

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

2017 National Outcomes Report

2017



NYOI
National Youth Outcomes Initiative

 **BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF AMERICA**

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2017 National Outcomes Report

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Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) is committed to measuring how much our young people are achieving and how effectively our Club Experience is implemented. Our measurement efforts are aimed at delivering high-quality programming and services, engaging in continuous improvement and demonstrating our impact to stakeholders. BGCA is proud to present this sixth annual outcomes report summarizing our 2017 national findings.

INTRODUCTION



Over the past decade, BGCA has worked with Club organizations to build their capacity to collect and use data to measure youth outcomes and demonstrate their impact to stakeholders. This data also provides Clubs with insights that enable them to adjust their practices and implement quality improvements to have a greater beneficial effect on young people.

Based on youth development research and more than a century of Clubs' own experience, Boys & Girls Club leaders articulated a new theory of change in 2010. The Formula for Impact depicts how Clubs put our youth development mission in action. It identifies who Clubs serve, shows how they serve, and what they hope to accomplish with young people. The Formula for Impact guides Clubs in helping youth achieve positive outcomes in three priority areas: Academic Success, Good Character and Citizenship, and Healthy Lifestyles.

In 2011, BGCA launched the National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI), a system grounded in the Formula for Impact and built to measure the impact of Clubs using a common set of research-informed indicators of our priority outcomes. NYOI's key tool for gathering outcomes data is a survey administered to Club members each spring. BGCA continues to provide training and technical assistance to enable local Club organizations to use NYOI data effectively.

Our Formula for Impact



Club professionals use outcomes data to inform planning and operational decisions, make improvements to programs and services, and demonstrate their impact.

Building a Data-Driven Culture

As BGCA completes the seventh year of NYOI implementation with nearly all nonmilitary Club organizations participating, its measurement efforts remain focused on how well Clubs implement the Formula for Impact and how much young people are achieving as a result. Professionals at the local and national levels use outcomes data to inform planning and operational decisions, make improvements to programs and services, and demonstrate their impact to donors and stakeholders.

NYOI's tools, data and the insights they yield will be particularly useful and valuable as the federation of Boys & Girls Clubs embarks on a new strategic plan, Great Futures 2025. The plan urges all Club organizations to prioritize improving program quality and strengthening capacity.

BGCA continues to enhance NYOI data collection and reporting tools and expand its capacity to conduct more sophisticated data analytics and program evaluation, often in collaboration with well-respected research partners. These efforts are designed to facilitate more effective use of data and a deeper understanding of how Club members are faring.

In 2017, BGCA developed an application on its internal website for Club professionals and volunteers called My Data. This tool gives Clubs easier, centralized access to member outcome and operations data they need to inform their strategic planning and decision making. By spring 2018, My Data will provide Club professionals and board members with their organizations' annual membership and attendance, financial, and NYOI member survey and staff survey data. BGCA's ongoing development of My Data includes enhancing report-generation options and linking Club users to resources to help them analyze their data and use it for continuous quality improvement.

Highlights from this Report

Throughout this report, it is important to note that the findings are for *regularly* attending Club members, defined as those who attended the Club on average once per week or more in the six to 12 months prior to taking the NYOI survey. Also note that percentages may not always add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Based on fundamental youth development principles, a high-quality Club Experience is fun and safe, provides guidance by caring adults, and fosters a sense of belonging. BGCA's analyses of 2017 NYOI member survey data provide updated findings that continue to show a high-quality Club Experience drives positive outcomes for Club youth.

In addition, this report presents current findings about the degree to which members across the Boys & Girls Club federation are achieving positive outcomes in the three priority areas. For example, BGCA finds that:

- More than twice as many 12th-grade Club members express interest in a STEM career as 12th graders nationally.
- Club members in eighth, 10th and 12th grades have significantly higher rates of volunteering than their same-grade peers nationally.
- Higher percentages of Club girls and boys report being physically active every day than their counterparts nationally. In addition, Club high-school-age members who stay connected to the Club as they get older seem better able to resist engaging in health-risk behaviors than their counterparts nationally.

Lastly, the report summarizes impact findings from the most important formal, third-party studies that have been conducted for BGCA over more than 20 years.



More about BGCA's National Youth Outcomes Initiative

In NYOI, individual Boys & Girls Clubs collect data about their registered members' demographics, attendance and participation. Local data management systems feed data into BGCA's national system, allowing BGCA to compile data on the national population served by Clubs.

The NYOI member survey asks members about their perceptions of the Club. Their responses allow BGCA to assess how well Clubs deliver a high-quality Club Experience that promotes positive youth development. The survey also measures indicators of youth achievement in BGCA's priority outcome areas. Some survey questions are asked of members of all ages, while others are only asked of teens ages 13 to 18; this is noted as applicable throughout this report.

BGCA processes the responses from surveys completed in Clubs each spring, furnishes each participating Club organization with its members' survey data, then aggregates and analyzes the data to render national results.

As of late 2017, 94 percent of nonmilitary Club organizations were participating in NYOI. Nearly 190,000 Club youth completed the member survey in some 3,000 Club sites in spring 2017.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CLUB EXPERIENCE



The central principle of the Boys & Girls Club theory of change continues to be supported by analysis of data from NYOI: When Clubs deliver a high-quality Club Experience, young people are more likely to achieve positive outcomes.

