

GREAT

APRIL 2016
bgclubfoxvalley.org



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE FOX VALLEY

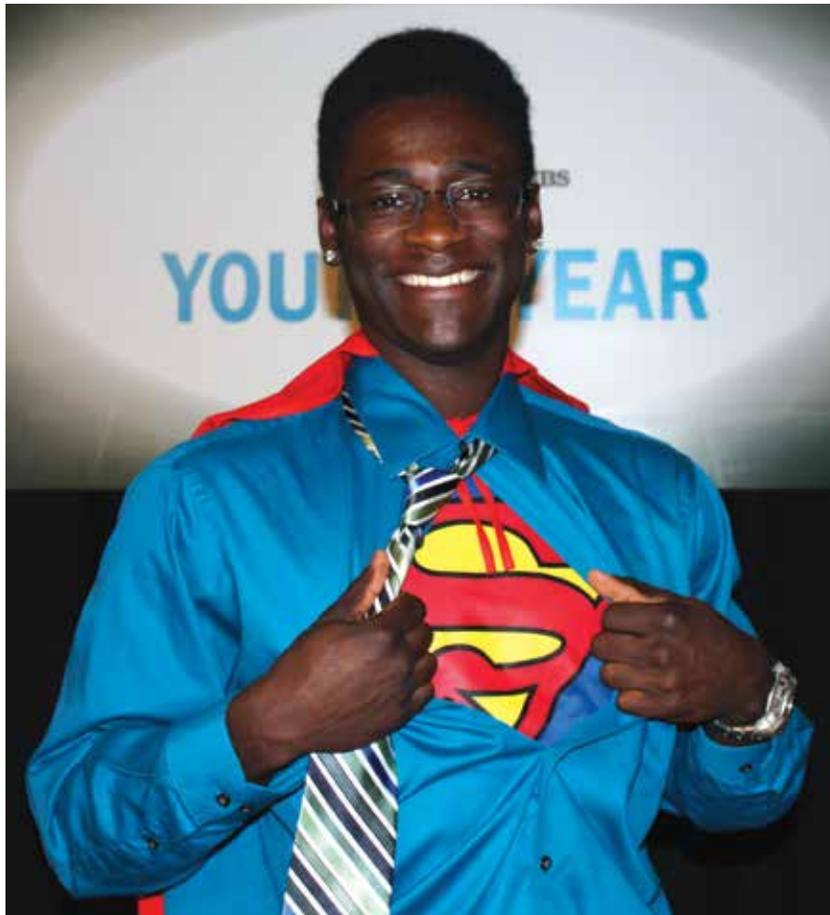
FUTURES

National Boys & Girls Club Week

More than 4,000 Boys & Girls Clubs across the nation celebrated “Red, White and Boys & Girls Club Blue!” for National Boys & Girls Club Week from March 7 to 14, 2016. A long list of fun and creative activities were held at all nine of our Clubs, including such events as a Superhero Obstacle Course, a life-sized game of Harry Potter Chess and more!



2015-16 Youth of the Year



Messiah Morning, 2015-16 Youth of the Year, believes everyone can be a hero.

Messiah Morning is the third oldest child of a single parent mother and one of nine children. Now seventeen years old and a senior at Menasha High School, Messiah has already lived in four different states, nine different cities and over 25 different homes. In addition, he’s also lived in five different shelters and at times in his young life has had no place to call home. His life has been one of constant transitions, both in terms of family and place. There’s been

almost no stability in his life, except for the Boys & Girls Clubs.

Messiah says that at age seven, “I was a nobody. I was a shy little boy and didn’t speak much.” He was living in Green Bay at the time. That was the same year he first walked into a Boys & Girls Club at his mother’s suggestion. That began a long-term connection to an organization that has become, according to Messiah, “...the constant thing that’s been in my life. There have been a lot of great people from the Boys & Girls Club

who have helped me in my family.” The Boys & Girls Clubs in Green Bay, Oshkosh, Appleton, and now Menasha have all been an important place of stability and refuge for a young man who by all rights should be telling a very different story right now.

The story he does tell, however, thanks not only to the Boys & Girls Clubs but also to an incredibly generous, caring network of supporters in the Menasha School District and to the wonderful people, Hans and Mari Nelson who’ve given him a place to live and be guided, supported, and encouraged, is one that is nothing short of inspirational. Messiah’s focus isn’t on his history, it is instead on his core belief that everyone has it within themselves to be a hero.

Messiah came to the Boys & Girls Club of Menasha when it opened in June of 2015 and asked not just to join, but to become a Junior Staff member. He wanted to work for the place that has been so important to him not just because he wanted a paycheck, but because he knows that what others have done for him is what he must and can do for others. He challenges Club members to never give up, to go on and do great things, to be a hero. In fact, Messiah will even break out a Superman shirt from time to time to drive home the point.

In November of 2015, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley was honored to select Messiah Morning as our 2015-16 Youth of the Year. 🌟

GREAT FUTURES START [HERE.](#)

Even I am sometimes overwhelmed at the incredible array of opportunities our team of dedicated staff and volunteers provide for our community's young people! We would need a much longer newsletter to capture it all, of course, but some of what you're reading about touches on some of the most important work we're doing right now. Here you'll

learn more about our comprehensive approach to health and wellness and also how we seek to build character and citizenship through community service. You'll also see in two different stories that the spirit of



Greg Lemke-Rochon

collaboration is alive and well in the Fox Cities. In one example we're working to create a career path for kids that can also strengthen the region's economic well-being, and in another we are helping put an end to violence against women by teaching boys how to be responsible and how to develop positive, healthy relationships.

“... the **spirit of collaboration** is alive and well in the Fox Cities.”

