



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF AMERICA**

# **2017 EDITORIAL** STYLE GUIDE

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revised **October 2017**

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# INTRODUCTION

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All written communications – whether a formal report or an email to a Club professional – sends a message about our organization. To help ensure consistency in messaging, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Marketing & Communications Department is pleased to present this revised version of the BGCA Editorial Style Guide.

Please consult this guide to help enhance our brand and deliver high-quality written communications to Clubs, the public, partners and other audiences.

BGCA editorial style is based primarily on "The Associated Press Stylebook". Please consult that resource for information not covered in this guide.

You can download the BGCA Style Guide, the BGCA Graphic Standards Guide, and Boys & Girls Club Brand Book at [BGCA.net/Marketing](http://BGCA.net/Marketing).

Questions? Contact Kelly Gaines at (404) 487-5889.

# BGCA TOP 10 STYLE TIPS

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These are the words, phrases and acronyms you will come across most often at BGCA. Follow this guide to ensure you're using them correctly every time. *[Note: All entries in this section are also in the alphabetized section of the guide.]*

- 1. Boys & Girls Clubs of America** is singular. Do not precede with "the."  
*Correct:* Boys & Girls Clubs of America is dedicated to empowering youth.  
*Incorrect:* The Boys & Girls Clubs of America are dedicated to empowering youth.
- 2. Always use an ampersand (&)** in the name of the national organization and local Clubs. *Correct:* Boys & Girls Clubs of America; Boys & Girls Clubs of Anywhere; *Incorrect:* Boys and Girls Clubs of America; Boys and Girls Club of Anywhere
- 3. Club/Clubs** – Always capitalize Club(s), in both the phrase Boys & Girls Club(s) and when using it alone.
- 4. The Boys & Girls Club Movement** – Refers to BGCA and Clubs collectively. Club is singular. Movement is capitalized.
- 5. Club member** – Young people who registered with the Club; "members" is not capitalized. As of 2016, there were approximately 1.95 million registered Club members.
- 6. Youth served** – Young people who are involved with Club activities but are not registered members. Full reference is "young people served through community outreach." In 2016, Clubs served about 2.05 million youth through community outreach.
- 7. Military** – Per the military's request, the proper way to refer to "Clubs on military bases" is "BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations," not bases. Keep in mind that traditional Clubs also serve children of military personnel.

8. **Outcome-driven Club Experience** – Capitalize the “C” in Club and “E” in “Experience.” Do not capitalize “O” in “Outcome” unless beginning a sentence. Always hyphenate “outcome-driven.” Refers to a Club Experience designed to ensure members can achieve important outcomes. (See Club Experience)
9. **Club Experience** – Capitalize the “E” when used in the phrase “Club Experience.” This BGCA-branded term refers to everything Clubs provide young people with, including life-changing programs, fun and enriching experiences, and supportive relationships with peers and caring adults.
10. **Great Futures 2025** – The strategic plan for the Movement will guide our actions through 2025 around a shared purpose and goal, enabling Club organizations to meet the needs of youth using the model best suited to their communities. The goal of Great Futures 2025 is to increase the number of Club members who report a high-quality Club Experience from 37 percent to 75 percent.
11. **High Quality Club Experience** – One in which members feel physically and emotionally safe, gain support and recognition from caring adults who set expectations for them, receive opportunities to try new things, have fun, and feel a sense of belonging.

# ALPHABET SOUP

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Every organization has its jargon, and BGCA is no different. Here are some of the acronyms – words or abbreviations formed from the first letter or letters of a series of words (e.g., BGCA) – that you'll hear across our Movement.

<b>ADA</b>	Average daily attendance
<b>AHOF</b>	Alumni Hall of Fame
<b>ALP</b>	Advanced Leadership Program
<b>ARS</b>	Annual Reporting System
<b>BOG</b>	Board of Governors
<b>CSS</b>	Club Support Services
<b>DOD</b>	Director of Organizational Development
<b>KPIs</b>	Key performance indicators
<b>NACC</b>	National Area Council Committee
<b>NYOI</b>	National Youth Outcomes Initiative
<b>NYOY</b>	National Youth of the Year
<b>OAP</b>	Organizational Annual Plan
<b>OJP</b>	Office of Justice Programs
<b>OST</b>	Out-of-school time
<b>POLD</b>	Program, Operations & Leadership Development
<b>RD</b>	Resource Development
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
<b>YDP</b>	Youth Development Professional
<b>YOY</b>	Youth of the Year

## Tips for Using Acronyms:

- Use them sparingly.
- Do not use when the reader would not readily recognize the meaning.
- To make plural, use "s." Do not use an apostrophe, e.g., YOYs.