BGCA partnered with the Search Institute in 2004-05 on a comprehensive study that aimed to identify core Club practices that are instrumental to fostering high-quality youth development.¹ The research yielded 62 strategies and hundreds of practices. These were ultimately synthesized into Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development and became central to the federation's Formula for Impact theory of change and approach.

Over time, BGCA developed NYOI member survey questions that are designed to capture members' perceptions of the Club Experience. The questions relate to the Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development, asking about components such as physical and emotional safety, fun, and adult connections. BGCA categorizes the responses to these questions to determine how many members report a Club Experience that is *optimal*, *fair* or *needs improvement*.²

A High-Quality Club Experience Drives Positive Outcomes for Members

Since NYOI's inception, BGCA has examined the relationship between members' Club Experience and the outcomes they achieve. BGCA has consistently found that when members have a high-quality Club Experience, they are more likely to achieve positive outcomes in three priority areas: Academic Success, Good Character and Citizenship, and Healthy Lifestyles. This finding is consistent with our Formula for Impact and core youth development principles. When members are immersed in an out-of-school-time (OST) environment grounded in effective youth development practices, they are more likely to acquire social and emotional skills and confidence, remain engaged in school, and make healthy life choices.

BGCA used a statistical method called *regression analysis*³ to determine the effects of the Club Experience on various youth outcomes, while controlling for member characteristics. Club members who reported an optimal Club Experience were compared to Club members who reported a Club Experience that needs improvement. Among regularly attending Club members, defined as those who attended the Club on average once per week or more in the past six to 12 months, those who reported an optimal Club Experience were more likely to report positive outcomes across all three priority areas and all age groups. Some key findings follow.

When members have a high-quality Club Experience, they are more likely to achieve positive outcomes.

Older teens (16 and older) who report an optimal Club Experience are:



more likely to volunteer on a monthly basis



less likely to get into a physical fight



more likely to be on track to graduate from high school on time



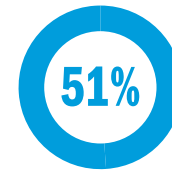
more likely to expect to attend college



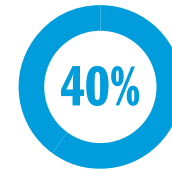
less likely to ever skip school



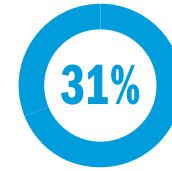
Younger teens (13 to 15) who report an optimal Club Experience are:



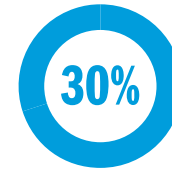
more likely to volunteer on a monthly basis



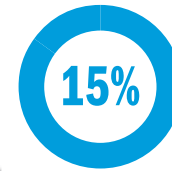
less likely to consume alcohol



less likely to get into a physical fight

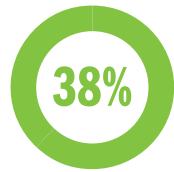


less likely to smoke marijuana



more likely to be physically active five or more days per week

Youth (9 to 12) who report an optimal Club Experience are:



more likely to believe that school work is meaningful



more likely to be on track to graduate from high school



The following insights are particularly useful for Club professionals who wish to improve program quality and deepen their positive impact on young people:

- These findings about the importance of the Club Experience apply to members regardless of their gender, ethnicity/race and family income.
- The optimal Club Experience predicts the most positive outcomes for teens and younger teens.
- Each component of the Club Experience, such as sense of belonging, staff expectations or recognition, is independently associated with at least three youth outcomes. In other words, all components of the Club Experience matter.

In order to support Boys & Girls Clubs with enhancing program quality, the first priority in the Great Futures 2025 strategic plan, BGCA is developing a comprehensive suite of resources and professional development opportunities for Clubs.

In 2017:

- Recognizing that Club site directors play an essential and critical role, BGCA mined external research to identify key management practices associated with high-quality out-of-school-time programs and began collecting promising practices from high-performing Clubs. Throughout spring 2018, BGCA will release a series of brief, practical bulletins, called “Promising Practices for Managing Club Staff,” to Clubs.

- BGCA launched the Club Directors Academy, a three-day workshop for Club directors and other management professionals that builds leadership, management and youth development skills and equips Clubs to create action plans for continuous quality improvement.
- The highly interactive Youth Development Institute models and teaches fundamental youth development practices using a research-based framework.⁴
- The free Youth Development Toolbox mobile app provides practical tips, resources, activities and learning challenges for Club program staff and their managers.
- The Club Experience Blog, www.clubexperience.blog, offers staff inspiration and field-tested ideas for infusing good youth development practices in programming provided by other Club professionals.

In 2018, BGCA will provide Club organizations with formal guidance and resources for establishing quality improvement systems and invest in more professional development opportunities for organizational leaders.

