

you help equip us with the tools + support to drive **academic success**

Many youth experience a “summer slip” but it is more prevalent in youth from low-income households. Summer learning losses can stack up from year to year. More than half of the achievement gap between lower- and higher-income youth can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities.

When the ISD 31 summer program reached its capacity limits due to the pandemic, McKinney-Vento liaisons sought to place students in other programs. They wanted students who experience uncertainty in their home lives to have a place to belong: one that provides stability and consistency, educational programs, social-emotional learning and support, and is both safe and fun. That place is the Boys & Girls Club.

Throughout the summer 17 students received academic enrichment, mental health support, explored STEM with Headwaters Science Center, read to BARC’s therapy trained dogs, and much more. Transportation is one of the leading barriers for families in poverty, so the district helped break down this barrier by providing transportation to and from the Club.

Caleb K., ISD 31 tutor, helped youth with their academics at the Club each week day. Fun fact - Caleb worked at the Club while obtaining his teaching degree from Bemidji State. Caleb combined his Club background with teaching skills to help mentor and coach youth to increase their academic skills this summer.

Thanks to donors and business partners who make gifts that help underwrite the Club’s all-day Summer Brain Gain program, assisting youth - especially those who need us most - to thrive.



STEM
programs
happen at the
Club

*The McKinney-Vento
program is designed to
address problems that youth
who experience unstable
housing encounter in enrolling,
attending and succeeding
in school.*

READING TIME IS FUN TIME



“Spending the summer at the Club helped Helena mature and gain confidence. Now she loves trying out new things. Before the summer she struggled academically and now she’s doing much better.”

- GRANDPARENT

the school year is here

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Club opened our doors on September 7th to a new school year, our 19th. Seeing the faces of many members come back after a summer away is always something we look forward to. We are proud that during the pandemic the Club has been running in-person activities continuously since June 2020. This has not happened without challenges; reduced enrollment, social distancing, cohort groups, masking, cleaning, air filtration, and quarantining have all been utilized to help the Club avoid any additional building-wide closures.

This fall we opened an additional room to serve more youth than we did last school year. Even with this expansion, every age group has a waiting list. As some of the regulations and caution that have hallmarked our last 18 months hopefully subside, a new challenge of being able to attract and retain talented staff to offer safe and engaging programming has risen. As we build out our staffing ranks through the school year, we hope to safely admit more youth per day so that all youth have a place where they can become productive, responsible and caring citizens.



navigating

NEW FIRSTS FOR CLUB KIDS

Slingshots, pop bottle rockets, archery, land navigation, and leather stamping are just a few things that Club members had the opportunity to enjoy this summer. A new partnership formed with Scouts of America gave kids the chance each week to develop unique skills and try new activities. Patrick and Carter, both 9, shared that they loved the archery session. They were excited to shoot a bow and arrow for the first time and hit the target.



Scouting puts kids in the middle of the action with hands-on learning to prepare them for today - and for life. Brad Olson, district director of Scouts, donated time and program materials to make this partnership possible for nearly 100 Club kids. This partnership between Scouts and the Club will continue through the school year to impact more children with the opportunity to explore and develop new skills.



16 Club kids participated in a **one hour bike safety event** provided by Bike Bemidji.



The perfect volunteer MATCH

Long before Amanda Nelson was involved at the Club she knew she wanted to make a difference in the lives of children and families. Amanda is an RN and the Clinical Manager in Northern Minnesota at Accra Care. She heard from clients about the impact of the Club's programs and signed on as a volunteer for the gala and golf committees. Her creative eye for design, dedication to youth, and ability to connect with businesses to share the Club's mission and secure sponsorships were all assets that have helped elevate these events.

"Amanda is a rock star. She's genuine, passionate about the Club, and willing to go the extra mile for our kids and staff. We are lucky to have her as a volunteer," shares Andrea Kent, executive director.

Amanda's commitment has grown as she's seen the impact of her involvement. Amanda was asked to join the Board of Directors in December 2019 and be the liaison to the gala and golf committees. Amanda is a monthly donor, making gifts automatically from her bank to the Club to support programmatic efforts for hundreds of youth.

"There is a place for every person who wants to volunteer at the Club. We all have different interests and experiences, but the Club has many options. Just let staff know you are interested and they'll find the right fit for you."

If you're interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities, visit our website: bgcbemidji.org



**"We all can
make a difference
in the lives of
Bemidji kids."**

AMANDA NELSON

A PLACE WHERE FAMILIES CAN learn and grow

Avery, 11, and Scarlett, 10, have been Club members since 2017. Their mom, Heather, knew the Club would be a great fit because it's a place where kids can continue to grow - the programs and staff adapt with the kids as they age. As a mom, she loves that the Club offers a variety of activities and dedicated homework time.



When Avery was younger, he spent a lot of time on the computer and struggled with transitions that required him to take a break. Making Avery part of the solution, he and the staff made a plan to engage in other programs and enjoy technology time as a reward. Nowadays, Avery likes to play four square outside and games with peers.

Heather trusts Club staff to work with families through challenging situations. Recently, Scarlett had a tough day, and Heather sat down with her daughter to talk it out with Morgan, Club assistant director, alongside. "I didn't expect Morgan to do that - she sat right on the ground with us to talk it out together." Actions like those show kids they have the power to shape their futures.



OUR WISH LIST

Laminating sheets, disinfecting wipes, tape of all kinds, six-quart plastic bins with lids. *For more ideas visit bgcbemidji.org/give*

Avery (above) and Scarlett (right) at Eagle Vista Ranch, a Club sponsored activity.



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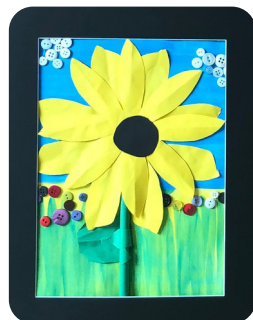
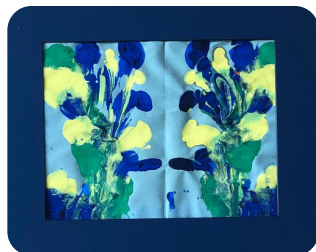
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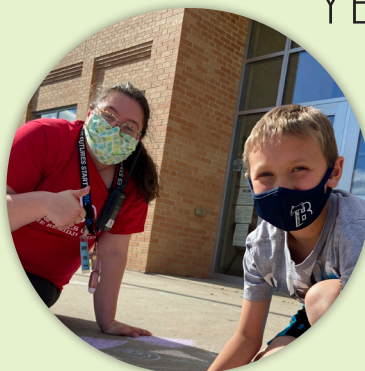
ASPIRING artists

This year three pieces of art from Bemidji members won the regional National Fine Arts contest and advanced to the national level. All submissions from the regional contests were judged for national honors by an esteemed panel of judges in Atlanta in August. Our local National Fine Arts program is made possible through the Bemidji Area Arts Endowment. National Arts Contests enable Club members to develop their creativity and cultural awareness through visual arts.

Top to bottom - Ruth, Print Making, age group 10-12, Flower Bouquet || Sebastian, Print Making, age group 6-9, Fireworks || Ben, Mixed Media, age group 6-9, Sunflower Summer Day



YEAR-ROUND SUPPORT



So much of what we do is based on our relationships - relationships with Club members, their families, volunteers,

business donors, individual donors, and community partners. Through the generous support of the George W. Neilson Foundation, the Club is able to build strong relationships with partners and advocates, who together with our staff and volunteers, help our youth grow into responsible, caring adults.

**George W. Neilson
Foundation**