



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF MERCER COUNTY

# Impact Report

2022-2023 School Year

**Summary:** This past year we launched the opening of (2) new after-school sites in Trenton at the MLK and PJ Hill Schools. This brought the total number of program sites to (12) with 3 in Ewing Schools, 7 in Trenton Schools, along with our Trenton and Lawrence Community Centers. This September also saw the Trenton Schools re-districting their grades and school assignments. They moved from a K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 configuration to K-3, 4-6, 7-8 and 9-12 configuration. The goal was smaller schools for better learning environments. The reconfiguration meant more family members attending different schools, and many youth having to travel outside of their community to get to lower middle and upper middle schools. Learning if this new configuration is good or bad is still years away.

In the short term there was a drop in overall Trenton board of education enrollment, with more students moving to charter schools due to the uncertainty/confusion of the re-districting. We also saw a lower enrollment per school in our after-school programs (ASP) this year. We determined this was partially due to each school having a lower than anticipated student enrollment this year (most schools went from 350-400 students down to 275-300) and that many students in grades 4-8 no longer lived in their neighborhoods, and thus parents weren't willing to pick them up daily at the after-school program. While we were still able to meet our enrollment **goal of 650 students**, we had more school sites with lower enrollment per site. We are actively working to increase enrollment at each site for the next school year, as keeping lower enrollment per school increases the cost per student and limits the number of activities we can offer each week due to less staff per school. We are working to combine enrollment from some smaller school sites into one for next year. Our Spruce & Centre Street locations are currently at capacity.

## Index

What Parents Say About the Club	Page 2
After School Summary	Page 2
STEM	Page 3
Social Emotional Learning	Page 3
Reading for Success	Page 4
Teens	Page 5
Healthy Living	Page 5
Food Security	Page 6
Garden & Outdoor Education	Page 6
Princeton E-Bikes & Bike Exchange	Page 6
Endowment & Legacy Society	Page 6
CEO Update	Page 7
Strategic Plan & Looking Forward	Page 7





**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF MERCER COUNTY

# Impact Report

2022-2023 School Year

**Detailed Report:**

**Parent Surveys** – The Club surveys parents in our ASP and Camp programs to both get feedback on how the program is running, but also feedback on how they see their children progressing. Here are some data from this year’s surveys.

- 76% of parents saw an overall improvement in their child’s behavior due to participation in the Club’s after school program.
- 73% of parents said their child improved their reading skills from the Club
- 75% said their child improved their conflict resolution skills from the Club’s social emotional learning program.
- 91% of parents rated the Club’s after school program as good to excellent when comparing it to other youth program providers.

**After School 2022-2023** – At the start of the school year, we opened two new locations at MLK and PJ Hill schools in Trenton, bringing our total number of sites to 12. Expanding our after-school services is critical because of:

- The need to support working parents with quality and affordable childcare.
- Being able to provide a snack and dinner for youth as food insecurity increases. (Largely due to inflation and reduction in SNAP benefits).
- The need to provide school support, supplemental education, and enrichment activities for many of our youth struggling with academics.

Key funders such as Amazon, Novo Nordisk, Bunbury Foundation, PACF, Mercer County and Next Gen Foundation stepped up, along with countless individual donors to help us reach our goal.

While registration at some individual school sites did not reach enrollment goals due to Trenton’s redistricting, we were able to reach our overall enrollment goal of 650 youth.

The after-school curriculum this year featured 1 academic activity and 1 enrichment activity each day. Enrichment activities rotated between sports, garden/outdoor education, cooking, STEM, and art. Academic activities included homework help, our reading for success program, social emotional learning, and pull-out tutoring for some students.

Specific data from outcomes tracked for reading and SEL are reported later in this report.

Our thanks to the following companies who “Adopted a School” site this year to help plan various enrichment and special events throughout the year. These companies are Blackrock, Amazon, Bill Trust, Westin-Princeton & Miami Holdings.





**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF MERCER COUNTY

# Impact Report

2022-2023 School Year

**STEM Programming** – was highlighted throughout the year in our after-school program. Some of the highlights were:

- November Teen STEM Conference sold out with 250 middle school students attending in-person.
- Teen STEM Club met weekly throughout the year with weekly guest speakers/volunteers from local companies (J&J, BMS, Genmab, Thermal Fisher, among others). Some of the activities included: Atmospheric Oceanic Science, design and build their own giant Operation game, Ohm’s Law and Kirchoff’s Laws, biomechanical engineering among others.
- Our partnership with Students2Sciencet this school year at all of our Middle school sites for STEM curriculums.
- Computer Exchange was back in business where ten teen interns completed their work study experience this school year. Four of the students are now working part-time at the exchange.