CLUB MEMBERS ACHIEVE POSITIVE OUTCOMES



Developing Globally Competitive Graduates



The national high school graduation rate reached a record 84 percent during the 2015-16 school year.⁵ Achievement gaps are slowly closing, yet academic outcomes remain significantly lower for young people of color and those who come from low-income families.⁶ These demographic discrepancies also appear in school attendance records, with youth of color and youth who are from low-income families attending school less frequently than their same-age peers.⁷

Acknowledging the critical relationship between school behaviors and academic success, BGCA uses a composite indicator made up of several NYOI education-related indicators to better understand the extent to which Club members are on track to achieve high-school graduation within four years. Members are considered to be on track to graduate on time when they: 1) progress to the next grade level in school within at least a year of the expected timing, 2) report grades of mostly As and Bs, 3) do not skip school, and 4) expect to graduate from high school.

In 2017, 56 percent of regularly attending Club members in fifth through 12th grades met these criteria: they are on track for on-time high school

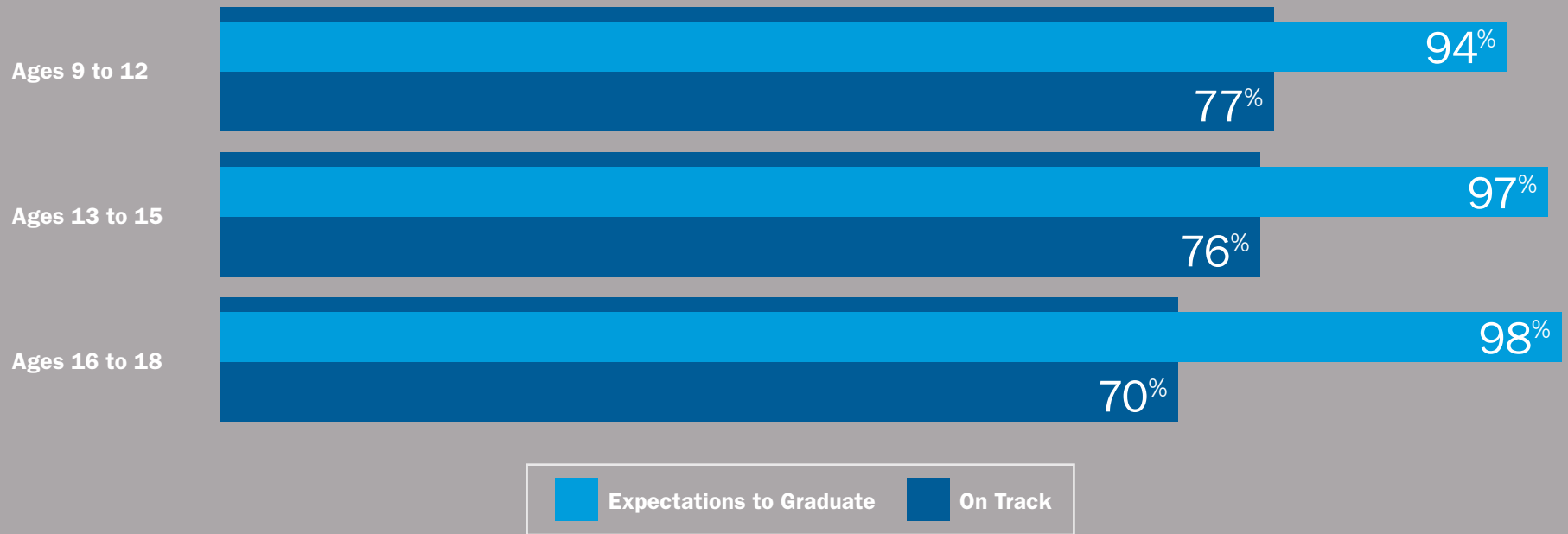
graduation with low risk.⁸ An additional 20 percent of members are on track with some risk, such as having poorer grades or occasionally skipping school. Altogether, 76 percent of members can be considered as being on track to graduate on time.

When examined by age group, the percentage of Club members who are on track to graduate decreases as they get older. At the same time, however, their personal expectations to graduate increase. (See chart on next page.)

Mentoring programs can help address this disconnect between behaviors and expectations, as young people who have a positive relationship with a supportive non-parental adult are more likely to build the skills and confidence they need to achieve their goals.⁹ BGCA's Power Hour program is designed to support members' on-track-to-graduate behaviors by providing homework help, tutoring and high-yield learning activities, thus encouraging members to become self-directed learners. In 2017, BGCA revised the Power Hour program to more closely align its activities to Common Core State Standards.¹⁰ Redesigned Power Hour program materials for elementary-, middle- and high-school members will be released in 2018.

73% of low-income Club members ages 12 to 17 reported earning mostly As and Bs, compared to 69% of their peers nationally.

Percentage of Members Who Are on Track to Graduate Decreases with Age, Yet Their Expectations for Graduating Increase



Club Members Report Higher Grades than Youth Nationally

Among Low-Income Youth Ages 12 to 17



Summer Brain Gain, BGCA's program designed to combat summer learning loss, offers six weeks of fun, theme-based activities for elementary-, middle- and high-school youth. The program provides Clubs with Common Core-aligned modules to engage youth in learning through discovery, creative expression and collaborative group work that evolves into a final project or production. Summer Brain Gain: READ! and Summer Brain Gain STEM provide Clubs with options for focusing on literacy development or science, technology, engineering and math.

