

# Afterschool Spotlight

Authored by Youth Ambassador Gabrielle Haynes

## Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows (BGCTM)

### The Opportunity

The Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows (BGCTM) creates a space where youth feel welcomed, accepted, and encouraged to express themselves. By exposing youth to new opportunities and experiences, BGCTM inspires youth to discover their interests and passions.

### In Practice

The Boys & Girls Club provides a safe place for students in grades to engage in fun activities during and outside of school hours. For 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> graders, BGCTM staff encourage students to maintain their grades, continue learning, and see things from different points of view. Every day after school, the program begins with a meal and thirty minutes of recreation before transitioning into “power hour,” where students complete homework and receive additional academic support. After “power hour,” students engage in fun, hands-on opportunities.

Activities include STEM projects, art lessons, gym time, or wellness activities where students can talk about what caused them stress during the school day with their peers. At BGCTM, younger students also interact with upper-grade level students and gain knowledge and insight about planning for the future and transitioning into young adults. As students move into the role of older club members, they are able to share their experiences with younger students and reassure them that moving up in grade levels and forming friendships is not as difficult as it seems. BGCTM staff encourage students to move into leadership roles and join the junior Leader-in-Training Program, which supports students in realizing their goals.

The club uses a step-by-step model to transition students from club members to paid staff members and supports them as they complete lessons, meetings, and internships. The junior leadership program helps students learn about themselves, focus on their future, and build new skill sets.



### YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

**Gabrielle Haynes**  
**Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows, Reno, NV**



“I discovered my love for being a leader and a role model at the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows. I joined the program in 7<sup>th</sup> grade after just moving to the area. I didn’t know anyone or have any friends. At the Club, I found others who were also new or didn’t have anywhere else to go. After noticing my leadership potential, the Club staff encouraged me to join the junior Leader-in-Training Program. Staff inspired me to be the best I can be and to work hard for the things I enjoy. They celebrated my accomplishments as I moved through the program and shared in my happiness when I was eligible to become a full junior staff member. Being a part of the junior leadership program helped me learn about myself and focus on my future, and inspired me to apply for the School of Business as my high school focus area. The experiences, opportunities, and training I received in the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows helped me find myself, make new friends, and build confidence in a new skill set. Now that I’m in high school, I hear from a lot of my friends who went to different schools that they wish they had an afterschool club like the one I had. Students at every grade level benefit from having a welcoming and safe environment to go to after school or during lunch when they’re feeling lonely, lost, or just out of place. Without the Club, I wouldn’t be where I am now.”

## Outcomes

The 2023 impact report from the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows shows that BGCTM served more than 12,000 youth and teens, served more than 650,000 meals, and provided 9,000 hours of homework help. Club members who are Leaders-in-Training complete more than 100 hours of community service each year.

A participant shared, “I didn’t have transportation to go to the college fair but the club was able to take me even if it was on a Saturday. I got to see lots of different schools and even found my dream school that’s in England.”

## The Challenge

Despite 90% of Nevada parents in favor of public funding for afterschool programs and 80% of voters nationally wanting federal, state, and local leaders to provide more funding for afterschool programs, too many young people are missing out. Nearly 25 million children are not in an afterschool program but want to be, including more than 214,455 children in Nevada. Greater investment in afterschool and summer programs is needed to make sure that all young people have the same opportunities as the young people in the Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows.

### Gabrielle’s Tips

To run an strong program:

- ▶ Afterschool programs, similar to the youth leadership model used at the Boys & Girls Club, should have older students run activities and lessons for their younger peers to build leadership skills.
- ▶ To encourage youth to get to know each other and feel welcomed when they first start attending a program, afterschool staff and youth leaders should run multiple icebreaker activities and other engaging games to help students feel comfortable.

## Reference

Boys & Girls Club of Truckee Meadows. (2023). Electronic Media and URLs. Retrieved on May 24, 2024, from <https://online.fliphtml5.com/miyev/rafb/?1711659764384#p=4>