## BY THE NUMBERS

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Here are some guidelines for the proper way to position some of the most-used organizational statistics. For further information, please also refer to Planning & Measurement materials, especially the Frequently Cited Statistics document, as well as the Fact Sheet that can be found on the P drive under "Marketing and Communications."

- 54% of alumni said the Club "saved my life." This figure is from a 2007 Harris Interactive survey of former Club members. It is not a comprehensive statistic that applies across the decades of service, and it does not apply to current Club members. Therefore, the proper way to refer to this stat is in the past tense; using the present tense could be misleading.
- National Youth Outcomes Initiative data consists of information from/about registered members only. It does not include information on other youth served.

Follow these guidelines in your written communications to help enhance our brand and ensure you're understood.

**Academic Success** – A priority outcome area. Defined as: All members on track to graduate from high school on time with a plan for the future. Use initial caps.

**After school** – Two words. When used as an adjective, add a hyphen. *Examples:* The Club is open after school. It provides many after-school activities.

**Alumni** – Men or a group that includes men and women, who, for our purposes, are former members of a Club.

**Alumna** – a woman

**Alumnae** – a group of women

**Alumnus** – a man

**Average daily attendance** – Do not capitalize when spelled out; however, the acronym is ADA.

**Board chair** – Head of local Club board; formerly known as chief volunteer officer or CVO.

**Boys & Girls Club Movement** – Refers to BGCA and Clubs collectively. Club is singular. Movement is capitalized: *Our Movement turned 100 in 2006.*

**Boys & Girls Clubs of America** – Singular and always uses an ampersand (&). Do not precede with “the.” *Correct:* Boys & Girls Clubs of America is dedicated to empowering youth. *Incorrect:* The Boys & Girls Clubs of America are dedicated to empowering youth.

**Capitalization** – Use initial caps (first letters of words) for:

- Conferences, councils, committees, special events, reports, awards, departments, services and programs that refer to specific groups, events or programs: *Pacific Administrative Conference, Midwest Area Council, Human Resources Committee, Board of Governors.* Do not capitalize when making a general reference: *BGCA holds five administrative conferences a year.*
- Formal titles, only when used before a name: *President and CEO Jim Clark.*
- Our tagline: Great Futures Start Here.

**The CLUB** – Brand and logo designed specifically to appeal to teens. Initial cap “The” and all caps for “CLUB.”

**Club Experience** – Capitalize the “E” when used with the phrase “Club Experience.” This term refers to everything Clubs provide to young people, including life-changing programs, fun, enriching experiences, and supportive relationships with peers and caring adults.

**Club member(s)** – Young people who are registered with the Club. Do not capitalize members: *In 2013, there were approximately 2 million registered members.*

**Ethnic groups:**

- Refer to ethnicity only when relevant, and ask the subject how they prefer to be classified (e.g. Mexican-American vs. Hispanic).
- Geographical ethnic designations should be capitalized (African-American).
- Lowercase references to race (black, white).

**Evidence-based programs** – Not “evidenced-based.” Refers to programs that have been found to be effective based on results of rigorous evaluation and are certified by federal agencies.

**Fundraising/fundraiser** – Both are one word.

**Gamesroom** – one word.

**Gender:**

- Women should receive equal treatment to men in copy. Do not assume maleness unless relevant to the story (reporters vs. newsmen, firefighter vs. fireman).
- Use non-gender-specific terms when describing an ambiguous noun (average person vs. common man, birth name vs. maiden name).
- Use gender-neutral pronouns when gender is not relevant (they vs. he and/or she).

**Good Character and Citizenship** – A priority outcome area. Defined as: An engaged citizen involved in the community who models strong character. Use initial caps.

**Great Futures 2025** – The strategic plan for the Movement will guide our actions through 2025 around a shared purpose and goal, enabling Club organizations to meet the needs of youth using the model best suited to their communities. The goal of Great Futures 2025 is to increase the number of Club members who report a high-quality Club Experience from 37 percent to 75 percent.

