Giving Back — The Travelers Way

Growing up in the Bowles Park public housing units in Hartford’s Blue Hills neighborhood, Greg Davis never imagined a career in corporate law. His childhood needs – a safe place, a caring adult, and access to positive opportunities – were more immediate in a neighborhood where gangs and crime were prevalent. “But I had a Boys & Girls Club that changed my life’s trajectory,” said Davis, Counsel, Strategic Resolution Group at Travelers. “It built the foundation that made me who I am today.”

It was his Club mentor, Joe Lapenta, who helped him earn a scholarship to a private high school. The Clubs’ board of trustees also donated $10,000 for Davis to start law school after college. “It’s a debt I can never repay,” said Davis.

But he’s trying, and grateful to work for Travelers, which not only invests substantially in the Clubs, but also encourages its employees to give back. And Davis is not alone. Kate Conway, Senior Vice President, International at Travelers, serves the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford as executive treasurer and has chaired the organization’s Dashaway Luncheon the past three years. The luncheon supports empowering young women through the Clubs’ SMART Girls program. “Seeing all that our club members have accomplished is phenomenal,” Conway said. “By investing in their futures and in the clubs, we are improving the community for all of us.”

Davis, a fellow BGCH Trustee agrees: “I will always appreciate the life made possible by Boys & Girls Clubs and want other children to have the same opportunities.”

87% Of parents say our after-school programs enable them to work full-time

68% Of Club members live in single-parent homes
Dear Friends,

We were founded to help all children achieve their potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens. We accomplish that only through the work of our staff and volunteers, the contributions of our donors, the support of the community, the trust of parents, and of course, our club kids. We thank each of you for a successful 2019; this annual report is a testimony to what you achieved.

Our effort starts by providing a safe and nurturing environment to the children entrusted to us; that remains our top priority. Our staff and volunteers then use the time with our members to build their self-esteem, lift their aspirations, and build the social behaviors, academic skills and healthy lifestyles needed to succeed. The results can be measured in higher graduation rates and lower chronic absenteeism, teen pregnancy, substance abuse and crime. But meet one of our club kids, and you will experience our results more directly than numbers can convey.

Community appreciation of what you have achieved is reflected in its support for our decision to put a new club in Hartford’s Southend. That support has been widespread and deep — including state and local government and the school board, Southend community leaders, Hartford’s corporate leaders, and local businesses and individuals. It is deeply gratifying that the community so strongly values our service to children that they have asked us to do the same for the kids of the Southend. We will.

None of this is possible without your support. We hope you enjoy seeing in this report a sampling of what you have accomplished in 2019.

Sincerely,

Alan Kreczko
Chairman, Board of Trustees,
Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford

Sam Gray
President & CEO,
Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford
Club Impact Numbers

More than 50% of CLUB members attend the CLUB 52 or more days per year.
Studies show that youth who attended were more likely to demonstrate greater positive outcomes when they attended the Club at least 52 times per year. Young teens who attended the Club more often were more likely to report the following outcomes.¹

ACADEMIC SUCCESS
- Decreased number of times skipping school
- Increased academic confidence
- Increased school effort

GOOD CHARACTER AND CITIZENSHIP
- Higher levels of community service involvement
- Increased levels of integrity (knowing right from wrong)
- Decreased levels of aggression

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES
- Increased levels of future connectedness & sense of possibility
- Decreased numbers of negative peers as friends
- Lower likelihood of initiation of carrying a weapon, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana and sexual intercourse

Internship at a Glance
We all know the importance of work experience when it comes to preparing young people for their futures; however, it can be difficult for teens to get that experience without having built a solid resume. This was the impetus for creating the BGCH internship program in partnership with local law firm, Robinson+Cole.

Robinson+Cole has been a vital partner to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford since 2003—supporting critical programs like Youth of the Year. During a Youth of the Year interview, Robinson+Cole uncovered an opportunity to create an internship program, and the rest is history. “Interns develop lasting relationships with our employees and quickly develop into integral, productive members of the R+C team,” said Lisa Boyle, Partner at Robinson+Cole. “After completing her internship, one of our interns stayed with the firm through college and is now a full-time employee working in our Talent Management Department.”

Rayshawn Adams, one of Robinson+Cole’s most recent BGCH interns, echoed Boyle’s positive sentiments: “The internship was a great experience. I enjoyed the atmosphere and the relationships I built. I got to step outside the box and learn new things,” Adams said. “I feel that every kid deserves a chance. Every kid can flourish being put in the right situation.”

