



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF MANATEE COUNTY

**MEDIA ALERT**

**Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County Launches Great Futures Campaign to Advocate for Kids During Out-of-School Time**

*Nationwide Movement Redefines the Opportunity Equation for Kids by Elevating Need for Increased Access to Afterschool and Summer Programs*

BRADENTON, FL – Today, Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County announced the launch of the Great Futures Campaign to mobilize the community in support of kids and empower today’s youth to achieve great futures. The local Club is joining Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide to redefine the opportunity equation for kids by elevating the critical role out-of-school time plays in a child’s development. Through the Great Futures Campaign, the organization seeks to ensure that every child and teen has access to a safe place after school and during the summer where they can build the knowledge, skills and behaviors to put them on the path for success.

Every day, 15 million kids nationwide (1 out of 3) leave school with no place to go<sup>1</sup>, putting them at risk of being unsupervised, unguided and unsafe. During the summer, an alarming 43 million (3 out of 4) kids in America lack access to summer learning programs<sup>2</sup>, increasing their risk of learning loss and putting them at a disadvantage before the school year starts. The way a child spends their time after school and during the summer can significantly impact the path they take.

“When the nation prepares to go back to school this fall, we want to ensure out-of-school time is part of the conversation. We’re taking a leadership role with the Great Futures Campaign to elevate the impact of out-of-school time, a critical, yet often overlooked, part of their day,” said Beth Work, VP of Operations and Interim CEO. “When school is out, no child should go unsafe or unguided. Through the Campaign, we are advocating on behalf of kids and convening public, private and nonprofit partners around our goal of ensuring all kids have access to a safe, engaging and productive place to go between school and home.”

A response to the crises facing America’s kids, the campaign is focused on reversing the most negative trends facing youth and the country:

- Today’s generation is estimated to be worse off than their parents<sup>3</sup>, the first in America’s history
- Our nation’s graduation rate ranks 22nd among 28 countries<sup>4</sup>
- Three out of 10 kids are obese or overweight<sup>5</sup>
- One in 5 American kids live in poverty<sup>6</sup>

Nationally, the issues have economic implications, costing as much as \$209 billion in lost taxes and higher government expenditures over the lifetimes of those who fail to graduate<sup>7</sup>. Healthcare costs to treat health issues related to childhood obesity are \$14.1 billion annually,<sup>8</sup> and states spend an average of \$7.1 million a day locking youth up in juvenile justice facilities<sup>9</sup>.

“Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County has been serving the community with afterschool and summer programs for 68 years. During that time, we’ve seen the positive impact that occurs when young people have access to a safe place with caring adult mentors and enriching programs during out-of-school time,” said Valerie Bliss, VP of Development for Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County. “We want today’s generation to be successful in school and in adulthood, to be healthy and active, and to develop strong character skills they need to become future leaders for our community and country.”

The Boys & Girls Clubs impact the lives of thousands of children in Manatee County. In 2013, over 6,000 young people, a majority of whom are economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority, benefited from the programs offered at 7 Clubs and through outreach programs. This year, 99% of our Club members moved on to the next grade level; 81% engaged in healthy habits 3 or more days a week; and, 94% reported a marked improvement in school attendance and positive feelings towards education, learning and their community.

Boys & Girls Clubs reach kids most in need with outcome-driven programs designed to increase their performance in the areas of education, health and character development. Research shows that when kids attend the Club more frequently, the impact grows, so Clubs create a fun and engaging environment that keeps kids coming back. Goals for the Campaign include:

- Increase membership and access to Clubs for kids who need a safe place to go after school and during the summer
- Ensure successful transitions to middle and high school, and foster college- or career-readiness with 21st century skills
- Motivate kids to be healthy through nutrition and health education, more access to healthy foods, avoidance of risky behaviors and a lifelong commitment to fitness
- Engage youth in taking action in their community and the world, promote resilience, build character strength, and develop the next generation of America’s leaders

Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County is asking the public to help the organization reach more kids and put them on the path to a great future. Whether you volunteer your time, become a mentor, make a donation to support the enriching programs, sponsor an event or advocate, you’re helping to open the door for a better future for the children of our community.

1) Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, January 2013, Afterschool Alliance, October 2009 2) Source: Afterschool Alliance, 2010 3) Source: Strauss, Rebecca. Remedial Education: Federal Education Policy, Renewing America Progress Report and Scorecard (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, June 2013) 4) Source: OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), Education at a Glance 2013, OECD Indicators 5) Source: National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) February 2012, and Ogden, C.L.; Carroll, M.D.; Kit, B.K. and Flegal, K.M. “Prevalence of Obesity and Trends in Body Mass Index among US Children and Adolescents, 1999-2010,” Journal of the American Medical Association, (February 1, 2012) 6) Source: U.S. Census Bureau Publication, September 2013 7) Source: Teachers College, Columbia University, Center for Benefit-Cost Studies of Education (CBCSE), 2007 8) Source: Trasande, L. and Chatterjee, S. “The Impact of Obesity on Health Service Utilization and Costs in Childhood,” Obesity, (2009) 9) Source: Justice Policy Institute (JPI) and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2009 (JPI) and 2013 (OJJDP)