

# The Edge

GIVING OUR KIDS THE EDGE THEY NEED TO THRIVE

SPRING 2020



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**  
OF LAGUNA BEACH





# GREETINGS

FROM PAM ESTES, CEO,  
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF LAGUNA BEACH



**PAM ESTES**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

I am pleased to share with you our inaugural newsletter! As you read each page and every story, please remember one important truth: you make this possible for our local youth.

As a partner of the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach, you are giving each young person “the edge” they need to succeed at school, at home and to achieve their dreams. With your help, young people are gaining the life-skills they need to become the problem-solvers, innovators and leaders that will shape our community and the future.

How do we give kids the edge they need? Listed below are the keys to our success.

A sense of fun. When Club members are having fun, they will want to return. It’s called disguised learning. What better way to learn, develop people skills and make friends than by having fun?

A sense of belonging. Our Youth Development Professionals (aka staff) make sure each young person feels respected and valued. We take the time to learn and remember each child’s name and the unique story behind them. We provide a nurturing yet dynamic environment where young people can explore, create, learn and grow.

A safe space. Providing a safe environment for children and teens is the number one priority at the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach. A safe environment allows young people to enhance their social, emotional, intellectual, and physical well-being. When Club members feel safe, they can learn, grow, and develop resiliency that will help them thrive in life.

A high-quality Club experience. All Club members benefit from a rich learning environment that helps them gain confidence and self-esteem. This includes evidence-based and innovative programs in leadership development, the arts, health and wellness, education and career development, and sports and fitness. For low income households, we provide a high-quality school readiness preschool experience for children ages 3 and 4.

Great futures start here is more than our tag line - it is our commitment. You are making this commitment happen every day at the Club. Thank you for helping young people unleash their potential and gain skills that will improve their lives now...and into the future.

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Linda Saville, President
- Phyllis Phillips, Past President & Governance Chair
- Kirk Reidinger, Treasurer
- Vito Francone, Safety Chair
- William Dolan, Endowment Chair
- Nancy Myers, Secretary

## BOARD MEMBERS

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
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| Dave Carter        | Alina Plaia         |
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# THE LEADERS OF OUR FUTURE

## YOUTH OF THE YEAR AWARDS HONORS ALL OF OUR EMERGING LEADERS

Every month each department recognizes a member that exemplifies passion, leadership and commitment in their discipline. This accumulates into our annual Youth of the Year Award ceremony. Program Directors take the stage to recognize all the hard work of our members and select their Department Youth of the Year from their twelve candidates. The evening is full of excitement and pride as family and friends cheer on the future leaders of our community.

The most prestigious award of the evening is Youth of the Year. Established in 1947, Youth of the Year is Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premiere recognition program. It celebrates young people for their commitment to community service, academic success, good character and citizenship, and establish long term goals.

The recipient of the 2019 Laguna Beach Youth of the Year was Toni! Toni has impacted many lives at the Club as well as in the community. He is graduating this year spring from Laguna Beach High School and is attending Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising, Los Angeles, in the fall. Toni spent hours writing essays, interviewing and practicing his speech to be able to compete. His final test was to deliver a speech in front of not only about 300 Club members and their families but also a panel of judges made up of influential community leaders. Toni shared his personal Club experience, what matters to him most and obstacles he has overcome. One of these obstacles includes his battle with cancer. An inherit quiet person, Toni had to really step out of his comfort zone to be able to compete. David Makela, local toastmaster member and speech mentor noted, "Toni told me it isn't so much that he cares about winning, he cares more that this speech is not about himself but it's about helping other kids facing cancer." This mindset helped to move him to the front line. Toni is now preparing to compete against other Southern California BGC's Youth of the Year recipients at the district level, serious scholarship money can be won.



