

# You supported Jayden's GROWTH

from young Club member to Club role model

## Goofball. There isn't a better way to explain Jayden's personality.

Jayden started his Club adventure in the summer after completing kindergarten. This year he will enroll as a student at Bemidji High School and enter his 9th year as a Club member, and bring the same infectious giggle and bright smile that he has since his first days walking into the Club.

This summer, with funds from the Department of Employment and Economic Development, Club teens were hired as our first-ever Youth Workers. When our program leadership team was asked who they'd recommend, they unanimously recommended Jayden.

Jayden excitedly took on his new role in the Club, of course bringing his goofballness with him - which the younger kids loved! Through coaching and training, Jayden established his ability to be a role model for the younger kids while still being a person they can connect with and confide in. Jayden balanced this role well by ensuring safety and rules were being followed and having tons of fun with the youth.

Jayden demonstrated his desire to give back by turning something he's always enjoyed into a summer job. A job he learned can be difficult at times but also incredibly rewarding, as the younger Club kids were so happy to see Jayden and the other Youth Workers each and every day.

We all are so proud and joyous watching Jayden grow from a tiny incoming first grader to now a young adult proudly wearing a Club staff shirt.



**JAYDEN**

Club member  
since 2013,  
student at Bemidji  
High School

Jayden grew  
his leadership skills  
by taking an active  
role in weekly Lake  
Bemidji State Park  
field trips.



# BREAKING BARRIERS, INCREASING SUPPORT

The Minnesota Department of Public Safety is investing in Bemidji youth and families through a grant called **PASSAR: Providing Access, Safety & Support at Ridgeway**. Right before the pandemic, the Rotary Neighborhood Initiative (RNI) began weekly meetings with key community partners and residents of the Ridgeway neighborhood to understand the challenges and barriers facing residents while brainstorming opportunities to collaborate. **This 15-month grant is now helping to fund youth, adult and neighborhood programs within the Ridgeway area.** It's also helping to create a web of support services with additional agencies, encourage positive relationship-building efforts and develop a strategic plan for the future. Thanks to partners like RNI, Bemidji Police Department, Village of Hope, Sanford Health, Peacemaker Resources, and the Boys & Girls Club we are working together to help change conditions that lead to community violence, reduce barriers for people experiencing poverty, increase tenant social support and knowledge to enhance quality of life for all who reside in and near the Ridgeway area. **It's amazing what we can do when we work together for the good of our neighbors!**



## growing knowledge

### NEVER TASTED SO GOOD

The garden program continues to expand to provide education for youth, funded by a MN Department of Agriculture grant and dedicated Club donors. Children still grow each plant from seed, accessing over 30 different kinds of produce, and now participate in culinary skill sessions led by Chef Isaac Welle.

**In the last few months, Club members made basil pesto, rhubarb crisp, and roasted tomatoes, all featuring produce grown at the Club.**

New sustainable practices include a composting program led by Club members and a reduction in single-use paper and plastic products. **Club members and staff are sharing their experiences with hydroponic growing thorough a partnership with Bemidji Middle School.** Grant support allowed the Club to purchase another Fork Farms hydroponic vertical system, co-located at BMS for 7th-grade classroom instruction. Club staff are helping Bemidji middle schoolers practice STEM learning through innovative agricultural practices.



10 Club kids went **Casting with Cops on Lake Bemidji** and collectively caught over 130 fish between two trips!



## good business GREAT HEART

Over a decade ago, Paul Iverson agreed to volunteer at the Boys & Girls Club...and he's been dedicated ever since. What he might not have known is that his years as the owner of Iverson Corner Drug would come in very handy during his service on the Finance Committee. **Paul's business sense, budget and HR experiences, and problem-solving skills have helped this committee make difficult decisions** when cash flow wasn't flowing, develop strategies for revenue diversification, remortgage a couple of times and become more financially sustainable. These vital, behind-the-scenes decisions are ones we can all appreciate for the health of the organization in our service to youth and families.

Paul has also helped with the Club's annual spring campaign and regularly attends other special events. An avid golfer, he has been a long-time participant in the Club's annual golf tournament often inviting new friends to play in the tourney to share the Club's mission. Even if Paul goes out of town and there is a meeting, he continues to Zoom in and lend his expertise during the monthly Finance Committee meetings.

"I volunteer with the Club because I have skills that help Club staff. I believe there is nothing more important than helping children be successful. This is especially true of the children who may not have as many opportunities as others."

*If you're interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities, visit our website: [bgcbemidji.org](http://bgcbemidji.org)*



**"I believe  
there is nothing  
more important than  
helping children be  
successful."**

PAUL IVERSON

## EXPANDED + NEW PARTNERSHIPS to Serve Those Who Need Us Most

The Club is positioned to play a critical role in meeting the needs of area youth, especially those who need us most. **Through the Ignite Believe & Build Afterschool grant, we are expanding our services through close connections and partnerships within our community.**



TALAYA AND CLUB MEMBERS

Together with staff from the Bemidji School District we are identifying 75 students, who are in danger of falling between the cracks due to challenges faced during the pandemic, to become Club members and experience our quality programs, healthy snacks, and caring adults. New and expanded partnerships with Headwaters Science Center, Peacemaker Resources, Bemidji Public Library, and Bemidji Community Theater open doors for Club kids to engage in the community through weekly field trips. The Club hired Talaya Kautz as our Ignite Assistant Director to oversee the implementation and success of this grant over the next two school years.

The opportunity for youth to develop strong, trusting relationships with caring adults help buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma. Research shows that engagement indicators such as attendance, behavior, and classroom performance rise when students regularly participate in quality afterschool programs like the Boys & Girls Club.

### OUR WISH LIST

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





P.O. Box 191  
Bemidji, MN 56619  
218.444.4171 • [bgcbemidji.org](http://bgcbemidji.org)



*Join the conversation!  
Follow us on Facebook!*



**Save the date  
for An Evening of  
Love for Our Kids  
Annual Gala!**

**Friday, February 24 at  
the Hampton Inn,  
Bemidji.**

*Interested in sponsorships?  
Find more information at  
[bgcbemidji.org](http://bgcbemidji.org).*

## Instilling Good Character

One of the three key program areas at the Club is Good Character and Citizenship. Our Club members focus on volunteering at the Club and in the community. Each week the teens traveled to Great River Rescue to help clean/sanitize and socialize the animals in preparations for their adoptions. This has been a highlight for youth this summer. Club teens and tweens were awarded Volunteer of the Month for July. Through the support of the George W. Neilson Foundation, our Club members were given this great opportunity to help them grow into responsible and caring adults.

**George W. Neilson  
Foundation**



## ARTISTIC IMAGINATION

The Club provides a safe and engaging place where youth develop positive relationships with caring adults and peers, and develop a healthy sense of belonging. **United Way of Bemidji Area** supports educational activities that encourage kids to explore their creativity and express themselves with dedicated **art time**. Time to let their imagination work is time well spent.

**Olivia, age 6,  
shows off her  
bubblegum-  
blowing  
self-portrait.**

