



THE BUGLE

Thank You
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The Club For Boys!



Spring 2024 • Helping all boys meet their needs today, so they can fulfill their potential tomorrow

Basketball Brotherhood

EACH YEAR, there is a noticeable buzz in the air at The Club for Boys leading up to the Club’s Basketball League season. Boys between the ages of nine and twelve eagerly await the opportunity to join the league, while volunteers and staff look forward to another season of watching young athletes build confidence on the court.

“A lot of hype starts circling when we’re getting ready to do signups,” Program Director Nick Lowry explained. “The kids get super excited, and so do our staff. It’s become a Club-wide collaboration.”

Throughout the season, the excitement intensifies during the league’s game night each Thursday. Parents line the Club’s hallways waiting to cheer on their boys. The gyms’ bleachers quickly fill, and the overflow of attendees anxiously line the sides of the courts.

Despite its current popularity, the Basketball League has not always experienced this level of interest. “When I took over the athletic program 15 years ago, the league wasn’t very popular,” Nick remarked. “Now, we have hundreds of parents showing up for game night. And we have to limit the league to 72 kids because we end up running out of playing time and roster space for our boys.”

According to Nick, the Club is always trying to create more opportunities for members. “Last year, we were excited to launch our Older Boys Basketball League to give more members the chance to participate.”

What has caused this huge shift in enthusiasm for the league?

The answer is simple.

“ Our staff and volunteers. We have awesome volunteers; we wouldn’t be able to run this league if it wasn’t for them. And Tristan does a fantastic job. He builds enthusiasm so that the boys are like ‘Heck yeah, I want to be involved in this!’ ”

—Nick Lowry, Program Director

This season will mark two years that Tristan Deming, the Club’s older boys athletic director, has been in charge of running the league. He agrees that the bonds created between players and those involved in the league are the reason for its success. “The boys build great relationships with their coach and the other volunteers,” he explained. “Those relationships really allow them to grow.”

As part of the league, players also get free professional photos taken of them and their team wearing their jerseys. The jerseys are designed to mimic professional jerseys and, every three years, are available for boys who attended at least 80% of games and practices to take home and keep.

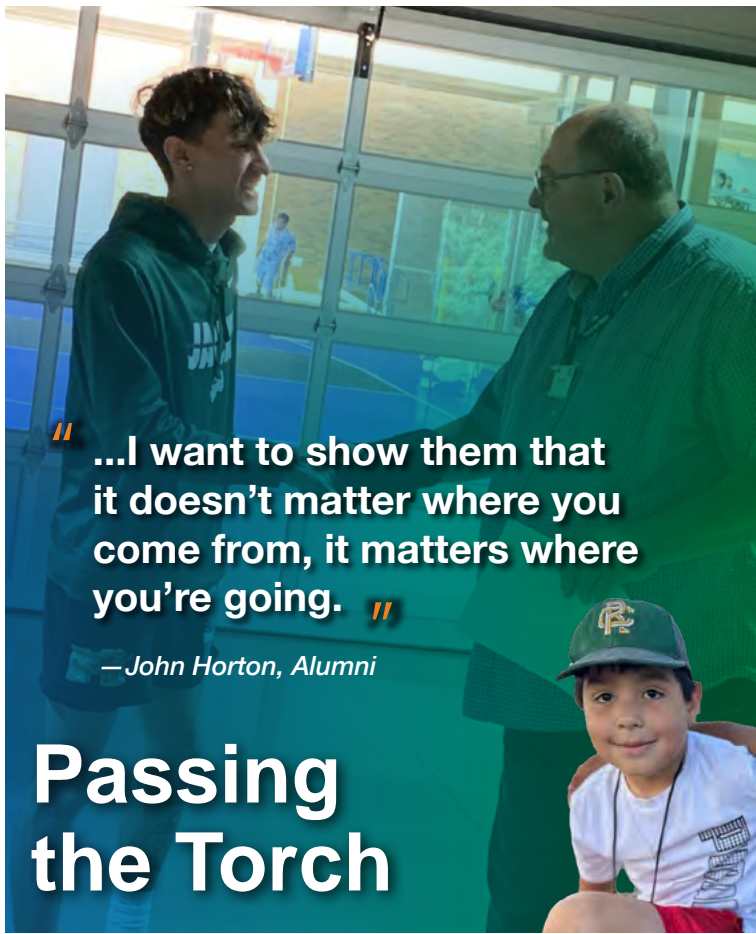
“We had a boy join the league one year just for the jersey,” Nick recalled with a laugh. “He would always stay on the sidelines. But he would show up for practices and made friends with other boys in the league, and by week three he had built up the confidence to get out on the court and play.”