Enthusiastic response for planned Boys & Girls Club in Hartford’s Southend.

The Southend Club capital campaign, chaired by Chris Swift, CEO of The Hartford, is well on the way to our fundraising goal. The new Club, scheduled to open in September of 2021, will serve 1,500 youth. While there’s much work to do, the community has responded generously and we’re very confident our goal is within reach. Located behind Burr Elementary School, off of Wethersfield Avenue, plans to break ground in the spring are underway.

We could not do this without your continued generous support.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford Team Up with The Beach Boys

The “Good Vibrations, Great Cause” concert on August 17 in Simsbury rocked! Trantolo & Trantolo, as well as a line-up of community stakeholders teamed up with music legends, The Beach Boys to raise more than $75,000 for Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford’s Southend campaign.

“The Beach Boys concert is part of our commitment to bring world-class performers to the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center on behalf of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford,” said Scott Trantolo, Chief Operating Officer at Trantolo & Trantolo, a Hartford-based personal injury law firm. The concert kicked off the firm’s multi-year charity concert series which will raise $250,000 to support the new Club.

Additional concert sponsors included, Mitchell Auto Group, Corona and Coors (ROGO Distributors), Liberty Bank and the Richard P. Garmany Fund through the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and supporting sponsors Stanley, Black & Decker and Bear’s Smokehouse.
John Cancian

John, who grew up close to the Trinity College Club in Hartford, knows first-hand the Club’s impact on young lives. John worked at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, and was driven to give back.

“I understand the challenges the kids are going through,” he said. “I wanted to provide them with a broader view of what’s out there, giving them something to look forward to. I wanted to remind them that they are smart, talented and can always do better.”

John began providing math tutoring at the Club, and when his son began attending Loomis Chaffee, John worked with the school to develop a weekly tutoring program where Loomis Chaffee students tutor Club members—as many as 25 members each week.

In 2017, to help keep kids excited and engaged in science during summer break, John began a summer Rocket Science Camp at the Trinity College Boys & Girls Club. The kids started with air rockets, doing simple calculations to determine how high each rocket flew. The students then graduated to more complex algebra and calculator skills to predict how high their rocket would fly. At the end of the session the kids launch their rockets at the Trinity College football field—launching memories that will last a lifetime.

By volunteering at the Boys & Girls Club, John Cancian gives back, serving as a role model and enriching the lives of Club members.
As an immigrant child growing up in New Britain, Joe Ghamo struggled to fit in with the other kids who spoke English as their first language. He credits “The Boys Club,” as it was called back then, for giving him the confidence to come into his own.

Ghamo, co-owner of JT Ghamo, a shop specializing in men’s formalwear, first got involved with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Harford through the Passport to Manhood initiative. Joe was selected as one of the judges for the annual essay competition, an experience that deeply affected him. “Reading the candidates’ personal essays and getting a chance to meet them touched me in a profound way; I knew I needed to be more involved,” he said.

Ghamo also donated formal outfits for the boys, teaching them how to dress for their future aspirations. “No one is born knowing how to dress like a professional. It has to be learned. We show young men how to properly tie a necktie, and the right way to wear other wardrobe accessories. We teach young men to dress like the men they want to become.”

Joe offers inspiring words to empower our young people, “Life is difficult, and I always encourage young men not to sell themselves short. They need to make the most out every opportunity that comes their way, and understand the importance of networking,” Ghamo said.

“At JT Ghamo, we believe there’s no better way to start improving our city than with the young men in our community,” Ghamo concludes.

SMART GIRL OF THE YEAR UPDATE  Jada Copeland

Jada Copeland—2018 SMART Girl of the Year. As a member of the Northwest and Asylum Hill Boys & Girls Clubs for seven years, Jada attributes her confidence and leadership skills to the SMART Girls program.

“The SMART Girls program taught me that if I set my mind to something I can achieve it. I learned communication skills and how to be a leader,” Copeland said. “Being involved with the Boys & Girls Club opened my eyes and mind to many opportunities.”

Jada is particularly appreciative of the college preparatory programs and campus visits, which exposed her to the importance of higher education and her options. When asked what she’d like club supporters to know, Jada responded “With your help Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford builds a better and stronger future for young people. Being a SMART Girl is the foundation of the smart, beautiful, and driven person I am today.”
As the 2018 Youth of the Year, and a Trinity College Club member for more than 12 years, Aracelis Figueroa left a lasting impression on the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford. Now a member of the UCONN Class of 2023, majoring in Computer Science with a concentration in Cyber Security, Figueroa has not forgotten her roots, or what’s made her the person she is today.