Looking at one of the components of the on-track-to-graduate indicator, school grades, BGCA is able to examine how regularly attending Club members compare to their national peers. BGCA compared 2017 NYOI data to data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration annually since 1988. NSDUH collects data from youth aged 12 and older to understand young people's levels of substance use and engagement in mental health services. NSDUH also collects demographic information and self-reports of academic performance and school attendance, allowing for academic success comparisons between Club youth and youth nationally. Using 2015 NSDUH data, the most current available, BGCA finds that 73 percent of low-income Club members ages 12 to 17 who attend the Club regularly reported receiving mostly As and Bs, compared to 69 percent of their peers nationally.¹¹

Engaging Club Members in STEM

In addition to basic academic skills and performance, BGCA recognizes that science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education is critical to the future success of America's young people. Between 2017 and 2027, the number of STEM jobs will grow 13 percent, while non-STEM jobs will only grow nine percent.¹² Yet too few elementary, middle- and high-school students are interested in and adequately prepared for STEM subjects. This is especially true for youth of color and girls.

To better understand Club members' interest in and level of preparation for STEM careers and to inform new program development, BGCA worked with The PEAR (Partnerships in Education and Resilience) Institute at Harvard University in 2016 to create STEM measures for NYOI.

Using one of these NYOI STEM-related survey questions,¹³ BGCA can compare data about Club members' interest in STEM careers to survey data collected by the Alliance for Science & Technology Research in America.¹⁴ When examining the college and career interests of the 2017 graduating class, 12th-grade Club members are more than twice as likely to express an interest in a STEM career as 12th graders nationally (56 percent of 12th grade Club members and 25 percent of national 12th graders report having this interest). Moreover, the percentage of Club girls who express an interest in a STEM career (51 percent) is more than three times greater than that of their same-

More than twice as many 12th-grade Club members express interest in a STEM career as 12th graders nationally.

aged female peers nationally (14 percent). (See related chart below.)

In an effort to continue closing the opportunity gap in STEM, BGCA provides Clubs and members with access to programs, activities and resources to build STEM knowledge and interest in STEM careers. In 2017, BGCA released new DIY STEM Kits to support Clubs in implementing interactive activities connecting youth ages 9 to 12 with science principles they encounter in their daily lives. BGCA also updated the My.Future platform to provide Clubs with digital access to over 125 program activities in digital literacy essentials,

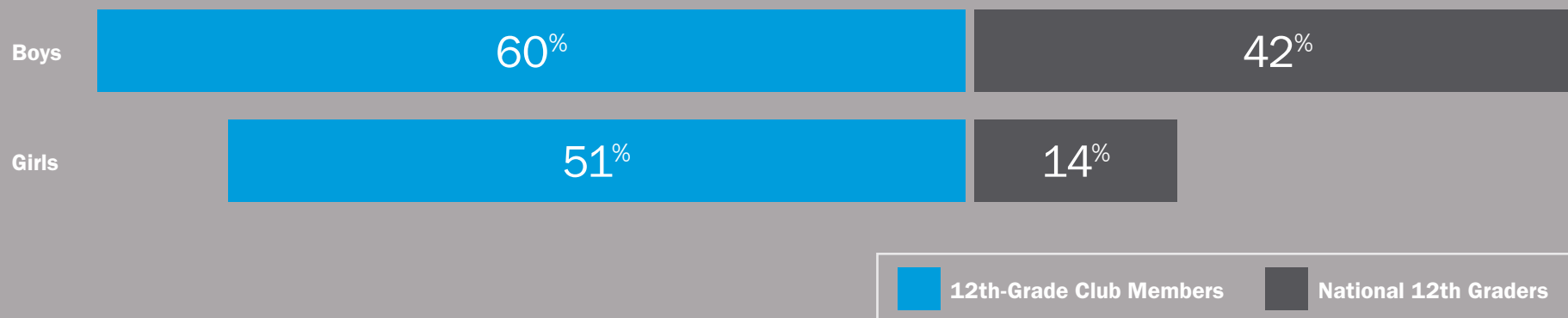
media making, computer science, leadership, visual arts and Lyricism 101 (a program for teens that builds literacy through the art of hip hop). As members complete activities and connect with friends via My.Future, they earn digital badges to recognize the new skills they have developed.

Preparing Members for College and Careers

Boys & Girls Clubs work to ensure that members leave the Club with a plan for the future. Clubs strive not only to help young people succeed in

school, but also to equip them with tools and knowledge to be college and career ready. By spring 2017, 78 percent of 12th graders who attended the Club at least once per week had applied to a post-secondary institution, with almost half of those (48 percent) reporting they applied to more than one type of school.¹⁵ More specifically, 81 percent of these 12th graders applied to a four-year college or university, 58 percent applied to a two-year college, and 29 percent applied to a vocational or trade school. Additionally, 76 percent of Club seniors reported taking the SAT or ACT, 69 percent reported submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and 65 percent reported applying for

Club Members in the 2017 Graduating Class Show More Interest in STEM Careers than Their Peers Nationally, Especially Among Girls



one or more scholarships. These data show that the majority of older members are taking advantage of resources that will help them be successful after high school, and they are seeking a variety of post-secondary education opportunities.