L to R: Judges Sean Chawal, Phyllis Phillips, Sandra Wirta, Youth of the Year Toni, Karen Jaffe, John Carpino



Health and Wellness Director, Lasslie Martinez and her 2019 Members of the Month



L to R: Ricki De La Torre, Ford Junior Youth of the Year Johnni Rose, Carrie Click



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## EXPANDING YOUNG MINDS



Triple Play is a recognized program that contains curriculum to help kids create healthy habits by taking a holistic approach to health and wellness. Thanks to the innovative leadership of staffer Richie Marquetty, the team at the Bluebird Enrichment Center introduced Triple Play Foreign Language Experience (Triple Play FLEX) to inspire Club members to improve their physical endurance and soccer skills and to expand young minds.

Richie grew up in a bilingual household as his parents were immigrants. A dedicated soccer player—his grandfather played professionally in Paris—Ritchie also had a passion for education and philosophy. As a New York City soccer coach Ritchie regularly worked with parents looking for an edge to give their children. Once families learned that Ritchie spoke multiple languages, they frequently requested a language component be worked into their children’s training. Given these experiences, Ritchie launched Triple Play FLEX in the fall of 2019.

Le programme est un succès— the program is a hit with Club members.

“I love playing soccer and learning French!” Weston and Brodi exclaimed. “We have had a lot of fun and have learned so many words!” Members were excited to share components of their favorite sport in a new language. Words in French are worked into the game to reinforce vocabulary. By the end of the eight-week session the program transformed into a multilingual experience with many members speaking and teaching their native tongues.



*“Triple Play FLEX will continue by popular demand,” stated Stephen Tinen, Bluebird Branch Director. “The benefits of learning multiple languages go beyond the ability to communicate. Bilingualism gives our youth a broader perspective of the world.”*



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# ART & CREATIVITY

The Arts for All program provides a positive environment for youth to learn and grow. The purpose of the program is to build confidence and self-esteem in club members and to boost their creativity and critical thinking. Club members can discover their unique self in an environment that encourages them to celebrate and express their individuality.

## STELLA GROWS AS AN ARTIST

Art exploration is a critical component that contributes to child development. Children are naturally curious. Through art, kids can explore, experiment, and express themselves in unique ways.

As a shy second grader, Stella Mackenzie frequently collaborates with club friends on art projects and has an affinity for nature as the subject of her paintings. However, she tends to dislike everything she makes and often throws her art in the trash.

Last summer, unbeknownst to Stella, Art Director Mar Stash picked up every piece she discarded and submitted one of them to the Imagination Celebration contest organized by Arts Orange County and the OC Department of Education. Upon learning that one of her pieces of art was selected as the winner within its category, Stella was shocked and surprised. And very happy.

Winning the contest boosted Stella's confidence. Now, when she comes to the art studio, Stella confidently shows her friends and staff her art pieces.



## STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE

Last year we had a member who was only interested in sports, especially basketball. Or so John thought.

In previous years when asked to explore other program areas, John refused. Over the course of 2019 he showed more and more interest in the arts. John started by observing and sitting with a friend. During the summer John started to fully immerse himself in the art program. Since picking up a paint brush he has grown to love the art room and is working with younger members. It is exciting to see the art that John makes, and his confidence grow.

What is John's biggest success? Stepping out of his comfort zone and seeing him explore new interests. We applaud John for learning new ways to express himself.



## IF ITS MONDAY, IT MUST BE ART THERAPY

In 2019, Mar Stash, Art Coordinator, began organizing therapeutic art projects for club members. Her inspiration for doing this came after watching the change in Club members as they entered the room and seeing their stress and anxiety melt away while creating art.

Mar's goal is to create a safe space for members to express themselves freely through their artistic mind. While immersing themselves in different art projects, club members work on socio-emotional well-being as follows.

**Gratitude:** through art, members learn to express happiness or gratitude. One example for doing this: draw all the positive things in your life.

**Emotions:** club members deal with heavier emotions such as anger and sadness by drawing or painting what their emotions look like, creating an emotion wheel, designing a postcard that will never be sent or drawing one's heart.

**Relaxation:** Art can be relaxing when club members paint to music, make a mandala or a zentangle, or have permission to paint freely without rules.





# CODING, 3D PRINTING AND PATIENCE

BGC LAGUNA BEACH OFFERS PROGRAMS THAT FOCUS ON INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY.



