

FALL
1999

IN

Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

Print

Changing Our World,

One Kid at a Time

Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

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Introducing BGCB's New CEO

Linda Whitlock joined BGCB as President and CEO in January. Formerly at Buckingham Browne & Nichols and Concord Academy, she served as both administrator and teacher. Having worked in senior management in state government, Ms. Whitlock has also been a trustee of a number of independent schools and community organizations, and brings a wealth of experience as a fundraiser to BGCB. She graduated from Mount Holyoke College and has a Masters degree in Psychology from the University of

Michigan. Currently, she is a trustee of Facing History and Ourselves, the Meadowbrook School, and the Boston Plan for Excellence, and is an Overseer of the WGBH Educational Foundation and a member of Mayor Menino's 2-6 Task Force.

Q. What drew you to Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston?

A. I was hooked on my first impromptu visits to two of our Clubhouses—the interactions between staff and the kids told me that this is an organization that lives its mission, that BGCB really does work to “change the world, one kid at a time.”



I was also struck by how important our clubs are to the boys and girls who are our members, what a magnet they are in these young lives. And, parenthetically, my father, who was my mentor and role model, was the first

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DAVID WETHERELL, INTERNET LEADER, TO BE FEATURED SPEAKER AT ANNUAL MEETING

David Wetherell, CEO of CMGI, and one of Boston's—and cyberspace's—foremost entrepreneurs, will be the featured speaker at BGCB's Annual Meeting next month.

Described by Boston Magazine as the man who is “building the companies that will rule the Internet,” he is a leader in venture capital investing in the Internet. He will speak on using the ‘Net’s potential for young people, particularly inner city youth, and the skills they’ll need to compete in the future.

**The Annual Meeting is scheduled to be held on
November 18 at the Westin Copley Square Hotel.**

Social Worker Staffing Completed

Taking a bold initiative, BGCB has added a social worker to the staff of each Clubhouse. The move was designed to fill a gap in our services to at-risk children and teens. Staffing was completed in April.

Linda Whitlock, BGCB President and CEO, noted that, “Some of the kids we serve in our Clubhouses come from neighborhoods

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Pledge from Wedge Hotel Group Kicks Off Chelsea Fund Raising

The Wedge Hotel Group, headquartered in Houston, has pledged up to \$250,000 to BGCB to support the fundraising campaign to build a permanent clubhouse in Chelsea.

Undaunted by a drenching rain, city and state officials held a groundbreaking ceremony on September 8 for the \$17 million, 180-room Wyndham Gardens Hotel. Slated to be built adjacent to Route 1 in Chelsea, the seven-story structure is planned as the centerpiece of Chelsea's 65-acre urban renewal district.

CEO of the Wedge Group, William White, presented an oversized check for a quarter of a million dollars to Myra Kraft, BGCB Chairman.

The hotel chain has committed \$1 per room per night over five years, totaling up to \$250,000, toward the estimated \$10 million in capital and operating funds needed to construct a Chelsea Boys & Girls Club.

A permanent facility is needed to serve a projected 1,500 to 2,000 kids a year—equivalent to 20% of the young people residing in Chelsea.

In 1992, the city of Chelsea invited BGCB to start an after-school pilot program for young people between the ages of 6 and 18. The basement of a public housing development served as a clubhouse for the initial 25 members. After a move to two rooms in the Burke Elementary School, the

Club was relocated to its present temporary quarters in the former Chelsea High School, where activities have outgrown available space and facilities are inadequate. Currently, 350 children and teens are enrolled as members.

New programming initiatives increase the need for expanded facilities. Core programs include homework assistance and tutoring, leadership development and art and recreation. Pressure on available space has been increased by delivery of new computer hardware for an innovative technology program, designed to provide Club members with broad-based educational and career opportunities.

Some Challenges in Chelsea

Total population

31,434

Population under 18 years

26%

People living in poverty

24%

Children under 18 living in poverty

38%

Families with children under 18 headed by a single parent

26%

Source: U.S. Census, 1990; MISER, 1995



The Beginning of Something Big

(Left to right) Myra Kraft, BGCB Chairman, with Bill White, Wedge Group CEO, and Guy Santagate, Chelsea City Manager.

A Place for the Summer

BGCB offered employment to some 150 teenagers this summer. As a designated CBO (Community Based Organization) site, BGCB received necessary funding to offer jobs to teens as junior counselors. Funded by an alliance of local businesses and city government, the program offered meaningful occupation and valuable training in work skills to prepare young people for future employment.

“Teens gain two important things: accountability and training,” Bob Monahan, BGCB Chief Operating Officer noted recently. “Our outstanding contribution is the supervision and structure we provide. Teens team up with adult mentors to develop leadership skills and think creatively to plan activities for our younger campers. We give them real responsibility, and we expect them to do a real job.” The program makes it possible for teens still too young to find jobs in the open market to be engaged in responsible, meaningful, carefully supervised and structured activities—and at the same time be a part of the fun of summer camp.