The NYOI data shows that 22 percent of 12th graders have taken no action to pursue additional education upon completion of high school. For this population, there is likely a great need for and an interest in building workforce readiness skills. In 2017, BGCA released a guiding framework for workforce development and postsecondary readiness. It articulates the critical strategies and

opportunities that Clubs can employ to help teen members determine and achieve their plans for the future. Through programs such as CareerLaunch, Money Matters, Diplomas to Degrees and Junior Staff, members can engage in activities to identify the career that best suits them, develop the educational pathway needed to reach their goals, and participate in real-world learning opportunities.

These results align with data from BGCA's Teen Voice Survey, administered online in spring 2017.¹⁶ This survey was designed to collect input from Club teens on what they want and need from Club programming to inform BGCA and

Club strategies for increasing teen recruitment, engagement and retention. Twenty-three percent of Club teen respondents reported they planned to go straight to work after high school, and 11 percent reported an interest in joining the military upon high school graduation. The most popular career choices among teen respondents were health care (25 percent), design/media (24 percent), public service (20 percent), and computers/ information technology (19 percent).

12th-Grade Club Members Report College-Going Behaviors

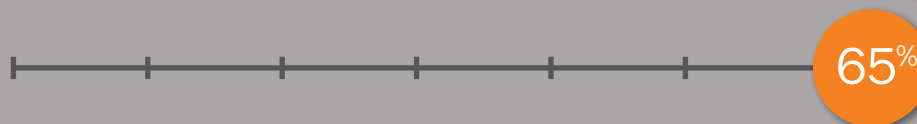
I have taken the SAT, ACT or another college entrance exam.



I have submitted the FAFSA.



I have applied for scholarships.



Developing 21st Century Leaders



50% of regularly attending teen members volunteered in the community at least once per month.

As declared in our mission statement, Boys & Girls Clubs are committed to developing productive, caring and responsible citizens. Young people who regularly engage in community service are more likely to achieve optimal social, emotional, health, academic and career outcomes throughout their lives.¹⁷ More specifically, as a result of participating in *service-learning*¹⁸ opportunities, youth are more likely to build positive relationships and work collaboratively with others from diverse backgrounds, apply the knowledge and skills they gain to improve their school performance, and increase their involvement in activities that shape community and society.¹⁹

In 2017, Club teens ages 13 to 18 reported their levels of volunteering over the past year. The data show that 74 percent of regularly attending teen members volunteered in the community at least once in the previous 12 months, with 50 percent of those volunteering at least once per month.²⁰

These findings are especially positive when we compare Club teens to teens nationally who participate in the Monitoring the Future study (MTF). Conducted by the University of Michigan annually since 1975, MTF is a research study examining the behaviors, attitudes and values of U.S. students in eighth, 10th and 12th grades.

While the survey content may change slightly each year in response to current trends and experiences of secondary students, MTF continually focuses on academic behaviors, healthy habits and community engagement. Given this wide focus, MTF questions provide a valuable comparison point for NYOI survey items. In this report, BGCA used 2015 MTF data for eighth-grade and 10th-grade comparisons and 2014 MTF data for 12th-grade comparisons, the most current data available.²¹

As shown in the adjacent chart, both NYOI and MTF data demonstrate that the rate of teens volunteering at least once a month increases with age. This trend makes sense given the inclusion of volunteering and community service requirements for high school graduation. More importantly, the data show that regularly attending Club members in eighth, 10th and 12th grades who completed the NYOI survey in 2017²² have significantly higher volunteering rates than their same-grade peers in the general population. By 12th grade, almost twice as many Club members report that they volunteer at least monthly in comparison to their peers nationally.

To better understand Club members' attitudes related to good character and citizenship, the NYOI member survey also examines members' concern for others and communities.²³ The results show

that 92 percent try to help when they see people in need, 84 percent believe they can make a difference in their community, and 82 percent have taken action to help people in their community.

Respondents to the 2017 Teen Voice Survey also reported on their levels of interest and engagement in community service. Overall, teens reported very positive feelings toward such activity, with 76 percent of teens agreeing they have a responsibility to be

