

The Telegraph

Boys & Girls Club preparing for full slate of activities

By alan greenwood - Staff Writer | May 21, 2022



Telegraph photo by ALAN GREENWOOD Craig Fitzgerald, Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua.

NASHUA – Like the families it serves, the Greater Nashua Boys and Girl Club had little choice but to change its methods of operation once the pandemic settled in.

Its purpose has stayed the same: Providing a safe space for city youths to play and grow.

With that in mind, the Club helped guide students and their families through the months that schools became online-only venues, particularly children whose homes did not have Internet access and/or computers.

“We basically adapted from an after-school youth development program to a school-support program for kids,” Boys and Girls Club executive director Craig Fitzgerald said. *“There’s a lot of kids who didn’t have access to the internet or computers at home. So we had 100 Chromebooks on stand-by, we would set kids up with Chromebooks, we had tutors with masks on.*

“We invested in the wifi and we had 125-150 kids here a day. Our gym was all desks, 6 feet apart.



Photos courtesy of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua

When the schools reopened, the Club returned to its traditional after-school program, but remained cognizant of the long-term impact Covid had on students.

“At the end of the day parents are relying on us to not just provide a safe place but to help them make sure their kids are growing and developing in a manner that will allow them to be successful,” Fitzgerald said.

And now, the Club is preparing for a full slate of summer activities. There are learning programs aimed for various age groups and field trips.

The only logistical difference from past years is that children must be preregistered for the summer, rather than simply drop in from day to day.

“It’s tough to run any structured programming when we don’t know how many kids are coming in every day,” Fitzgerald said.



Photos courtesy of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua

All-day care for children from kindergarten through third grade will cost \$200 per week, with summer camps for grades 4-6 at \$125 per week. Students from grades 7-12 can sign up for access to the Stahl Teen Center for a one-time fee of \$35.

Breakfast, lunch, and a snack will be provided each day. Bus transportation to and from camp is available throughout Nashua.

“The kids are really excited to get back with their friends, doing fun activities,” he said. “For a while there we were trying to do as many outdoors activities as possible. But now that some of the code restrictions have been reduced, we’ve been able to do more indoor activities that had previously shut down.”

During the school year, the Boys and Girls Club has partnered with the city school department and the Youth Council in Project Succeed, an effort to help alleviate some of the pressures that have resulted in post-pandemic behavioral problems.

“Any student who gets suspended, they come to Boys and Girls Club,” Fitzgerald said. “They get help, they get caught up with their school work and are given a social and emotional needs assessment to determine if the behaviors are a manifestation of something else going on (in students’ live).”



Photos courtesy of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Nashua

“We’ve doubled down on the social, emotional support as well, so we have counselors from the Youth Council, from Greater Nashua Mental Health.

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