A generous gift from a major donor also made it possible for BGCB to employ an additional 50 younger teens to work as Young Leaders for the summer. Thirteen-year-olds, too old for camp, too young to work, are Young Leaders. Their activities, besides helping with meals and programs, include peer leadership and personal development workshops.



Summer in the City for One Talented Teenager

Summer in the city was something different for Audie Jacques this year. The seventeen-year-old earned an internship with Putnam Investments as one of 11 teens employed for the summer by the financial services leader.

Last winter, Audie was part of a group of Blue Hill Clubhouse teens that wrote, designed and produced a short animation video. The film was created for a press presentation to announce a \$1 million gift to BGCB from a group of senior executives at Putnam Investments. The grant is bringing state-of-the-art computer technology to BGCB's five Clubhouses.

While other kids were hoping to find something to do for the summer, Audie was commuting to downtown Post Office Square every day, making the shift from the friendly, family atmosphere of the Clubhouse to an 8-5 workday in the corporate world. At Putnam, he was an AV technician, where he worked on lighting, wiring, sound, and networking.

As a high school junior, Audie taught himself to write computer code. "He took it up on his own. I told him that 2nd year college engineering students have to take classes to learn it," Daphne Griffin, BGCB's new lead technology coordinator said. "He was my assistant at Blue Hill, and he has taken the lead at the Clubhouse in computers and technology, everything from troubleshooting hardware to graphic design software."

Now a senior at Egleston Community High School, Audie leads an after-school program for 6 to 12 year-olds in the Blue Hill Clubhouse Computer Crunchers program. A poised, good-looking teenager, he talks enthusiastically about the activities he's organizing for the group. He makes it clear he has *plans* for them.

"I'm taking the tops off computers to let them learn all the parts," he explained. "I want to teach them everything I wish I'd learned when I was younger. As soon as I met Daphne [Griffin, then computer technology advisor], I just went straight forward with it. Now I'm hoping to get equipment to help kids do their own programming."

Every Saturday, Audie takes a course in Adobe Photoshop at Roxbury Community College to get his certificate in the software. When asked if he was pretty good, this very modest young man said softly, "Anything you love, you're good at."

A member of BGCB's Technology Advisory Board, he also is in his 4th year in the Score Boston hockey program for inner-city youth, playing left wing. Soon, he will begin working on his college applications.

Mia Smith, Education Director for the Blue Hill Clubhouse, said recently, "Audie's experience at Putnam gave him a boost in his determination and motivation. If he had a mentor, he would shine even brighter, academically and in his aspirations. In ten years, I know I'll say I'm glad I knew Audie Jacques."

HARVARD B-SCHOOL STUDENTS PUT BGCB UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

Three Harvard Business School students, working under the direction of Stephanie Lowell and Olive Darragh at McKinsey & Company, made the organizational structure and decision-making process of BGCB the subject of a case study for 12 weeks this summer. Conducting exhaustive interviews with staff, board members, and Club members, the team focused on the organization's structure, systems, and strategic direction. The study report, produced by Stacey Childress, Purnima Kochikar and Jodi Prins, will serve as a starting point for BGCB's forthcoming strategic planning process, scheduled to begin in late fall.

Golf Clubs Swing for BGCB Clubhouses

Three major golf events helped to raise money for BGCB this summer. The BankBoston Senior Golf Classic, sponsored by Nashawtuc Charities, held at the Nashawtuc Country Club in Concord, MA attracted thousands to the 6-day event. Club members themselves picked up the clubs to tee off at “Mascots Day at McGolf.” The “Beat the Pro” Contest, sponsored by WBZ-TV, challenged hundreds to beat a celebrity shot.

Donations from all participating golfers and corporate sponsorships raised over \$60,000 for BGCB.



“Mascots Day at McGolf” brought 75 BGCB members out to meet the National Baseball League’s All-Star Mascots and enjoy an afternoon of golf instruction by the pros. Club members took part in clinics and putted on the mini course greens. McGolf Development, creator of Billy McGolf, the sport’s official mascot, hosted the day. Through its partnership with McGolf Development, BGCB received funding to support an array of summer programs.



BankBoston Classic Boosts BGCB on the Course

BankBoston Classic Tournament Director Tracy West (right) presents a \$35,000 check to Linda Whitlock, President & CEO of BGCB, and Jerry Steimel, Director of the Charlestown Boys & Girls Club, in support of programs.

