



The Dream Play Yard

Addressing physical, socio-emotional, and academic well-being with more PLAY and learning for our kids and families



The Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach (BGCLB) has been helping young people thrive since 1952, with a consistent focus on inclusion, diversity, equity, and access for each member who enters its doors. Daily, the organization impacts approximately 3400 students in Laguna Beach and the Saddleback Valley. In contrast to businesses that downsized during the pandemic, the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach gained unprecedented momentum with an increased demand for both programming and new hires in its period of Post-Traumatic Growth.

Distance learning took a toll on many students, particularly those from low-income households. As soon as the pandemic hit, BGCLB identified members lacking adequate resources and quickly came to those in need. BGCLB provides a safe environment where young people thrive through mentorships with staff and carefully screened volunteers. Guidance, when needed, focuses on strength-based language. The Dream Play Yard enhanced outdoor space, will increase attendance from the Laguna Beach Community, expand on current offerings at the Canyon Branch, and create collaboration with local nonprofits focused on environmental and ocean stewardship.

The Dream Play Yard plan includes:

- Clearance and demolition of existing storage containers, re-allocation for storage systems
- Redoing the hardscape and opening it up to offer over 10,000 square feet of flat space for basketball, skating, bicycling, handball, and other activities
- Installation of a new turf area and new shade structure
- A new greenhouse, raised gardens, and butterfly gardens

- An art wall with chalkboards of all sizes for creative expression and art therapy
- Local artist installations with local history bronze wall and an Olympian mural featuring Club alumni
- Replacing the existing aged play structure with a new option to reside in the back corner of the turf

How the Dream Play Yard benefits our members and families:



Physical Well Being: Pediatric studies reveal alarming disparities in obesity rates among children ages 2 through 17 since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to epidemiological data, obesity rates were higher among non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic youth than in non-Hispanic white or Asian American youth. Simultaneously, eating disorders rose in teen girls creating unprecedented wait times to enter clinics. Some Covid transmission reduction tactics worsen pediatric obesity. Virtual schooling limited physical activity while increasing reliance on processed convenient foods.

Pediatricians continue to explore options to support families with healthy lifestyles during this pandemic. Chief Executive Officer, Pam Estes, is currently discussing the concept of "prescribing" the Boys & Girls Club of Laguna Beach to their families. The new Dream Play Yard offers the ability to engage in almost every type of sport (with potential weekend conversion into a skate park in partnership with the City of Laguna Beach.) The turf area presents new sports such as soccer, frisbee, frisbee golf, traditional golf, outdoor yoga and, unstructured play.

Socio-Emotional Well Being: Anxiety and depression levels directly correlate to screen time. Many children suffer from digital world challenges including false comparisons, bullying, exclusion, and fear. Nationally, 55% of teenage girls self-report some degree of depression. Local underage drug and alcohol usage exceeds that of most towns in Orange County. Holistic wellness efforts have long been ingrained in the BGCLB experience. Although the CDC reported a 31% increase in mental health-related hospital visits among adolescents, Club kids grew stronger by building resiliency and other protective factors through meaningful relationships with staff. The Wellness Turf area in the Dream Play Yard will become a new option for our young to learn self-care through



mediation, visualization, yoga, tai-chi, martial arts, music, and other therapies. The art wall allows for new avenues of creative expression where children can explore art and nature surrounded by Laguna Beach's natural hillsides. Being outdoors in the sunshine and fresh air produces stronger immune systems and happiness due to biophilia.

