

WORKFORCE READINESS



YWCA Greater Miami-Dade Clubhouse

Miami, Fla.

39

Average number of students served during the school year

70%*

Students from low-income families

Main funding sources:

- ▶ United Way
- ▶ The Children's Trust
- ▶ Miami-Dade County

*Percentage is based on the national Clubhouse network.

Introducing students to new interests, opening their eyes to potential career pathways

The private sector spends more than \$164 billion every year on employee education and training to close workforce skill gaps and more than 1 in 3 workers agree that they do not have the education and training they need to get ahead. These issues beg the question: how do we sufficiently prepare youth to enter the future labor market as adults? Afterschool and summer learning programs are integral partners in this effort, providing students a ladder of supports that offer a step up for future success and help them reach their career aspirations.

Overview

The YWCA Greater Miami-Dade Clubhouse, part of The Clubhouse Network—a global community comprised of 100 Clubhouses in 19 countries, provides a safe space for students to experiment with technology through hands-on projects. Students gain confidence in their ability to use technology, as well as better understand how technology can be an asset to their future goals. Paired with career-preparedness activities, goal setting, and internships opportunities, the Clubhouse encourages students to set a high bar for their futures and become active members of their communities.

A typical day for students

When students first arrive at the YWCA, they have the opportunity to catch up with friends and decompress after a long day at school before activities begin. During free time, students collaborate and experiment to accomplish personal projects. During the week, students participate in various “challenges” against their peers in areas including technology and arts, as well as activities that build foundational skills and competencies, such as responsibility, patience, and teamwork, aimed at preparing students for their lives after high school.

Outcomes

An online survey of more than 1,300 youth involved in Clubhouses around the world found that students are learning content in science and technology; building skills that contribute to designing, making, and problem-solving; and gaining professional, collaboration, and social skills.

Challenges

Employees are missing critical foundational skills that employers desire.

The ability to work in teams, problem solve, and communicate effectively are among the principal skills that employers consistently report desiring in their future hires, yet employers report difficulties finding potential and current employees possessing these set of skills.

Employers find it challenging to hire a workforce with the technical skills needed for open positions.

In a 2017 survey of 500 leadership and human resource staff, 3 in 5 agreed that it was “common for job applicants to lack the technology skills important for success in their career.” Additionally, although more than half of the current U.S. labor market is comprised of middle-skills jobs, only 43 percent of workers are trained for these jobs.

Employers struggle to find candidates with job experience when looking to fill open positions.

A survey of 400 employers found that candidate’s lack of experience was one of the top reasons reported by employers when asked why it was hard to fill positions and that 9 in 10 employers were more likely to consider hiring a recent college graduate if they had an internship or apprenticeship with the company.

Read [Building Workforce Skills in Afterschool](#) to learn more.



Program characteristics

By design, the Clubhouse is a place for creation and exploration. Students at the Clubhouse are given unstructured time to work on personal projects and pursue their own interests. While knowledgeable staff are available to assist students when they hit roadblocks on their projects, students are encouraged to tackle challenges with their peers first to provide older students leadership experience with their younger peers, build teamwork and communication skills amongst students, and help students gain confidence in their abilities.

A key element of the Clubhouse is encouraging students to think critically about their futures. All students create vision boards: collections of images that illustrate students’ goals and desires. From college degrees to careers, students to visualize their dreams for the future and discuss the pathways to accomplish their goals. As students get older, goals become more focused and are directed toward a specific college or career pathway. Students also practice resume writing and answering interview questions, and learn to use Microsoft Office, among other tools.

The Clubhouse leverages partnerships with organizations like Best Buy and Nova Southeastern University to show students the different jobs available to them. Clubhouse students have learned about an array of careers, from architecture to funeral services.

Program history

Close to a decade after the first Computer Clubhouse opened at Boston’s Museum of Science, the YWCA Greater Miami-Dade Clubhouse was established in 2002 to provide Miami youth with a space to experiment with and create with technology. It has since expanded its focus to include career development opportunities, which is now a central component of its mission.

Recommendations

for helping students explore career pathways:

- ▶ Listen to what your students want to do and provide them with individualized opportunities to keep them engaged.
- ▶ Find ways to connect your students with their dream job and give them the opportunity to experience what that job might look like for them.

