \$200,000 for the upcoming school year to deepen our impact and stem the learning loss our kids face.** We will also be requesting funding through state sources. With this funding we are aiming to increase the number of families served in Cincinnati to 1,000 from June 1, 2021 to May 31, 2022. We are also expecting to support our academic team, bring the ratios of students engaged in academic work from 1:15 to 1:5, add tutors, expand our volunteer efforts and partner with other agencies to offer specialized academic assistance and counseling and case management services.

Thank you for your consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss our program further and give you a tour of our Avondale or Price Hill Clubs. Please contact me at 513-421-8909 ext. 23 or wbresser@bgcgc.org.

Sincerely,

William M. Bresser
Chief Executive Officer
Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Cincinnati