Gifts Make it a Cooler Summer for Hundreds of Boston’s Kids

A mid-May dinner held at the Louisburg Square home of Tom and Dola Stemberg helped make it a cooler summer for a number of young people this year. Hosted by the Stembergs and John and Susan Spooner, the party provided a significant portion of the funds needed for BGCB “Camperships” this summer. Some 30 supporters attended the special dinner, which raised \$41,000. Over 250 children were able to attend BGCB summer camps as a result of the great generosity of these contributors.

BGCB summer camp programs are designed to keep kids off the streets, educate them during the months they’re not in school, and expose them to new recreational experiences. Programs include environmental, multicultural and community activities.

Introducing BGCB's New CEO

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black board member of the Richmond, VA Boys Club.

Mentoring is very important to me. I take seriously our responsibility to the disadvantaged young people among our members who have few other resources. I view us as their stewards. I believe we have a sacred trust to help them be motivated, nurtured and constructively engaged, and to help them gain a sense of self-worth and confidence about their future.

The loyalty of our constituents is extraordinary. BGCB has outstanding governance, and it is an honor to be able to work with Board chair Myra Kraft, and all our dedicated directors, overseers,

and Advisory Board members, in developing support for a cause to which I am passionately committed.

Q. What challenges do you see for BGCB?

A. Alexis Herman, U.S. Secretary of Labor, said recently that we don't have a worker shortage in this country, we have a skill shortage. BGCB's programming is aimed at providing the right tools to help our members become productive citizens who are employable, literate, and connected to the world around them.

It's important that we continue to increase our efforts to engage teens in our activities. Our teen membership

increased a whopping 39% over the past year as a result of stepped-up programming designed to attract teens along with the addition of staff devoted to teens.

Also, our staff work very hard in support of our members. We need to give them greater recognition and a level of compensation commensurate with their responsibilities.

We need to capitalize on our alumni/ae base. BGCB has approximately 100 members of the community, many of them steadfast former Club members, who serve on Clubhouse Advisory Boards. Strengthening our connections to our more recent "graduates" will ensure an even broader base of support for BGCB.

Q. What are your goals for BGCB?

A. Articulating our "shared values" as an agency is a necessary preliminary step to developing a long-range plan, both financially and programmatically. Our organization has grown tremendously over the past few years and has experienced the challenges and opportunities that rapid growth can cause. Developing consistency, not uniformity, in our core programs remains a priority.

Second, we must continue to develop our partnerships and support systems for our members. Collaboration between BGCB and schools and community agencies can benefit both our members and the community at large. The Youth Collaborative in Dorchester is a fine example of the kind of partnerships we can create to keep kids in the fold—or bring them back in, if necessary. The recent addition of a social worker to every Clubhouse staff offers the intervention and extra support some members need.

Our mission is to provide activities and experiences that are responsive to young people's needs. Helping our members become responsible citizens—socially, educationally, and emotionally—has been our mandate for 106 years and it remains a powerful guide to us today.



Winners of the Frederic C. Church Award for Most Outstanding Club Member, with the plaques they received at the 1999 Recognition Dinner: (l. to r.) Johnson Owumi, Roxbury; Daniel Fitzgibbon, South Boston; Keisha Gibbs, Chelsea; Keison Harry, Blue Hill; and Colin Smith, Charlestown.



Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

The mission of BGCB is to help boys and girls develop the qualities needed to become responsible citizens and leaders. To achieve this, we offer a variety of program activities and support services designed to assist in the educational, emotional, physical and social development of 6 to 18 year olds, without regard to social, racial, ethnic, or religious background.



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SAVE THE DATES

BGCB Annual Meeting

November 18, 1999

Antique Show

February 24-27, 2000

PREVIEW PARTY

February 24, 2000

Partners for Youth Dinner

April 5, 2000

Social Worker Staffing

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plagued by poverty, unemployment, crime, and substance abuse. Parents are working longer hours, and often hold down two jobs. These pressures can make young people vulnerable to feelings of being overwhelmed, and destructive behavior can result. We want to intervene before children hurt themselves, or others.” In recent years, Clubhouse Directors have observed that the complexity and severity of problems facing some of our children have increased, with more and more forms of behavior that point to stress and, at times, crisis.

For more than a century, BGCB has provided recreational and educational programs that are prevention focused. With social workers on board, we can better meet the need for appropriate interventions—particularly in crisis situations—and for more targeted prevention programs.

Social workers coordinate discussion groups and workshops in substance abuse prevention, conflict resolution, and self-esteem and personal development. They also supervise peer leader training and community service projects, and advocate for young people

whose families are in crisis and need case management.

When needed, the social workers refer Clubhouse members and their families to other city and health agencies that can help them. Our mission to serve at-risk young people gains important depth with the addition of these staff members and the specialized training they bring to our work.

Generous support from the Boston Foundation and a gift from an individual donor have made this innovative program possible.

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