Coding through my.Future, a program of BGC Laguna Beach, has opened a lot of eyes at our Bluebird Enrichment Center. Members gained interest in coding using video game design as the method to learn the fundamentals of computer science. Through weekly challenges, members complete tasks that aide them in designing a video game and leaning the intricacies of coding. Club members learn the subtle differences between different type of programing as well as the attention to detail and patience needed to complete a video game to its entirety.

Club members are tasked with creating a video game. The highlight of the eight-week program is the day all members can showoff their game and challenge everyone to play.

The 3D Printing Club, offered at our Laguna Canyon Enrichment Center, is both challeng-

ing and rewarding. Members are trained on 3D shapes and how to create models out of paper to understand dimensions. After a basic understanding of figures, members can use 3D printing pens to bring their creations to life. Members have found the need for precision and a steady hand in order to properly print their design.

The second half of the program is spent learning an online platform that creates templates for a larger 3D printer. The new figures they help design can include several parts that must be built, glued together, sanded to create a finished project. Members learn the complexity of the machine, including the proper safety while printing and how to trouble shoot any issues if the figure they tried to print didn't come out correctly. 3D printing teaches patience as an item takes a minimum of 4-6 hours to print.

Coding and 3D printing are unique programing that give our members an edge. They teach critical thinking, attention to detail, delayed gratification and reinforce positive problem solving. Club members use their creativity to learn new skills that prepare them for future studies as well as the work force.



## GET INVOLVED

The popularity of our technology-based programs are on the rise! Enrollment in these programs is at capacity. How can you help more club members get the edge they need to succeed? See our wish list below. We are looking for one or several angel donors who can donate the following:

**5 – Asus Vivobook 15.6" Full HD Laptops  
R3-3200U 4 GB 128GB SSD F512DA-PB31-SL**

To make a gift, contact David Armendariz at [davida@bgclaguna.org](mailto:davida@bgclaguna.org) (949) 715-7918.



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# UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITIES AND REWARDS

YEAR-ROUND ACTION PACKED ADVENTURE CAMPS OFFER SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE.

In the month of August Teen Director, Ricki De La Torre, takes 17 lucky club members for a trip of a lifetime to Catalina Island. The 5-day, 4-night Catalina Camp is an adventure that presents unexpected opportunities and rewards. Many participants share fond memories of being a new outdoor environment and participating in activities they wouldn't normally experience.

Hands down, the most commonly shared camp experience was "I've never done that before." These experiences include fishing for dinner and then cooking and preparing the meal, night snorkeling or simply living in a tent for a week.

Through the many camp experiences offered during the year, club members enhance their communication skills, develop resiliency and self-efficacy, as well as the opportunity for personal growth by facing challenges and overcoming them.

As exciting as it is to experience the great outdoors, for some members, the journey inward was the trip highlight.

"Learning to be self-reliant was the most important part of camp," said Aden. "You have to put in your own work in order to make the most of it."

According to Jonnie, "I learned new things about people. Spending so much time with other kids changed my opinion of them. It helped me to make friends with people I wouldn't normally spend time with."

For another club member, "Relaxing was the best part of the camp. I didn't have to worry about things that I normally do."

According to Ricki, Teen Director, the Catalina Camping trip "is not only one of the most unique activities we offer at the club but one of the most rewarding. The bond that staff and kids create among themselves is uniquely strong and the positive mentorship that occurs between members is something I am truly proud of."



## GET INVOLVED

The Catalina Camping trip is part of our Action Packed Adventure Camp (APAC). APAC meets throughout the year participating in activities such as: rock climbing, skimboarding, backpacking, sailing, ski/snowboarding trips and more.

In the summer we host an APAC week where members and non-members thirteen and over participate in a variety of team building and challenging activities. These activities include: canyoneering, paintballing, indoor sky diving, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding, surfing, backpacking and much more! **We are in current need of outdoor leadership volunteers and/or sponsors to lead and host these activities. Please reach out to [Jenniferc@bgclaguna.org](mailto:Jenniferc@bgclaguna.org) for more information!**