Overall, the most important thing that the boys acquire by joining the league are the friendships that are built throughout the season. “Because of the way we set up teams, the boys really branch out and become friends and talk to those that they might not have otherwise,” Nick shared. “It’s really awesome to see relationships and teamwork build.”

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“...I want to show them that it doesn’t matter where you come from, it matters where you’re going.”

—John Horton, Alumni

Passing the Torch



LIKE 38% OF MEMBERS that attend The Club for Boys, John Horton was raised in a single-parent household. With his mother working two jobs to provide for him and his four siblings, the Club served as a second home for John and his three brothers as they grew up.

“My mom would pick my brothers and I up from school and drop us off at the Club and head to her second job,” John recalled. “We’d stay at the Club until it closed, every day, Monday through Friday.”

John’s fondest memories of attending the Club were those that involved the many activities that he participated in, which included basketball, carpetball, and ping pong. He learned how to play pool in the Club’s Games Room and earned a spot at the championship of a pool tournament one year. “Going to the Club was a great experience, and I’m so thankful for it.”

The mentorship from staff and volunteers at the Club also had a substantial impact on John. “They took the time to spend with us kids and be patient with us,” he said. “They taught us valuable skills like responsibility and respect for others. Without the Club, my childhood would have really been different.”

As an adult, John now wants to provide that much needed mentorship that he received in his youth. He has served as a referee for the Club’s Football League and looks forward to serving as a referee during the upcoming Basketball League season. During the holiday season, he joined fellow Club alumni in cutting down over 150 trees for the Christmas Tree Lot. “Any time they need help with something, I’m willing to step in and make time for it,” he added.

John has also teamed up with Assistant Executive Director Mark Kline and the Rapid City Police Department to go back

to his childhood neighborhood in North Rapid City and host summertime events for children that live nearby, many of which are Club members. By doing so, he wants to show kids in the area, which has experienced surges in violence in recent years, that there is a better path for them to take.

“I want to be a positive role model because I know where these kids come from,” John shared. “And I want to show them that it doesn’t matter where you come from, it matters where you’re going.”

Believing that The Club for Boys should remain an accessible and enriching space for future generations, John hopes that his fellow alumni will join him in giving back and continuing the Club’s legacy.

“It’s up to us alumni that grew up here to start getting involved. The Club helps a lot of boys and we want to continue to pass it on from generation to generation and keep the doors open.”

Calling All Alumni!



An Alumni Association has been started to reconnect former members and provide them with a way to get involved with Club activities.

To join, please email your name and address to alumni@theclubforboys.org.

“ When you’re present and show that you care, you’re making a difference in these boys’ lives. ”

—Alex Conner, Volunteer

Nurturing a Legacy of Volunteerism

FOR ALEX CONNER, volunteering at The Club for Boys is how he gives back to an organization that impacted him during his formative years. “I just can’t say enough about what the Club did for me as a kid, and now what it’s doing for me as an adult,” he explained.

Growing up, Alex spent his summers at the Club, where he indulged his love of sports in the Athletic Program. Over the years, he grew close to the Club’s staff members and volunteers, building bonds that he still enjoys today. “If you talk to any alumni, there’s a story they can tell you about a staff member or adult that was at the Club that helped get them through a tough time,” he said.

Throughout high school and college, Alex returned to the Club as a member of the summer staff, as well as a volunteer in the Flag Football League. Now, as a seventh-grade math teacher with Rapid City Area Schools, he continues to devote his time to guiding young athletes at the Club. “I enjoy making an impact and doing good for my community. It just makes me feel good as a person.”

The opportunity to establish meaningful relationships with the boys who attend the Club is another reason why Alex continues to volunteer. “I’m able to connect with boys at the Club before they come to me as students,” he added. “I’m then able to have more impactful conversations with them, and they tend to share more.”

According to Samantha Wickham, the Club’s volunteer and event coordinator, these connections are a large reason why people choose to volunteer at the Club. “Everyone loves our staff, and they love our boys,” she said. “People enjoy spending time with other people, building relationships, and giving back to something that makes a positive difference.”

Witnessing the dedication of the Club’s Volunteer Program has had a profound impact on Samantha. “It challenges me to think of what I’m doing to give back to my community,” she reflected. “The generosity of our volunteers has given me so much hope and humbled me so much.”