**Great Futures Campaign** – Shortened version of “Great Futures: *the Campaign for America’s Kids*,” a BGCA multi-year campaign: *Clubs launched the Great Futures Campaign with kick-off celebrations*. Make campaign all lowercase when used alone: *Your Club can find campaign resources at [marketing.bgca.org](http://marketing.bgca.org).*

**Great Futures Start Here** – Our tagline. Use initial caps. Do not use initial caps for great futures unless it is part of a title: *One day we will provide every child with a great future.*

**Great Futures Vision** – Provide a world-class 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 their future, demonstrating good character and citizenship, and leading a healthy lifestyle.

**Healthy Lifestyles** – A priority outcome area. Defined as: Adopt a healthy diet, practice healthy lifestyle choices and make a lifelong commitment to fitness. Use initial caps.

**High-yield activity** – Hyphenate “high-yield.” Do not capitalize. Refers to activities designed to provide youth with fun experiences that are hands-on and interactive; they intentionally develop critical thinking or other skills.

**Membership Management System** – Centralized member management system specifically for Boys & Girls Clubs and currently in development.

**Military Youth of the Year (MYOY)** – A component of the National Youth of the Year program, Military Youth of the Year recognizes a Club member served on a U.S. military installation who has overcome enormous odds and demonstrated exceptional character and accomplishments.

**Movement** – Refers to BGCA and Clubs collectively. Club is singular. Movement is capitalized. Movement-wide always takes a hyphen. *Examples:* Our Movement turned 100 in 2006. The Movement-wide email went out last week.

**My.Future** – This safe, fun, mobile-friendly social platform for youth ages 6 to 18 offers access to over 100 BGCA program activities including the areas of STEM, leadership and the visual arts. Youth can share work with friends and earn recognition and rewards.

**Names of youth** – In general, identify youth under age 18 by first name only. Young people who are public figures, such as YOY finalists or contest winners, can be identified by both first and last name.

**National Outcomes Survey** – Club-member survey that measures indicators of achievement in our priority outcome areas and perceptions about Clubs. An integral part of the National Youth Outcomes Initiative.

**National Youth of the Year (NYOY)** – Each year, six Boys & Girls Club members emerge from local, state and regional competitions; five as a Regional Youth of the Year, one as Military Youth of the Year. These young people become the finalists for National Youth of the Year, the highest honor a Club member can receive. In September, they convene in Washington, D.C., where one exceptional young woman or man is named National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year serves as a BGCA teen spokesperson for the next year.

**National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI)** – An initiative designed to measure the impact of Clubs throughout the country in a consistent way to determine how well Clubs implement the Formula for Impact and how much Club members are achieving as a result. Use the abbreviation NYOI on second reference.

**Native Services Unit** – The BGCA division that provides support to Native Clubs is the Native Services Unit, not Native Youth Services.

**Native Youth** – Inclusive term refers to Native American, Native Alaskan and Native Hawaiian youth.

**Out-of-school time** – After school and during the summer. The time when Clubs can have a significant impact on young people.

**Priority outcome areas** – Academic Success, Good Character and Citizenship, and Healthy Lifestyles. Use initial caps for each area name.

**Serial comma** – Do not use a comma before a conjunction in a series: *Jane, Rowena and Garth are all Club members.* An exception is when a series element requires a conjunction. *I had orange juice, toast, and ham and eggs for breakfast.* A comma can also be used before the last conjunction in a complex series of phrases: *Points to consider are whether board members are actively involved with Club activities, whether they bring fresh ideas and enthusiasm to the board, and whether they are committed to engaging new Club supporters.*

**States** – Spell out the names of all 50 states when used in the body of a story. State abbreviations, which still apply for lists and similar instances, are below. The names of eight states are never abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Ala.	Del.	Ky.	Miss.	N.J.	Ore.	Vt.
Ariz.	Fla.	La.	Mo.	N.M.	Pa.	Va.
Ark.	Ga.	Md.	Mont.	N.Y.	R.I.	Wash.
Calif.	Ill.	Mass.	Neb.	N.C.	S.C.	W. Va.
Colo.	Ind.	Mich.	Nev.	N.D.	S.D.	Wis.
Conn.	Kan.	Minn.	N.H.	Okla.	Tenn.	Wyo.