Key STEM funders were Bristol Myers Squibb, Catalent Pharmaceuticals, Munich ReInsurance, & Kentfield Foundation.

**Social Emotional Learning** –Trenton and the greater Mercer County community continues to have an increase in mental health challenges, and thus our social emotional learning program continues to be a vital part of our programming. We

- Developed specific age-appropriate curriculums for (2) program cycles during the year.
- Trained all new staff on SEL & ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- Conducted DESSA assessments at the start, mid-point and end of the school year to both measure overall SEL progress but also to identify students who needed additional support.
- Provide mid-year progress reports to parents on SEL, Literacy and ASP participation. For students who were below satisfactory we provided parents with resources to support at home utilizing our Schoology LMS.

From pre/post testing using the DESSA assessments we found that 6% of Club youth moved up from either In Need to Normal or from Normal to Strength. We also had 6% of our youth move into the Advance category for an overall 12% improvement during the 2022-2023 school year. About 15% of our youth stayed in the In Need category, which is typically for at risk youth. We continue to seek mental health partners to support these youth & families.

Key SEL funding from Otsuka Pharmaceuticals.



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2022-2023 School Year

**Reading for Success Literacy & Language Arts Grade Level proficiency** – This was our fourth year of implementing this initiative focusing on youth reading books, spending time on Lexia a language arts software program, and completing language arts worksheets with staff.

Besides youth having access to Lexia 24/7 through Schoology, our Learning Management System, each site had one day per week where all students participated in the Reading for Success program. Students behind in grade level skills, also participated in Lexia after homework projects were completed.

Highlights from this include:

- 650 youth in the program, getting at least 1 hour of programming per week. While we served the same number of youth last year, the average number of youth using Lexia and the reading for success program increased dramatically both during the 10 month school year, and on a weekly basis.
- Students completed 53,874 units in Lexia, up from 15,622 last year (344% increase)
- Students advance 858 grade levels. When divided by 650 youth that equals 1.32 grade levels per youth.
- Providing over 3,000 free books to students
- Providing youth with a free back-to-school backpack & school supplies throughout the year.

Effect on End Results: The state testing data for the Trenton School district is not out yet for the 2022-2023 school year. School report card data from the State of NJ Department of Education for Trenton for the 2021-2022 school year showed the following LA data:

	LA Grade Level Proficiency	Math Grade Level Proficiency
Trenton Public Schools	10.5%	Less than 10%
State Average	49%	36%

Boys & Girls Club Language Arts Statistics for 2022-2023 school year measured by Lexia:

- 24% of Club youth moved up at least (1) grade level during the school year
- 6% of Club youth moved up (2) or more grade levels during the school year.
- This totals a 30% grade advancement from the beginning to end of the school year for our students. Note this is 6% higher than last year’s Lexia results.

While this 30% increase can’t be directly compared to the 10.5% TBOE student grade level proficiency, it is highly correlated to enabling students to reach grade level proficiency.





**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF MERCER COUNTY

# Impact Report

2022-2023 School Year

We also do parent surveys at the end of the school year. In the survey we ask questions about parents perception of their child’s improvement due to being involved in Boys & Girls Club programming.

73% of parents from the survey said their child improved their reading skills from participation at the Club.

Key funding from TD Bank, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Grant

### High School Teens

Teens were our most impacted population during COVID. They had the highest absenteeism rate during remote learning, and the fewest resources (as they were homebound). Most teens drastically fell behind in school, suffered emotionally from isolation and lack of social contact, and felt alone. This was the bounce back year for teens, with our daily teen attendance growing throughout the year from 25 teens/day to more than 50 teens/day this spring. Some of the highlights this year were:

- Our College Access Program ran all school year with 15-20 teens participating on a regular basis. College tours were conducted both in person and on-line throughout the year.
- Our Career Launch Program was back in full steam with 110+ teens going through our Career Exploration, Work Readiness & Internship program. It seemed after 18 months in isolation, teens wanted to get back and work, bucking the previous trend.
- Our annual College, Career & Job Fair was back 100% in person this year.
- At our June 8<sup>th</sup> Awards night, we recognized 21 teens with \$14,000 in scholarship towards post-secondary career goals.

The Club continues to have on average, 95% of Club seniors graduated from high school each year, 85% were accepted into college, 5% into Technical School, and 5% into jobs for an overall 95% postsecondary career pathway placement. Key funding provided by PNC Bank, Bank of America, Bloomberg and Mercer County.

