

January 2014

01/24/2014

Afterschool can't be an Afterthought

Every day in our country, 15 million kids leave school and enter a world with no adult supervision. With most parents still at work, some kids go home to empty households. Others haunt shopping malls, loiter in the streets or fill the idle hours with similarly futile undertakings.

The fact is, the out-of-school hours of 3 to 6 p.m. are as important to our children's development as the time that they spend in school and at home. In fact, out-of-school time is so essential, it was addressed at the recent [TEDxYouth@San Juan](#) youth development conference in Puerto Rico, where I had the privilege to speak.



Research shows that kids who are productively occupied after school significantly enhance their probability for long-term success. Conversely, youth who are not engaged in beneficial activities during this period are at greater risk of aberrant behavior, such as committing juvenile crimes, which peak on school days from 3 to 6 p.m.

Every day they're not in school, every kid needs a safe, supervised environment. For millions of kids, the Boys & Girls Club is their safe out-of-school setting to meet friends, have fun, get homework help and be actively engaged under the watchful eye of trusted adults.

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So where do your kids go after school? What do they do over the summer? Are you happy with these arrangements? Do you feel they're positively occupied? Please, take a minute to share your thoughts by leaving a comment.



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01/17/2014

Why Doing Good is Good for Kids



"Life's most persistent and urgent question is:

What are you doing for others?"

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. put [that question](#) to parishioners at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Ala., nearly 60 years ago.

Today, his query remains relevant and indispensable. I expect it always will.

Monday, we'll commemorate this great American with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. In communities around the country, we'll honor Dr. King's legacy by volunteering our service.

My family and I plan to help out by serving meals at a local homeless shelter. Getting our boys involved in their community is important to my wife, Samantha, and me. We want Chase, 11, and Grayson, 9, to understand the value and necessity of making a difference in the lives of others. It's an important life lesson. It's also good for them.

Service Spawns Success

Studies show that young people who engage in service do better in school, maintain positive relationships with adults and peers, avoid risky behaviors and are less likely to drop out of high school – and more likely to graduate – than their peers who do not.

Outcomes like these are why Boys & Girls Clubs work to instill a sense of civic responsibility in the kids we serve. Last year, more than 260,000 Club youth participated in service projects to strengthen communities. Those are amazing numbers. Now, we're preparing to make an even bigger impact on America's kids and communities.

Millions Making a Difference

Million Members, Million Hours of Service is a new initiative to involve Club kids in service activities year-round. With support from [the Citi Foundation](#), our more than 4,000 Boys & Girls Clubs will work to raise members' awareness of community service opportunities and provide them with resources to undertake projects for their communities.

Our aim is that at least 1 million members will perform 1 million hours of service within five years. It's an ambitious goal, no doubt. But consider this: If every Club member contributes just one hour of community service each year, we'll meet that objective. And you might be surprised

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at what can be accomplished in a single hour.

This Monday, Boys & Girls Club members will be among the millions of volunteers making a difference across our country. What a perfect way to honor Dr. King's vision of harnessing the power of volunteering and service to transform communities.



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01/13/2014

Lasting Friendship, Success Began at Phoenix Club



You can't help but be inspired by this recent [Arizona Republic story](#) about Club alumni and longtime friends Khadija, CJ, Taylor and Chloe. Their friendship began years ago at the [Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix](#).

Now college students, each recalls the various ways the Club helped them to chart their own unique paths for future success. It's a great example of how Clubs continue to benefit young people as they become young adults.



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01/06/2014

Let's Resolve to Help More Kids in 2014



For many, a new year presents an opportunity for a fresh start. With 12 perfect months rolled out in front of us, everything seems possible.

So we resolve to lose weight, shed bad habits, balance checkbooks faithfully and improve a million other things in our own lives. Imagine the impact if every one of us similarly resolved to look outside ourselves and make the world a better place for kids.

With more than 1 in 5 U.S. kids living in poverty today, there's no shortage of young people who need our help. And making a difference in a kid's life isn't hard.



[Boys & Girls Clubs](#), for instance, need volunteers to tutor and mentor members. Homeless shelters need art supplies, games and toys for young residents. Food banks need help to feed hungry families.

Let's resolve to make 2014 a Happy New Year for kids everywhere.



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My.Future Helps Club Kids Expand Digital Literacy

Last week, Boys & Girls Clubs of America announced a new five-year, national partnership with Comcast NBCUniversal. It includes the launch of [My.Future](#) (pronounced My dot Future), a new technology initiative that will provide Boys & Girls Club kids and teens with opportunities to learn workplace skills for 21st century success and expand their overall digital literacy.

We broke the exciting news at Clubs in Chicago, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia. To celebrate, Comcast NBCUniversal equipped each Club with state-of-the-art technology, including computers, tablets, smart boards, digital cameras, music studio gear and video-editing tools. The Comcast Foundation also provided new paint, furniture and structural repairs. (The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Peninsula in Menlo Park, Calif., also received a technology upgrade and will hold its own celebration today.)

In today's technology-driven culture, it's crucial that all kids, in all communities, have access to computers, apps, the Internet. But it takes more than access to pick these skills up. To successfully use the myriad hardware and software at their disposal, kids need good direction and training, too. That's where we see My.Future making a real difference for our young people.

The My.Future initiative will enable members to develop technical knowledge via project-based learning experiences in areas such as web exploration, digital communication and media creation. More advanced topics include robotics, coding and game design. Club members who demonstrate progressive, broadly-based levels of digital competence will earn [digital badges](#), which they can use to unlock cool technology and leadership opportunities.

BGCA is thrilled to join forces with Comcast NBCUniversal on My.Future. Together, we're giving kids opportunities to acquire skills and expertise in technology pathways that interest them most – and develop the great futures they deserve.

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