**Summer Brain Gain** – The BGCA summer learning program designed to help Club members retain knowledge over the summer months, thus preventing summer learning loss. Do not abbreviate as “Brain Gain,” whose trademark is owned by another organization.

**Titles** – In general, confine capitalization to formal titles used directly before an individual's name: *BGCA President and CEO Jim Clark, Jim Clark is the president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America.*

**Website addresses** – Boys & Girls Clubs of America URLs:

- Initial caps for multi-word addresses – GreatFutures.org, MyClubMyLife.com
- BGCA.org, BGCA.net – Capitalize each letter of abbreviation
- Hybrid – Marketing.BGCA.org
- External website names – defer to their style, e.g., wallacefoundation.org

**Youth development professional** – General term used to refer to staff at Boys & Girls Clubs and similar youth-serving organizations; all lowercase.

**Youth of the Year (YOY)** – BGCA's premier national program for Club members. Hyphenate year and capitalize national/regional designation. *Example: 2017-18 Southeast Youth of the Year.*

When referring to multiple young people who have been named Youth of the Year, do not add an “s” to “youth.” Use a term that will make the phrase plural.

The term “YOYs” is also acceptable.

*Correct:* Youth of the Year participants; regional YOYs.

*Incorrect:* Youths of the Year

**Youth served** – Young people who are involved with activities at the Club, but are not registered members. Full reference is “young people served through community outreach.” In 2013, Clubs served approximately 1.8 million youth through community outreach.

## RECOGNIZING DIVERSITY: LANGUAGE SENSITIVITY

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Words are powerful. Words can inspire, motivate and uplift people. Words can also hurt, isolate and oppress individuals or entire segments of society. Below are excerpts from “People First Language: Examples to Use and to Share” by Kathie Snow.

### Say this:

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- People with disabilities
- He has a cognitive ability
- She has autism
- He has Down’s syndrome
- She has a learning disability
- He has a physical disability
- She has an emotional disability
- She uses a wheelchair or mobility chair
- He received special ed. services
- Congenital disability
- Youth who enter Club doors

### Not this:

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- The handicapped or disabled
- He’s mentally retarded
- She’s autistic
- He’s Down’s
- She’s learning disabled
- He’s a quadriplegic/crippled
- She’s emotionally disturbed
- She’s wheelchair-bound; she’s confined to a wheelchair
- He’s in special ed.
- Birth defect
- Youth who walk through Club doors

### Ethnic Groups:

- Refer to ethnicity only when relevant, or as the subject how they prefer to be classified (e.g., Mexican-American vs. Hispanic).
- Geographical ethnic designations should be capitalized (African-American).
- Lowercase references to race (black, white).

### Gender:

- Women should receive equal treatment to men in copy. Do not assume maleness unless relevant to the story (reporters vs. newsmen, firefighter vs. fireman)
- Use non-gender-specific terms when describing an ambiguous noun (average person vs. common man, birth name vs. maiden name).
- Use gender-neutral pronouns when gender is not relevant (they vs. he or she).

**Minority** – In recent years, the word minority has come to be seen as implying that the people who are being referenced are minor or inferior. Avoid using “minority” when referring to people. (For instance, “minority populations” is acceptable, but “we serve many minorities” is not.)

**Guidelines and alternatives:**

- Whenever possible, be specific.
  - “About 1 in 5 students fails to graduate on time. The rate is even lower for black and Hispanic/Latino students.”
  - “Native students have the lowest high school graduation rate at 68 percent.”
- Talk about communities, as opposed to individuals.
  - “Traditionally under-served communities”
  - “Communities with fewer resources”
  - “Low-income communities”
- When there is a need to make a collective reference, good options include:
  - “At-risk youth”
  - “Communities of color”
  - “Populations of color”
  - “Underserved communities”
  - “Youth from underserved communities”

**Native Services Unit** – The BGCA division that provides support to Native Clubs is the Native Services Unit, not Native Youth Services.

**Native Youth** – Inclusive term refers to Native American, Native Alaskan and Native Hawaiian youth.



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National Headquarters  
1275 Peachtree St. NE  
Atlanta, GA 30309  
BGCA.org

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