BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF THE BEMIDJI AREA

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SAVE THE DATES:

ACE Hardware
Ace on the Lake

LEFSE DAY
AT ACE HARDWARE
NOVEMBER 21, 2026

ANNUAL GALA
THE GREATEST SHOW
FEBRUARY 26, 2027





Summer Recap at the Clubhouse

What a summer it's been at the Clubhouse! Our kids spent the season **learning**, **exploring**, **creating**, and **making memories** both inside and out. From fishing, swimming, hiking, and archery to climbing, ziplining, dancing, and ice skating, there was no shortage of ways to stay active and try something new.

Our 1st-5th graders explored nature and animal science, learned survival skills and navigation, and even went on bug hunts and nature walks. Meanwhile, our Tweens and Teens put their creativity and problem-solving skills to work by coding 3D design images, sewing ribbon skirts, crafting outdoor art, and engineering STEM projects.

Just as important as the activities themselves were the opportunities to build confidence, discover new interests, and connect with others. Kids learned new skills, challenged themselves, spent time with animals, explored the arts and outdoors, and experienced new places throughout our community.

We are incredibly grateful to the many community partners who helped make these experiences possible - from local organizations and businesses to families and volunteers. Together, they helped make this summer one filled with **fun, friendship, learning, and memories that will last well beyond the final days of summer!**





BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF THE BEMIDJI AREA

BEMIDJI
newsletter

FALL 2026



Art Takes Root at the Club:

Youth create pollinator garden murals

Over the last six months more than 50 Juniors, Tweens, and Teens worked alongside community artist Mary Therese to design, paint, and install a vibrant pollinator-themed mural in the Club's garden.

As they brought their mural to life, Club Kids learned about the important relationship between native plants and pollinators. They explored local bees, butterflies, birds, and native flowers, discovering how pollinators help **support healthy ecosystems and the food we eat**.

The project encouraged creativity, collaboration, and a deeper sense of connection to their surroundings. Youth practiced sharing space, taking turns, and combining their individual ideas into one unified work of art. They also learned the techniques of mural making, from painting broad backgrounds to adding intricate details.

Once completed, the acrylic paintings were sealed with UV-protective varnish and installed in the garden. With guidance from volunteers Mark, Ed, and Larry, Club Kids helped drill and secure the panels to the garden shed and rainwater collection tank frame.



> "Collaborating and mural making emboldens young artists to dream big... and dream big together."
> -Mary Therese

We are grateful to Mary Therese, the Minnesota State Arts Board, our volunteers, and the Club Kids who turned this creative vision into a lasting part of our garden! ***Read the full story at www.bgcbemidji.org/news/***

This meaningful art experience was made possible through an Arts Experience Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, funded by the voters of Minnesota through the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.



Thanks to:

CLEAN WATER LAND & LEGACY AMENDMENT

MINNESOTA STATE ARTS BOARD

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A Partnership That Inspires



For the past two years, our partnership with **Headwaters Music & Arts** has opened the door to new creative experiences for Clubhouse kids. Through dedicated grant funds, more than **60 Club kids** participated in several week-long summer camps at Headwaters Music & Arts, exploring art, music, creative writing and more.

From **Splish Splash Art Camp**, where youth created splatter art and watercolor shells, to **Chibi Art Camp**, where they created original characters, practicing gradient shading, line work, & composition. There was no shortage of ways to get creative!

Juniors, Tweens and Teens took on new adventures during **Dungeons & Dragons Camp**, designing characters and backstories, painting miniatures, creating dioramas and learning the basics of gameplay. It was a fun way to combine art, imagination, storytelling and problem-solving skills.



This summer also brought a new opportunity through **Choir Camp**, where youth learned harmonies, practiced one- and two-part songs, and worked toward a final performance for their families. Watching their confidence grow - and seeing some families travel from afar to cheer them on - was a special part of the experience.

We are grateful to Headwaters Music & Arts for helping our Club kids **try something new, discover their creativity and build confidence through the arts**!

Growing Together

VIEW HARVEST REPORT HERE







Our Club garden is growing - and so are the kids who care for it! Throughout the season, Club members planted, watered, harvested, and learned where their food comes from. From vegetables and herbs to strawberries and hydroponic lettuce, youth experienced the journey from seed to table. This year, Club kids harvested **over 2,000 pounds of fresh produce**. *(Read more in our Harvest Report!)*

The garden is also a hands-on science classroom! With help from the **Beltrami County Master Gardeners**, Club youth explored photosynthesis, pollinators, beneficial insects, composting, and healthy soil. They dissected flowers, conducted fieldwork, planted flowers, made leaf prints, and learned how worms can turn food waste into nutrient-rich compost - all while building responsibility, teamwork, and healthy habits.

Our garden area also includes the high tunnel, spaces for cultural learning, and a new native pollinator area in our parking lot swales. Together, these spaces give Club members opportunities to connect with nature, explore Ojibwe traditions, support pollinators, and see how their work can make a lasting impact.

Scan the QR code to read the updates on our website about our native garden and pollinator project!





"Lots of Good Opportunities Start Here"

At 15 years old, Jevin already knows a thing or two about what it means to grow up at the Club. He's been coming here for nine years, and this summer, he took on a **new role as a Youth Worker**.

Jevin spent his summer working with our 4th and 5th graders and assisting staff. He **helped organize and lead games in the gym**, including Ultimate Basketball, Gaga Ball, and Line Tag. He continues to work at the Club during the school year, where he primarily helps keep the gym clean and safe.

The Club's Youth Worker program, made possible through grant funding, gives Club members ages 14 and up the chance to gain paid work experience while building skills for the future. Responsibilities vary by age, but every role provides an **opportunity to learn, contribute, and prepare for the workforce**.

Jevin has watched Club staff come and go over the years, but one thing has stayed the same: he says the people are the best part of the Club experience.

When Jevin was younger, he wanted to be a police officer - a career he even dressed up for in one of our favorite photos (above). Today, through programs like Career Launch, Jevin gets to explore many options for what comes next.

As Jevin puts it, ***"Lots of good opportunities start here at the Club."*** And his experience is a great example of exactly that.

MEET OUR NEW STAFF



Zoee Johnson
School Liaison & Mentoring Coordinator



Angel Cano
Clubhouse Elementary Program Director



Savanah Shenkle
Blackduck Branch Director

Small Gifts, Big Impact:

Heather's Commitment to Giving



As Board Chair, Heather understands the vital role the Boys & Girls Club plays in the community. Since October 2019, she has been a **monthly donor**, helping provide local youth with a safe, structured place to go outside of school hours.

For Heather, giving is about creating a **safe place for young people** and thinking about the big picture. "It feels good to know that you are contributing to something bigger than yourself," she says. Her involvement has also deepened her understanding of community needs and humbled her along the way.

Heather appreciates that monthly giving is **simple and sustainable**. Her advice to others? "It's okay to start small. Would you be willing to *'buy the Club a fancy coffee'* once or twice a month? When you think of it that way, it is easy to commit and it feels good."

CLUB GEM
GIVES EVERY MONTH