“In addition to the love and support of my parents, being a part of the Boys & Girls Club has molded me into the strong independent woman I am. The Club offered many opportunities to go on college tours and attend conferences on college campuses. With these opportunities I felt prepared to move away from home,” Figueroa said.

“The Club also gave me the guidance on how to manage money, time and energy to have a good work-life balance. With this, I was able to maintain my internships throughout high school while still being an active member at the club, an athlete, and a contributing member of my family at home,” she said.

Aracelis plans on pursuing her Masters in Computer Science and possibly, her Doctorate. Her dream job is to be a classified hacker for the FBI or CIA. She still plans to be involved with the Club and give back every chance she gets. “The Boys & Girls Club cannot function without the support of the community, and I would love to thank the donors as they have encouraged me to keep going and to exceed my goals,” Figueroa said.

**COMMUNITY PARTNER Spotlight**

*BGCH in partnership with:*

**FOODSHARE**

and

**The House of Bread**

**2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR:**

(Numbers reflect outcomes of our full service Clubs)

- **Total Meals**: 72,176
- **Total Snacks**: 57,938
In Gratitude to The Hartford

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford is deeply grateful for the support of many of Hartford’s business community; however, few match the commitment of The Hartford. Known for creating safe, strong and successful communities where its employees live and work, The Hartford has made a tremendous contribution to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford growth and impact.

The Hartford’s support makes a real difference for kids at sites like West Middle Community School. Initiatives such as the Great Explorations Career program with UConn, as well as the Instrumental Petting Zoo with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, enrich the lives of our kids. The Hartford’s dedication is making a difference nationwide as well—helping to open 30 College and Career Centers at Boys & Girls Clubs across the country.

Beyond financial support for programming, The Hartford’s employees volunteer their time at West Middle each week throughout the school year as math and reading buddies. This program is something the kids look forward to and treasure. To kick the program off each October, The Hartford hosts a Fire Prevention Day, where every participant becomes Junior Fire Marshal for a day.

Our partnership with The Hartford touches the lives of so many of Hartford’s youth each year, providing them the access and opportunity to create great futures.

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Isaiah Cora

Isaiah, a 10th grader at Wethersfield High School, is a 7-year Southwest Club member. Winner of the 2018 Young Man of the Year award, Isaiah advocates for the Club, its programs and the values they instill.

“The Boys & Girls Club has provided me with programs that are going to benefit me now and in the long run, including Money Matters that helps me with managing my money and staying out of debt. The Club has also helped me give back to those in need by hosting fundraisers for people in Puerto Rico,” he said. “I’ve also learned the importance of a healthy lifestyle, eating right and staying in shape. I’ve been working on my basketball game with Mr. Clinton during open gym, who is helping me to be a better player.”

In the future, Isaiah hopes to attend college at CCSU or UConn, and dreams of being a cartoonist.

“I come to Boys & Girls Club because here, I can express myself, I feel comfortable, and I can happily call this place my second home,” he said. “I am proud to represent our organization and show kids why our Clubs are amazing places to be.”
Thank you! Here at Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford, we believe every kid has what it takes to build a great future, and this wouldn’t be possible without the support and generosity of our donors. In contributing to Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford, you empower Hartford’s youth to reach their full potential through programs focused on Academic Success, Good Character & Citizenship and Healthy Lifestyles. Because of you, Club kids receive the mentoring necessary to make the right choices, graduate high school and become contributing members of our community. For almost 160 years, we have been the premier youth development organization in Hartford, currently providing programs for more than 8,000 young people a year. Your support helps us change lives for the better and continue this good work we do for the community.
Alexa Keener
Sue & George Kelleher,
in memory of Oliver Patrell
Marian Kellner, M.D.,
in honor of Donna Stout
Amanda E. Kellogg
Daniel Kelly
William Kennedy*
Richard Keough
Philip Kerr
Kids for Kids Connecticut
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Donna and Sam Stout
Elizabeth Stout
John and Lisa Stout
We also thank the businesses and individuals who donate items to our event auctions and the many volunteers who provide their time, talent, and treasure to make our Clubs a safe and inviting place for Hartford’s kids.

_______________________________

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Tony Healy, Capture, LLC
Drone photo of Beach Boys event, page 3

Steven Laschever, Laschphoto
Fire Prevention Day, page 7

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