Through his work at the Club, Alex hopes to inspire the next generation of members to return as volunteers. “When you’re present and show that you care, you’re making a difference in these boys’ lives,” he said. “And hopefully they’ll pay it forward in the future, like we as alumni are doing now.”



Alex Conner continues to volunteer in the Athletic Program.

Thank You *to all our staff and volunteers!*

Your contributions make an incredible impact for The Club for Boys!



Ready to make an impact on young lives?

Email Samantha at samanthaw@theclubforboys.com

to join our team of volunteers and become a part of something bigger!

YOUR GIFT CHANGES THE LIVES OF OUR BOYS

We would like to thank everyone who donated gifts of time, money, and in kind.

Thank you to the people, businesses, and organizations that gave gifts from October 2023 to December 2023 to The Club for Boys.

We would like to thank everyone who donated gifts of time, money, and in kind. The following people, businesses, and organizations gave cash gifts of \$250 or more. Those with a * gave \$1,000- \$9,999, + gave \$10,000- \$99,999, and ! were gifts of \$100,000 or more.

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Our Santas will be thanked in our Summer Bugle Edition! Stay Tuned!

Nourishing Minds, Fueling Futures

WITH THE STEADY RISE OF FOOD COSTS in recent years, many families throughout the Black Hills struggle to keep nutritious meals on the table. Children that are eligible for free or reduced lunches, which includes 70% of the boys that the Club serves, are particularly vulnerable to the effects of escalating food prices and are often negatively impacted both physically and mentally due to a lack of access to healthy foods.

Recognizing the importance of balanced nutrition to overall well-being and development, The Club for Boys offers a Nutrition Program to its members as part of their \$12 a year membership.

“The idea is that, if we can meet the basic need for nutritious food here at the Club, there is one less obstacle our boys have to face and they can instead focus on their academic and personal development,” Assistant Executive Director Mark Kline stated.

According to Mark, the Club does not skimp on the quality or nutritional value of the food that is served. Each snack that members receive includes a piece of fruit, and lunches and dinners include a salad bar.

The Club offers a Nutrition Program to all of their members at no extra cost.

“We’re not just heating up canned, processed foods,” he explained. “We’re serving made from scratch meals and fresh fruits and veggies.”

—Mark Kline,
Assistant Executive Director



Through the Nutrition Program, boys not only get fed, but they are also taught how to better feed themselves. “We have a volunteer that comes down weekly that teaches boys ages 12 to 17 how to cook,” Mark said. “We also have B.O.B., Brothers of Barbeque, where we’re teaching kids how to barbeque safely on the grill.”

Members are not the only ones to benefit from the Club’s Nutrition Program. During Family Nights and special events, members can bring their families along to participate in fun activities and enjoy a meal seated together around a table. “We’re trying to help families even more,” Mark added. “With the rising cost of food, this is just one more thing that we add to the value of their membership.”

The Club also serves as an open site during the summers, so that any school-age child in the community can eat.

Assistance from those throughout the community is what allows the Club to continue to provide 70,000 quality, nutrient-dense snacks and meals each year. “I can’t give enough credit to the ranchers who donate beef to us,” Mark continued. “If we didn’t have those kinds of donations, we’d have to cut back somewhere for sure.” Feeding South Dakota is another valuable resource utilized by the Club.

By continuing to address the need for a reliable source of nutritious meals, the Club aims to not only fill stomachs but to also nourish the potential and dreams of members. “It’s letting our members know that we care about them and are taking care of them,” Mark said.

4 wishes

- Sunscreen for Summer Program
- Gatorade for Basketball Leagues
- Beyblades and Hot Wheels for our Younger Boys Program
- Tonka Trucks for the Sandbox

We are able to do more at The Club for Boys with the support of people like you!

In addition to your financial support of our work, which keeps our dues at just \$12 per year per boy, we would appreciate donations for some items for The Club!



Thank You for Your Support!

You may also scan this QR Code to view other items on our Amazon Wish List!



Rapid City Club for Boys
320 North 4th Street
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TheClubForBoys.org



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HOOKED ON HARDWATER

THE CLUB FOR BOYS

Saturday
Feb. 24, 2024

Our upcoming Hooked on Hardwater annual fundraising event pairs our Club members with pro ice fishermen for an unforgettable morning of ice fishing in the beautiful Black Hills!

Learn More @ TheClubForBoys.org/Hooked-On-Hardwater