Most of all, we continue to be inspired by the incredible resiliency of our kids. Our cover story profiles one of the most resilient young men we've ever had the pleasure to get to know. Messiah Morning, our 2015-16 Youth of the Year, is a young man whose story is nothing if not inspirational and whose future will always be one of service to others.

We are so grateful to those who continue to invest in our efforts to make the Fox Cities a great place for all kids to grow. Thank you.



GREG LEMKE-ROCHON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Carlyn Andrew, Director of the Club's Youth and Family Counseling Program.

Health and Wellness: A Comprehensive Approach

Maria, age 17, had suicidal thoughts, depression and anxiety. Maria's sister had died and her family relationships were fractured. Suspended from school, Maria was failing her classes and at risk of not graduating. She was a young woman in a very dark place. A referral from a local school district to Carlyn Andrew, Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs' Youth & Family Counseling Program, brought Maria and her family into a no-cost, professional mental health service that annually serves approximately 1,000 area youth. Individual and family counseling helped Maria find new ways of coping with traumatic family upheaval, including the death of her sister. It also helped eliminate abusive arguing in the family and allowed family members to reconnect to each other and bond in ways they never had before. As counseling sessions wrapped up, Maria's mother said, "I don't think Maria would have graduated from high school without counseling."

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley believes in stretching the boundaries of what might traditionally be expected of a youth development organization more commonly known for its gyms, games rooms and

cafeterias. In other words, while the physical health of those we serve is important, young people's mental and behavioral health is equally if not even more critical. We are proud to be part of a growing community-wide network of schools, professionals, organizations and individuals working together to provide resources to address the escalating need for specialized childhood mental and behavioral health services.

Four distinct programs, all of which are offered at no charge to youth and their families, spearhead the organization's mental and behavioral health services. In addition to the Youth & Family Counseling Program, the Truancy Assessment Center collaborates with area school districts to provide case management services for truant youth and has a notable history of helping students stay on track to graduate on time. The Runaway and Homeless Youth Service provides 24-hour crisis intervention response, short-term foster homes, prevention education, care packages and more to youth and families in need. Lastly, the Center for Grieving Children provides an opportunity for young people and their families to find hope and to heal following the death of a loved one. 

Food Innovation

Two Lawrence University student organizations have recently come together in an interesting and, as it turns out, delicious collaboration for Club members. **Food for Fox**, an innovation and entrepreneurship organization, works with fellow students from the **Food Recovery Network** to bring unserved portions of healthy food to the Boys & Girls Club of Appleton. The sometimes uncommon foods such as sweet potato bisque or Chinese food served with brown rice have been a hit with Club members and families alike and are now a regular part of the Club's **Family Fun Nights**.



FISHING CLUB

Fishing is more than just fun — it's a great way to enjoy the outdoors, build relationships with peers and caring adult role models and learn about the world around us.

Megabites

What will it take to make Northeast Wisconsin a preferred destination for Information Technology (IT) talent in the future? So asks Rustin Keller, Executive VP and CPP at J. J. Keller & Associates, who sees the growing number of unfilled jobs in the IT sector in Northeastern Wisconsin as a major challenge to the region's economic health.

Looking for ideas that might inspire more young people to pursue careers in IT fields led Rustin to explore the Boys & Girls Club's work in the STEM educational arena. A visit to the new Boys & Girls Club of Menasha and a conversation with Greg Lemke-Rochon, CEO for the Boys & Girls Clubs, brought forward an idea: Could we add a higher level of IT education into the Club environment? Gratefully, Doug Waterman, Dean of IT and Distance Learning for Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) was all-in from the start.

The Club has kids and technology, Fox Valley Technical College has IT instructors and ultimately, companies like J. J. Keller & Associates have the jobs. "It's a win-win-win for everyone," says Chris Vue, Unit Director of the Boys & Girls Club of Roosevelt Middle School where this pilot project has taken root. "Our kids are thrilled to work side-by-side with IT professionals." Named by the Club members themselves as "Megabites," FVTC instructors now help students build websites from scratch



by learning basic computer coding in addition to photography, videography, and animation.

Funded by the J. J. Keller Foundation, two upcoming summer camps will also be held at FVTC to further introduce kids to IT resources and education. "We know there are many middle and high school students whose families don't necessarily have higher education on their radar," says Mary Downs, Director of the FVTC Foundation. "This is an opportunity to open their eyes to potential IT fields and to the realistic possibility that they can do something they really love." 

Passport to Manhood

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Fox Valley has teamed up with Fox Valley Voices of Men to help reduce sexual violence and domestic abuse in our communities. Through use of the Club's Passport to Manhood curriculum in area schools, boys will learn how being a man is about treating others well and building positive, healthy relationships. When facilitators at the first such group at Horizons Elementary asked the boys why this group was important to them, a sixth grader replied: "Many of us will be fathers someday. Some of us



haven't had great parent role models, so I'm hoping this group will teach us how to be better dads."



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MISSION – To inspire and enable all youth, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.

CONNECT WITH US ON

Cheers!



More than 300 people enjoyed the Vintage in the Valley Celebrity Wine Dinner on March 19, 2016. The evening's festivities included wonderful food, wine and a program featuring Boys & Girls Club members.



CHARACTER & LEADERSHIP

Character & Leadership programs help youth become responsible and caring citizens. Studies show that young people who engage in service do better in school, maintain positive relationships with adults and avoid risky behaviors.

89% of members surveyed believe the Club does well in **teaching civic responsibility and care for the community.**

65% of members surveyed **demonstrate and understand positive conflict resolution skills.**

99% of members enthusiastically **support the Club's leadership education.**

1,500 Club members annually **participate in community service activities.**

425 members regularly **attend Club leadership programs.**