



Youth Opioid Prevention

Vision Statement: Every young person should be equipped to make healthy decisions resulting in positive social, emotional, and physical well-being.



Every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs **returns \$9.60** in current and future earnings and cost-savings to their communities.

The Epidemic

Currently, more than 46 people die every day from overdoses involving prescription opioids. As the opioid epidemic within our communities becomes more pervasive, youth increasingly are the unintended victims. The traumatic experience of growing up within a family and community where substance use and misuse is prevalent disrupts a young person's ability to thrive. The associated adverse experiences, such as childhood abuse and neglect, put young people at increased risk for substance use and other behaviors that lead to poor health outcomes. In order to combat the opioid epidemic, greater investments in prevention must be made.



Boys & Girls Clubs are now the **2nd largest provider of afterschool programs in rural America**—second only to public schools. There are **990 rural Clubs** that serve nearly **290,000 registered members**, which is **1 out of every 3** young people in rural areas where Clubs operate.

Youth Opioid Prevention

Today, nearly **4,300 Clubs** serve **4.3 million youth** each year, with **458,000** children and teens entering the doors of a Boys & Girls Club every day. These Clubs represent a cross-section of America with **1,659** school-based Clubs, **1,008** Clubs in rural areas, **287** Clubs in public housing facilities, **492** affiliated youth centers on military installations worldwide, and **189** Clubs on Native lands. This uniquely positions **Clubs** to disrupt the cycle of addiction and abuse by providing a high-quality youth experience that employs key evidence informed prevention strategies as its universal approach.

BGCA's method provides improved social & emotional resilience for all youth by enhancing high quality youth development practices, risk prevention practices and messages in programs. BGCA's effective substance abuse prevention strategies include:

- Creating meaningful opportunities to build Social & Emotional Development Skills, specifically, self-regulation, communication, emotional awareness, healthy decision-making, self-efficacy, and healthy peer and adult relationships.
- Using a trauma-informed approach that realizes the widespread impact of trauma, and responds with fully integrated trauma-informed practices, policies and procedures.
- Creating high-yield, small group opportunities that allow youth to develop a sense of emotional safety, peer support, trust and transparency, collaboration, and leverage youth choice and voice.



We ask that Congress dedicate **30 percent** of the SAMHSA State Opioid Response Grants and State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants, to prevention efforts. Youth-serving organizations need more resources to help meet the need of providing prevention services; reducing risk factors leading to addiction; and promoting resilience in children, families and communities.

- Implementing a prevention program and activities that are developmentally responsive and address all forms of substance use.
- Engaging families intentionally within the Club and creating strong community partnerships to support youth and families with needs beyond the scope of the Club.

Findings

According to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Youth Outcomes Initiatives Report, prescription drug use abstinence is higher among Club members compared to their peers:

95% of Club 9th graders report abstaining compared to 87 percent of 9th graders nationally.

94% of Club 12th graders report abstaining compared to 80 percent of 12th graders nationally.

Clubs in Action

New Hampshire: Boys & Girls Clubs in New Hampshire, host **Camp Mariposa®**, a no-cost, national addiction prevention and mentoring program for youth who have been impacted by substance abuse in their families. Children ages 9-12 attend transformational weekend camps multiple times a year. Campers participate in fun traditional camp activities combined with education and support exercises led by mental health professionals and trained mentors. Additional educational, social and mentoring activities are offered for campers, teens, and their families throughout the year. These activities build knowledge, coping skills, confidence and an opportunity to connect with one another. Led by mental health professionals and trained volunteers, Camp Mariposa provides a safe, fun and supportive environment critical to help break the cycle of addiction.

Oklahoma: The **Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea**, with support from the OK Methamphetamine and Suicide Prevention Initiative, has been a key partner in the health, safety and well-being of tribal youth within Northeast Oklahoma. The Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea along with the Delaware Tribe of Indians has been able to focus on the growing substance abuse and opioid epidemics tribal youth face, expanding prevention and intervention practices by adding a component of onsite behavioral health, including a weekly behavioral health specialist (enrolled member of Seneca Cayuga Tribe) onsite to assist staff with education and best practices. Through the program curriculum of **SMARTMoves** and **MethSMART**, the Boys & Girls Club of Chelsea ensures youth retain key knowledge, not only in the areas of suicide and drug use, but also in basic life skills. The goal is to enable and equip all young people in the tribal communities with the best knowledge and prevention practices, while ensuring behavioral health remains a top priority.

West Virginia: The **Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle**, in Martinsburg, WV utilizes local partnerships with **college and community mentors**, the **county school system** and the **Martinsburg Police Department** to charter new paths for children through the availability of afterschool prevention programs.