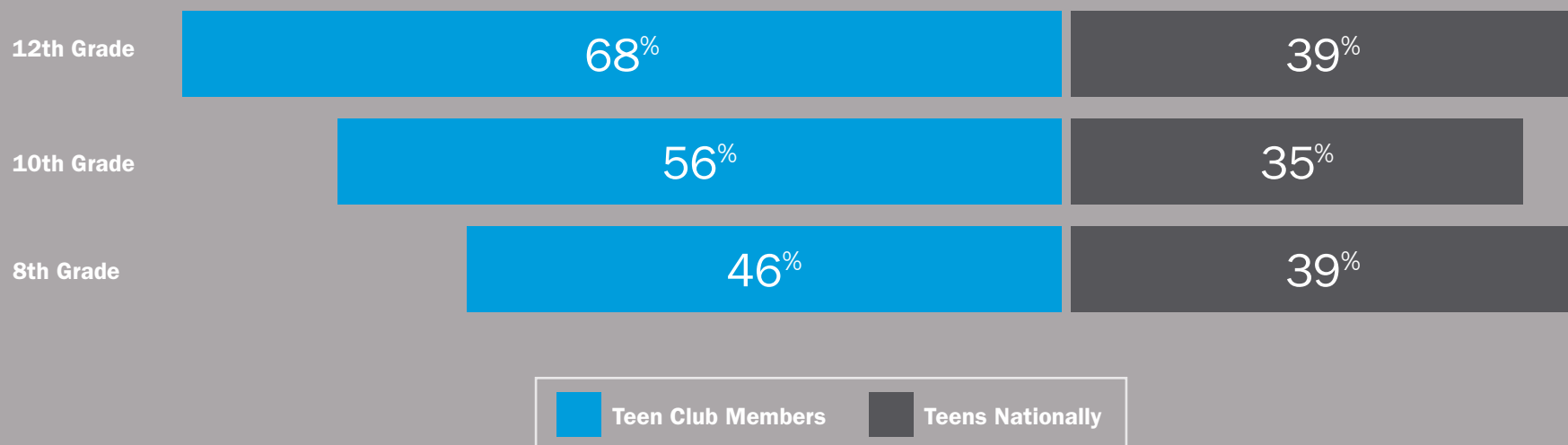
actively involved in community issues. When asked about specific actions they have taken to understand and support an important cause, almost half of teens reported they spoke to an adult (48 percent) or peer (47 percent) about the issue, and 31 percent reported they actively volunteered their time.

The NYOI survey also asks Club members about different leadership behaviors.²⁴ Similar to previous years, 91 percent of members reported that they

can stand up for what they think is right, even if their friends disagree. In addition to this, 90 percent reported that once they know what needs to get done, they are good at planning how to do it; and 90 percent said that when they are the leader of a group, they make sure everyone feels important (see visual on next page).

More Club Teens Volunteer at Least Monthly Compared to Teens Nationally

More Teens Serve as They Get Older



Club Members' Leadership Strengths

Can stand up for what I think is right

91%

Good at planning projects

90%

Make sure everyone feels important

90%

Good at organizing a team to do a project

79%

These results speak to the benefit of Clubs' fundamental youth development work, as well as specific programs such as Torch Club, for youth ages 11 to 13, and Keystone Club, for teens age 14 and older. Both of these long-standing small-group programs provide Club members with the consistent guidance of adult advisors and age-appropriate activities to develop critical character and leadership skills. More importantly, both programs focus on integrating service and leadership development into academic plans, career exploration, and health and wellness activities to promote members' overall success.

Members of Keystone Clubs have the opportunity to work toward attending an annual National Keystone Conference. When asked about their experience in the 2017 National Keystone Conference evaluation survey, 88 percent of the respondents agreed that participating in the program and attending the conference helped them to develop new leadership skills. In 2018, as part of a three-year initiative to serve more teens in Clubs, BGCA will offer Clubs training to improve their implementation of the Keystone Club program.

The demand for strong character and leadership skills is increasing in our classrooms and workplaces. Being able to think critically, communicate effectively and collaborate well are necessary skills for young people to navigate the challenges of adolescence and adulthood successfully.²⁵ In response to the growing need for 21st century leaders, BGCA has expanded Youth of the Year into a comprehensive suite of programs to promote leadership development for Club youth ages 6 to 18. Junior Youth of the Year offers training and hands-on experience for members ages 10 to 13 to develop their leadership skills. The Youth of the Month program recognizes Club members for their leadership roles in the Club. Youth of the Year extends teens' opportunities for leadership in their communities, encouraging teen members to explore identity, passion, personal branding, voice, teamwork and goal setting as they prepare for the Youth of the Year selection process. With the added component of a leadership badge on the My.Future digital platform, the Youth of the Year program suite exposes Club youth to in-person and online opportunities, helping them build leadership skills that support their academic, career and life goals.

Developing a Healthier Generation

The most effective way to build a healthier generation of young people is to focus on developing healthy habits during childhood, instead of trying to correct unhealthy behaviors as youth get older.²⁶ Using a whole child approach to positive youth development, the most productive environments attend to physical health and nutrition, social-emotional development and the absence of risk behaviors to promote healthy outcomes for youth.²⁷ Research shows that when this comprehensive approach to youth well-being is taken, young people are not only physically and mentally healthier, but also more likely to do well in school and have more positive relationships with peers and adults.²⁸

Promoting Physical Well-Being

One-third of all young people in the United States are overweight or obese.²⁹ The overall obesity rate among children ages 2 to 19 has held steady at 17 percent for almost a decade, with the prevalence of obesity increasing as children get older.³⁰ The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, adopted by the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommend that youth participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day.³¹

Research indicates, however, that levels of physical activity among youth fall short of this recommendation, with girls more likely to fall short than boys.³² In fact, less than 23 percent of girls ages 12 to 15 are meeting that recommendation.³³ In their high school years, fewer girls participate in daily physical activity as they age, so that by 12th grade, only about one in seven girls is participating in the recommended amount of physical activity.³⁴

With young people losing opportunities for physical education and recess in school,³⁵ Boys & Girls Clubs provide a safe space to play and take part in team sports. Clubs offer fun, creative ways for youth of all skill and fitness levels to get moving.