Academic Well Being: The Dream Play Yard is experientially educational in every aspect, supporting Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM). Local nonprofits have chosen to have a Play Yard presence with educational displays. Through these, the Club is building specific learnings aligned with NGSS standards for children of all ages. The Education Initiatives Director has been meeting with partners to discuss how to maximize this opportunity. Once the Dream Play Yard is completed in 2022, it will host community-wide events like fun family movie nights, picnics, skate park days, music, guest speakers, and educational presentations shared by partners in the collaborative exhibits. Additionally, the new play structure is STEAM-oriented, and the art wall enhances STEAM proficiency. Education is a core value for the BGCLB as the latest statistics report: 52% of 12th grade Club Members express an interest in a STEAM career, compared with 27% of 12th graders nationally. 97% of Club teens expect to graduate from high school. 76% of low-income Club Members ages 12 to 18 who attend the Club regularly reported A-Bs, compared to 67% of their peers.



Play: Although the United Nations has recognized play as a basic right of every child, the digital natives we serve do not experience the amount play shared by previous generations. Play is essential to development as it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of young people. Younger children thrive on play-based learning that cannot be equivalently replaced by digital means. Studies show a 90% retention rate in experiential play learning versus 10% from

reading alone. Play encourages communication, improves cognitive development, and encourages relationship building. Structured play includes rules or boundaries to teach. Through it, Club Members learn critical skills of leadership, teamwork, listening, problem-solving, and goal setting. Free-play allows kiddos to use their creativity to develop imagination while discovering talents on their own. It teaches them to learn and practice self-regulation, decision-making skills, and conflict resolution. Play has been on the decline for the past 50 years leading to increases in childhood illness. Studies show that child-driven play has been successful for many as an ADHD intervention because it causes the child to focus on social skills.



How the Dream Play Yard Benefits Laguna Beach Community At Large:

- It addresses the skate park need by using portable ramps to convert the blacktop area.
- It creates access and inclusion for local youth
- It offers extra recreation class space for the City
- It creates a community venue for pickleball, movie nights, lectures, outdoor sculpture shows, Chamber, and City events
- It promotes collaboration between all participating nonprofits
- It promotes community unity, family health, and access to play
- It serves as a more efficient overflow parking space when needed during festivals



Projected Costs:

The build is estimated to run between \$350,000-\$400,000. The Club plans to garner investments to make the Dream Play Yard a reality by contributions from families, foundations, local and federal government grants and corporations. Naming opportunities include program support and structural maintenance. Current fundraising updates are listed in green. Public fundraising will begin December. **The first 150 naming participants (and a guest) are welcome to attend the **Time to Play** celebration at Hotel Laguna on 2.20.22. As of 11/22/2021, pledged/received revenue stands at \$124,000.*

The Dream Play Yard Naming Opportunities:

- \$1000 Lend-a-Hand Wall-join families on the lend a hand wall where your name/handprints will be impressed
- \$2000 (10) Picnic Tables-opportunity for family name and art design on a picnic table. Hosts can repaint with members annually. **Stagg Family, Tarbox Family**
- \$5000 Handball Court and Wall-**Austin Family**
- \$5000 Creative Expression Art Wall-**Ellingson Family**
- \$8000(2) Basketball -includes court, net, poles, and installation
- \$8500 Raised Gardens and Greenhouse-**Laguna Garden Club**
- \$10,000 Media/Movie Screen Wall on the wall above the turf for family movie nights
- \$22,000 The Shade- installation and purchase for poles and large-scale green shade over the turf area
- \$30,000 Eco System Environmental Stewardship Exhibits-education to preserve and appreciate our precious greenbelt, including plants, rock formations, educational plaques, displays, and wildlife representation
- \$30,000 Ocean Stewardship Exhibit-education to preserve our waters, creatures, kelp beds, and tidepools
- \$30,000 (2) North and South Athletic Turf-installation of Envirofill and Safeshell non-toxic, environmentally friendly, low-maintenance turf infill that is safe for children.
- \$80,000 Skate Park Conversion-includes ramps, hardscape components, supplies, and lessons
- \$100,000 **The Play Structure-Wayne Peterson through LB Community Foundation**
- \$150,000 The Deconstructor- includes demolition, leveling, hauling away poles, and removal of shipping containers
- \$200,000 The Maintainer-Premiere Naming Opportunity covering maintenance and sustainability for 20 years