### Triple Play: A Game Plan for the Mind, Body and Soul program

The Boys & Girls Clubs continues to offer Triple Play, an evidence-based program developed by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, which encourages participants to Eat Right, Move Right & Live Right. Club members participate in physical fitness activities such as flag football, basketball, soccer, skating, dancing, and jump rope throughout the week. Healthy cooking classes occur weekly as well and focus on preparing healthy foods. We introduce our youth to many new foods that they may have never tried and provide "teach-back" lessons that they can take home to share with their families to help impact the whole family's food choices.

Key Funder of this program is Novo Nordisk.





**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF MERCER COUNTY

# Impact Report

2022-2023 School Year

## Food Security

Continues to be a challenge for many area families with the rising costs of food due to inflation and the roll back of certain SNAP benefits. With the expansion of the number of youth in our programs, that meant an expansion of the number of snacks & meals served this school year. We also started a new partnership with Mercer Street Friends & Makers Place to do a weekly diaper and food pantry distribution at our Centre Street Community Center.

- We provided 104,550 meals/snacks to students this school year.
- We distribute 960 food pantry bags to area families in just 4 months from our Centre Street food pantry that opened in March
- We supported 180 families with diapers in our first four months of distributing free diapers in Trenton.

Key funding provided by the Bonner Foundation, WaWa, NJ Dept of Agriculture, and Northfield Bank.

## Community Garden and Outdoor Education Center

Again this year our Community Garden and Outdoor Education Center was a crucial part of our summer camp & after school program experience. Students grew vegetables and picked them each week to use in our cooking program at camp. Besides having a place for city youth to be outside on nice days, the outdoor education center provides extra classroom space for the Club.

**Princeton E-Bikes Social Entrepreneurial Project** – launched in March 2021 as a means to financially support the Boys & Girls Club. It is an all-volunteer effort being led by Russ White (founder of the Bike Exchange), Jay & Theresa Wroble. Located in the Lawrence Shopping Center on business Route 1, they currently have the largest selection of ebikes in Central New Jersey. To date they have donated more than \$100,000 to the Boys & Girls Club.

## Endowment Efforts.

In February 2019 the Club launched a \$20 million, 20-year effort to build our endowment to help ensure the legacy of the Club for future generations of Trenton area youth.

We initiated several strategies to accomplish this goal:

- Forming a Foundation to be the home of our endowment, but to also hold events/membership to raise funds and build awareness of our efforts.
- Create a Planned Giving and Legacy Society to encourage community stakeholders to make estate gifts to the Club. <https://www.bgcmercer.org/legacy-society> This past year we added (3) new Legacy Society members.
- Formation of Honorary Trustees who are committed to the Club, connect the Club to resources, raise funds for the Club, but have fewer meetings/commitments than traditional Board members. We currently have 11 Trustees with a goal of 20. Having more





**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
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# Impact Report

2022-2023 School Year

connected stakeholders increases our ability to raise the resources needed for the organization.

- Designating a new fundraising & revenue source to allocate 25% of this new revenue towards our endowment.
- Establishing scholarship funds in which 2/3 of the funds would support Club operations and 1/3 would go towards students’ post-secondary career scholarship.
- Allocating a percentage of year end unrestricted funds toward the endowment.

We started the year with just under 5 million dollars towards our goal and ended this year with 6 million dollars thanks to the efforts listed above, and countless donors.

**CEO Transition** – It’s hard to believe a year has gone by already since Reggie took over as CEO of the Boys & Girls Club. Good news is that Reggie is more enthusiastic than ever about his role as CEO, and that the Club had a successful year both programmatically and financially. While in his first year, Reggie was more focused internally on working with the Board and our Administrative staff; he plans on starting to be more outward facing this next year. He is also actively recruiting volunteers for the Club’s Board of Directors, Foundation and various Committees. Reggie will also host (3) Meet the CEO events during the year. Please don’t hesitate to connect with Reggie at [rcoleman@bgcmercer.org](mailto:rcoleman@bgcmercer.org)

### Looking forward to 2023 - 2024

**Strategic Plan** – We are entering into our second year of our Strategic Plan and thus far have been able to:

- Open two additional School sites
- Hire a full time Director of Volunteer Services, Ashley Nwankwo
- Hire a Latino Outreach Coordinator & host our first Hispanic/Latino Heritage Celebration in September
- Purchased more than 50 laptops
- Invested more than 1 million dollars into our endowment
- Formed new affinity volunteer groups: Women Empowerment, Hispanic/Latino, Club Alumni

This coming year we plan to:

- Work towards financial sustainability of our 8 new after-school sites opened in the past two years amidst rising costs.
- Continue to grow Hispanic/Latino participation in Club programs, Board, Committees and volunteer support.
- Continue to invest in technology upgrades
- Continue to invest in our endowment
- Continue to grow volunteer participation and membership in our affinity groups.