To understand the positive impact that Club participation has on youth, each year BGCA compares NYOI member survey data to data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS). The YRBSS is a national survey administered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that monitors health-risk behaviors among youth and young adults. The survey is administered every two years to students in sixth through 12th grades in their school classrooms. The NYOI member survey includes questions from the YRBSS. In this report, BGCA used 2015 YRBSS data, the most current available.³⁶



Higher percentages
of Club girls and
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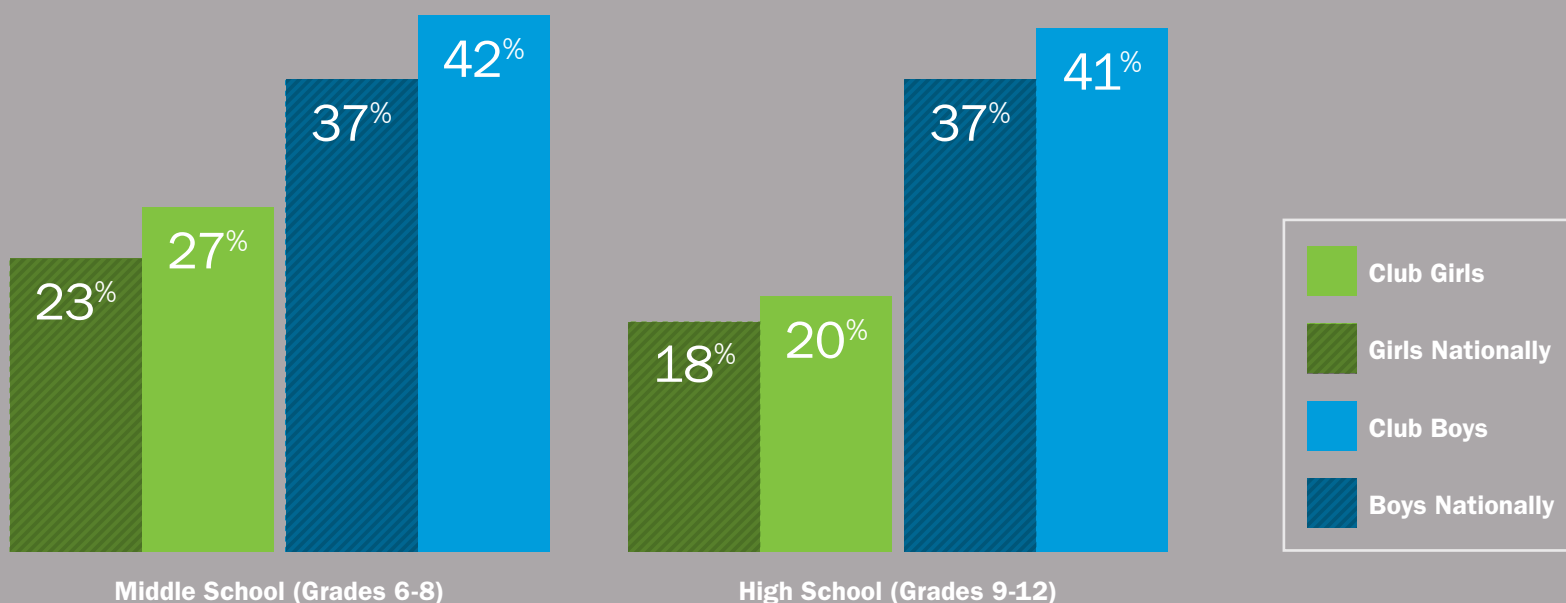
Both NYOI and YRBSS data continue to show that engagement in daily physical activity is lower for girls and declines as youth get older. While all Club members would benefit from greater levels of physical activity, the data shows that regularly attending Club members report higher levels of daily physical activity than their peers nationally.

In 2018, BGCA will continue to work with Boys & Girls Clubs to increase physical activity and nutrition education for members and their families, provide healthy meals and adopt policies that support young people's wellness. Thus far, 740 Club sites have adopted healthy eating and physical activity standards, benefiting more than 100,000 youth ages 6 to 18. BGCA's ALL STARS sports league

program is adding step and dance activities to help meet the needs of younger adolescents and teens, with an emphasis on female participation. BGCA remains dedicated to helping more Clubs enroll in federal feeding programs so that they can serve more healthy meals and snacks to youth. In 2016, 91 percent of Club sites reported providing more than 81 million snacks and meals at no cost to members.

