



# BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF LAWRENCE

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**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**JUNE 19, 2023**  
**ANNUAL BGCL GOLF TOURNAMENT**



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF LAWRENCE**



Meet Herian Perez, a National Honor Society member, the first person to receive the Barbara Sweeney Scholarship, and the Club's 2023 Youth of The Year! Herian is an exemplary senior at Central Catholic High School with aspirations of becoming a nurse and giving back to her community.

Joining the Club as a young child nine years ago, Herian was quieter and less social than her peers. However, taking a leap of faith and joining the BGCL River Sharks Swim Team helped her to blossom into the person she is today. With new friends and caring staff, she was motivated to explore other Club opportunities that would ultimately guide her on a path to success.

Participating in Bread Loaf – a program that teaches youth how to express themselves through writing and art – helped her to gain the confidence she needed to discover her

true self. “Being at the Boys & Girls Club has provided me with a lifetime of support. Every staff member has been a significant part of my journey in life. They encouraged me to become someone great and ensured I had everything I needed. I gained so much confidence and dedication to the things I love,” she said.

Herian is confident that she will succeed and is grateful for the Club staff who nurtured the many positive values that helped Herian to realize her potential.

## Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

In addition to some of the great Club happenings you'll read about in this newsletter, we have relaunched a trades workshop for 7th and 8th graders; hired a social worker; added more swim lessons; and included 8th graders in our Planning for the Future program – all on top of a successful basketball season.

Many people already know about our hallmark programs, but these initiatives show we constantly tune in to our kids to understand their needs. We observe and listen. As always, thank you for your support.

Gratefully,  
Markus Fischer

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## Making Care Packages!

“Once a Club kid, always a club kid” is a saying that means a lot to our BGCL alum. It can be terrifying when our alum graduates high school and go off on their personal journeys. For many of them, the Club has been their home for the last ten years. Transitioning from attending the Club daily to making your routine can be challenging. To combat those feelings and remind them of home, Jodi R., our Teen Director rallied Keystone members to prepare care packages for our college alum.

Staff always think of those who have moved on and stay in touch with them. Jodi and Keystone wanted to remind alums that they are not alone and still have a place at the Club. The care packages included goodies, blankets, and little treats to remind them of home. After receiving the packages, the alums were so grateful and overjoyed. At the Club, we pride ourselves on creating meaningful relationships with our members, so they know they are welcome here and are always thought of wherever they go.

## NEW PROGRAM: CHEER!



B-G-C-L, what does that spell? Have you heard about the cutest new program at the Club? Coming from a background of cheerleading herself, our front desk staff, Rebecca D., started our own BGCL cheer squad.

With the new school year, Club members were excited to learn they could add cheerleading to their extensive resumes. The cheerleaders have shown off their moves at a few home Club games and are planning to do a routine at the art showcase. Along with Rebecca, Kathy C., our Arts Coordinator and Dance Instructor, helps to create and teach the squad new cheers. Practice is every Monday and Wednesday at 3:30.

Nashley, age 8, said, "I love being in cheer. It is fun learning the cheers and performing them at games. It's a good exercise too."

Cheerleading is a great activity. Not only is it fun, but it gets our members up and moving. Physical health is critical in children, and we are glad we have more activities to keep them healthy.

We are so happy we can provide these fantastic opportunities for our Club kids to learn, grow, and find

## FLIGHT SIMULATION!



Over the summer, the Club was gifted a flight simulation device that teaches our members the mechanics of flying a plane. The device has been a hit in the Technology Center, with kids of all ages wanting to test it.

The device is designed to mimic actual plane controls and to put users in the pilot's seat. However, as fun as it looks, learning to use it is challenging. To educate our members and give them some tips, our volunteer coordinator Suzanne F. solicited the help of Paul J., a JetBlue pilot, and long-time Club partner.

Intrigued by Paul walking into the Club with his uniform on, the kids lined up in the Technology Center, eager to learn. Paul taught them the basics, such as the functions of the buttons, how to take off, and how to land. After the demonstration, the kids were allowed to test their new knowledge.

Juan, age 12, said, "I didn't think it would be this hard to fly a plane. I could not even get in the air without crashing! I now have lots of respect for pilots."

Activities like this one are essential to our Club's mission. We want to expose our members to the many options available to them and to support the belief that the right attitude and guidance can help them achieve their goals. Thank you, Paul, for introducing piloting to our kids!



## Ironstone Farm

Thanks to a generous grant from the Cummings Foundation, a few of our Club kids were given the opportunity to learn about farm life at Ironstone Farm in Andover, MA.

During the February school break, our members learned about leadership, trust, teamwork and horses!

Over the three vacation days, our members were bused to the farm, where they learned about caring for and feeding horses, and ultimately learning how to ride them around the corral! They also discussed therapeutic practices, animal education, and shared a little about themselves. The program was successful as participants boasted about being grateful for the new experience.

Ari, age 12, said, "I used to be afraid of horses, but this program helped me to get over that fear and understand that horses are sweet and calm animals."

Thank you, Ironstone Farm. The kids had a fantastic week of outdoor fun, laughter, and discovery. We can't wait for a new batch of kids to experience the same opportunity over spring break!

## THERMO FISCHER

### Making Catapults!

Whenever Thermo Fisher stops by, we know it will be a blast! Whether conducting DNA experiments or teaching the kids about lasers, our members are always lining up at the door, eager to learn and have fun.

This time, Thermo Fisher brought another great STEM activity that taught our members about energy and how to build catapults! This experiment was exciting, with staff even popping in a few times. Thermo Fisher volunteers were helpful, engaging, and very educational.



The real excitement came when our members could test their new inventions. Once the catapults were built, they were put through a series of tests. The challenges tested the catapult's strength and agility by seeing if they could knock down a tower of cups and how far they could go.

Manuel, age 10, said, "It was cool that we got to do various challenges. My favorite challenge was the cup one. I didn't knock any down, but I really liked it! The volunteers were also really fun. They were helping me build my catapult when I needed help."

Thank you, Thermo Fisher, for all you do for our Club kids. You continue to inspire and bring joy to our members. Iyah, age 9, says that because of your efforts, she has become more interested in STEM. "It was super fun