

Lakota Community Conversation

Boys & Girls Club

Nov. 7, 2019

*What's the value of club...what are the good things it does?*

The connections that we make.

It's like a whole family.

The power hour.

Trusting adults.

Creativity..

Power hour – From Monday through Thursday can work on homework and projects.

Friday you can do whatever you want. You can code on the computer.

The center looks at every child, and has enough programming for them to discover their own passions.

Some kids don't have a place to go. This is a place to go.

Hanging out with friends.

Getting work done.

Making connections. When I first came here I didn't have friends. I have them now.

I'm able to talk to other people. I started making friends here, and now at school I'm more open to other kids.

It's the one place that brings together kids from both West and East.

There are leadership opportunities here at the club.

Confidence building.

Kids don't feel threatened. They're comfortable with their surroundings, and it makes them more outgoing.

The Youth of the Year selection process. I saw a young man develop so much energy, and personality.

If you want to do activity you can but you also can just have downtime.

The staff here takes the extra mile. They know your child

My third-grader wants to be one of the leaders.

Kids have their models. It starts pretty early. They can talk to an adult they feel safe with.

It's a safe place, physically. A fun place to be.

You can get help from the staff and also from other students.

The communication and the chance to make connections (with the staff).

On the flip side of having connections, there's transition when adults leave. That's tough on the kids.

When teachers left, or when came back from summer break and they were gone, that was really hard on them. I hope the club is looking into why someone leaves when they do.

*What are the challenges you're seeing that kids and families that need a collective community effort?*

Would like to spend more time here.

More hours.

Cyber-bullying.

A lot more cyber than in person because it's much more easier to do. It doesn't require actual confrontation.

Some kids, if they can ruin someone's life on-line, they'll do it.

The perception of self to others – that's why cyber-bullying gets so much attraction.

People fight all day on social media. They sneak it in the bathroom. It's a real distraction to the learning process.

Everything on social media is really hurting our children.

One of our kids felt safer talking to adults here than the teachers at our school.

If a member is having a bad time in school, or vice versa, maybe the school and club could work together to help.

On the bus is where problems can happen, but bus drivers are very good at communicating about what's going on on the bus.

We (club staff) have permission to talk to school, but we need to figure out how to best talk to each other.

Most of kids feel comfortable talking to at least one staff member here.

Relationship is a strong focus, but schools also have to educate, not just build a relationship.

They create a rapport with these students, that's why the students can open up more.

What we have going on at club is great. But they're at capacity. So they can only take so many of our kids.

When kids come her, the pressure is off. They're not worried about a grade or staying out of the principal's office.

Being so busy with work school kids, as a single parent and a woman, we feel we have got to succeed and have to do everything.

He was crying with his teacher because of his self-esteem.

Here he loves it, and feels noticed and confident.

My nephew comes here and doesn't have those behavior issues. He doesn't feel excluded.

I'm a single mother with two children. I just need a breather between my work day and dealing with kids again. I never see kids running out the door here. I'm always waiting for them to come out.

Transportation is an issue. I couldn't afford to have a car but I had to have one. Paul's Bus wanted so much money. The club said they take high school, and pick them up. They could have a lot more people if they picked up after sports.

My student says he going to walk home -- two to three hours -- to Rolling Knolls.

What about the parents that don't have a vehicle? What about the kids trying to get to high school? If my car breaks down, how do my kids get to school? What if I can't afford transportation? The club -- they have transportation.

I used to walk to school but they stopped allowing it. I walked three times this year, but my mom says I can't do that anymore. Being here is so helpful. I have somewhere I can go. I can do my homework. She can pick me up.

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*What other kinds of challenges should board know about:*

Mental health has been a declining issue, that is, it's getting worse and worse. have friends with anxiety disorders. We're all struggling with it.

The staff here will notice if they're slipping.

My 18-year old has depression and would go to class and start crying.

It's all about the rapport. They check in on him here, but teachers have so much to do. Just watching them interact with our kids, it makes you realize there are teachers who care about our kids

Mr. (Ben) Brown was riding a bus with a group of kids earlier. Things like that go unnoticed.

I know a teacher, Ms. Walcott, who can't walk into a store in Lakota area without being swarmed.

I have seen teachers that care, and teachers that just do what they have to do

The club doesn't have the capability to have an aide. I don't know if Lakota can give them an aide.

Schools do a lot of extra thins, but I've learned to do even more things here.

My mom doesn't like that schools don't have things that help with mental growth, but have so much sports.

*For the club staff members, what are the challenges you face?*

One broad one – just communicating with people about what happens at school, at the club, on the bus.

For me personally, it's working with kids who have a history of trauma.

(Board member) It's great to hear from parents and members. This meeting gave me ideas to take back to a board meeting. Maybe we need to make transportation more of a focus. Also, the partnership/liaison piece, we need to do to serve kids better.

For junior high and high school kids, just getting them interested and passionate about doing things they're not comfortable with. They just want to play video games. I get it. I love games too. h

It's hard to get quantifiable results in my position.

I definitely agree with the motivation factor. Especially middle school students, some must lack motivation. They're at school all day from wake-up to here, being told what to do. I do love that we have room here for structured freedom. We offer so many amazing opportunities here. We need to find incentives for them to do them.

Some kids are just hungry. It goes back to basic needs, the need to not be hungry, not tired, to be safe and comfortable. A lot come here and we do provide a snack. We do offer a second snack where they can buy apples, chips, ice cream. But we don't have resources to do more nutritious things.

It's a long day. Even if I pack my daughter a lunch, when I pick her up she says she's starving.

I eat the very last lunch of the day but I snack throughout the day, and I'm still starving.

It's a very ongoing cycle, especially for older kids. We're always hungry.