



# LIVING PROOF

THE HARRIS SURVEY OF BOYS & GIRLS CLUB ALUMNI



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF AMERICA**

"Of the 19 boys in my school class that were my friends, only two are still alive. The rest died of drug overdoses, auto accidents or committed suicide. The two of us that are still alive are the only ones that belonged to the Club."

Roy G.

## What Works?

For young people living in a complex, dangerous world, the answer to that question can – literally – be a matter of survival.

But generations of American kids have found a **better life** and a **brighter future** thanks to an empowering, inspiring resource right in their neighborhood – the local Boys & Girls Club.

How do we know that Clubs make a difference? We have **tested and proven programs**, trained professional staff and experience that has provided more than a century of hope and opportunity for youth, enabling them to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible adults. But we also know that Clubs work because our alumni – millions of former Club kids – tell us so.

In a recent Harris Survey:\*

**57%** of alumni said the Club **saved their life**

**91%** of alumni are **satisfied** with their adult life

Clearly, Clubs are more relevant – and necessary – than ever for the youth who need us most. By providing a safe, positive place where kids can daily develop self-esteem and the skills to succeed, **Boys & Girls Clubs have an immediate and long-lasting impact on the lives of alumni.**

\* Survey conducted online and by telephone by Harris Interactive from November 15, 2006, to March 16, 2007, among 1,014 Boys & Girls Club alumni more than 18 years old. Sampling error is +/-3. A full methodology is available through BGCA.





I WAS  
HERE  
I WAS TOO



"If not for the Club I would not have attended college. I would not know how to make friends. I learned responsibility and I learned self-respect – for myself and others."

Marveta S.

## Educational Attainment

Despite challenges faced by many Club members, the Harris Survey finds alumni **equal** or **exceed** the U.S. population in academic attainment.

**90%** of alumni graduate high school

**26%** of alumni are likely to **earn a college degree**, the same as the general U.S. population

**Fact:** The average high school **dropout rate** in America is 33 percent. For Latino and African-American males, that rate is closer to 50 percent.

\* Source: Time magazine 5/3/07

Alumni also report that **the Club experience had a profound impact on their attitudes about learning.** The findings are particularly dramatic among minorities.

**62%** Total "I became more committed to my education"  
72% AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
73% HISPANIC  
55% WHITE

**45%** Total "The Club helped me graduate from high school"  
48% AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
59% HISPANIC  
39% WHITE

**33%** Total "I am the first person in my family to go to college"  
32% AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
36% HISPANIC  
31% WHITE

**28%** Total "I would have dropped out of high school"  
31% AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
26% HISPANIC  
28% WHITE







"At the Club I learned team spirit, tolerance, caring and self-esteem.

Had I not learned those things, I would not be where I am now."

Jim O.

## Impact on Character Development

Throughout our history, we have known that **adult staff make the difference in Clubs.**

The Harris findings put this in specific terms as Club alumni acknowledge and recognize the **positive effects** staff had on various aspects of their lives – as children and adults – including:

**85%**  
Knowing right from wrong

**82%**  
Self-confidence

**78%**  
Self-esteem as a child or adolescent

**77%**  
Learning good leadership skills

**76%**  
Having someone to talk to

**67%**  
Having goals and aspirations

**67%**  
Ability to avoid difficulty with the law

**63%**  
Success in high school

**60%**  
Work life and later career







"The Club kept me doing positive, worthwhile things and taught me to share my talents with the community."

Bill S.

## Civic Engagement

The Boys & Girls Club Movement seeks to be a catalyst for an age in which success is within reach of every child, and whole generations of young people are **inspired to a level of civic engagement** that multiplies efforts within – and outside – Club walls.

A majority of Club alumni believe it important to be a good citizen and are **actively involved in their community**. Almost half (48%) attribute this desire to give back to their Club participation.

Helping others is a priority of mine

**92%** <sup>Total</sup> 60% Strongly Agree  
32% Somewhat Agree

My participation in the Club helped me develop a sense of responsibility to give back to my community

**81%** <sup>Total</sup> 48% Strongly Agree  
33% Somewhat Agree

I am actively involved in my community

**75%** <sup>Total</sup> 38% Strongly Agree  
37% Somewhat Agree





"Without the Club, I don't know what would have become of me, running with a bad group of kids, drugs, I just don't know. What I do know is, because of the Club, I had a safe place to go and mingle with kids who were looking for the same thing I was – friends and a feeling of family. Thanks."

Beverly S.

## Club Impact

Majorities of alumni report a **positive impact on each aspect of life** examined in the survey:

**85%**  
Sense of belonging

**80%**  
Health and fitness

**86%**  
Ability to work with others

**84%**  
Outlook or attitude as a youth

**69%**  
Emotional life



### What Makes a Club Unique?

- **Neighborhood** and building-centered
- Provides a **safe, affordable place** for young people ages 6-18 during non-school hours and the summer
- Led by paid, trained **youth development professionals**





"The Club helped me find alternative paths when I had run into dead ends. The people at the Club gave me respect when I thought I deserved little to none. It saved me from a life on the street."

Jeff K.

## A Critical Role

Experience shows that **Boys & Girls Clubs play a pivotal role in the lives of many young people:**

**60%** of alumni said the Club was the **only place to go** in their neighborhood after school

**90%** said the Club was **one of the best things** available to them in their community

These findings are even more likely to be true among low-income families.



### Programs That Work

Core Boys & Girls Club programs engage young people in activities with adults, peers and family members that **enable them to reach their full potential.** Based on the interests and needs of the youth they serve, Clubs offer diverse program activities in five areas:

- 1 Character & Leadership Development
- 2 Education & Career Development
- 3 Health & Life Skills
- 4 The Arts
- 5 Sports, Fitness & Recreation







"It gave me a place to be. A place to look forward to going."

Mary M.

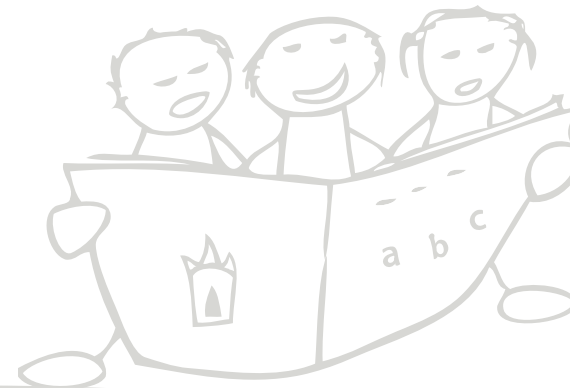
## Club Participation

Experience has also shown us that **frequency of attendance is key to gauging the positive impact** of Clubs. The more young people visit a Club, the more they gain from it.

**5.2** Years *Total Years of Club Participation*

**4** Days *Days per week Attended Club*

On average, alumni were Club members for more than five years and attended the Club four days a week, a substantial – indeed, generation-changing level – of participation.



**Fact:** In addition to frequency of participation, a Club's impact on youth is determined by the extent to which it implements **five key elements\*** in its operations:

- A safe, positive environment
- Fun, family atmosphere
- Supportive relationships with peers and adults
- Opportunities and expectations
- Recognition

\* Deepening Impact Through Quality Youth Development Strategies and Practices, Search Institute, April 2005





## Our Mission

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To enable all young people,  
especially those who need  
us most, to ***reach their full  
potential as productive,  
caring, responsible citizens.***



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