More Club Members Participate in Daily Physical Activity than Youth Nationally

Girls and Older Teens Need Additional Supports



Promoting Social-Emotional Well-Being

As BGCA and Clubs expand the definition of health to include physical and emotional well-being, there is an increasing emphasis on enhancing young people's social and emotional skills. Studies show that people who develop healthy and adaptive social-emotional skills during childhood are more likely to make positive decisions regarding alcohol, illegal substances and criminal activity, as well as avoid physical and mental health challenges later in life.³⁷

For these reasons, BGCA added indicators related to coping with challenges, teamwork and goal pursuit to the NYOI member survey in 2016. The chart on the next page provides insights about a few key social-emotional behaviors from the 2017 survey data. All respondents were asked to rate how true statements about experiencing challenges in their lives were for them. More than half of Club members report they are likely to persist and learn from their mistakes when faced with difficulty. Similarly, more than one-third of Club members report they reach out to others to understand the challenge and identify solutions. On the other hand, middle-school-aged members report the lowest skill level across these social-emotional indicators, suggesting that youth in sixth to eighth grades may be in most need of social-emotional programming.

In partnership with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, BGCA has developed a resource guide, "Social Emotional Development Throughout the Club Day," that identifies key staff practices

and youth activities that Clubs can implement. In 2017, more than 3,000 Club staff and 100 youth ambassadors were trained on emotional intelligence concepts to ensure that youth have access to safe, supportive and inclusive Club environments.

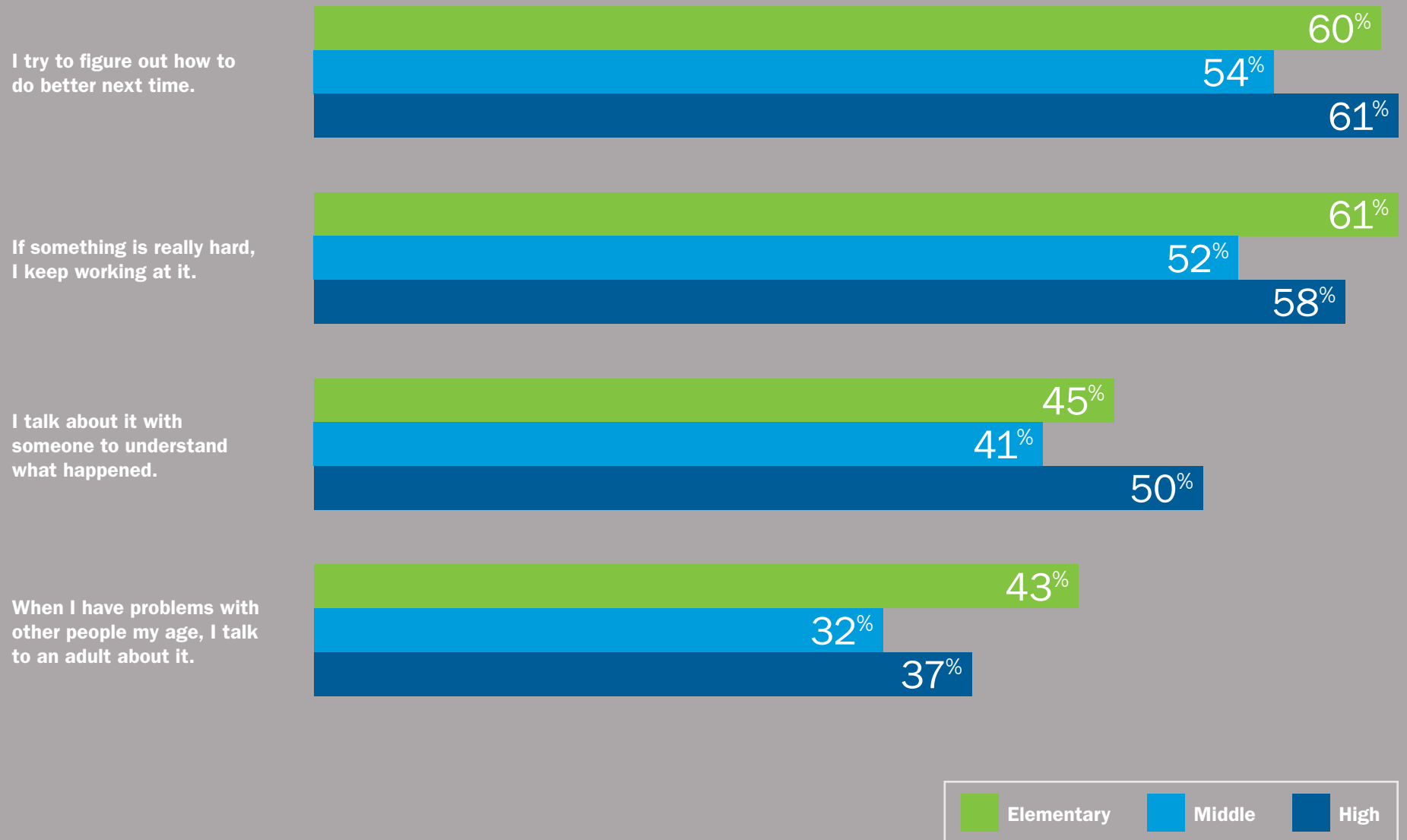
BGCA has also produced several toolkits that address the needs of specific populations, such as youth with disabilities, youth who are grieving, and youth who are LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning or queer). Additional toolkits on bullying prevention and creating a positive Club climate draw attention to the environmental and cultural aspects of a Club that can be designed to enhance young people's experience of emotional safety and supportive relationships.

Clubs can access all of these resources on BGCA's internal website for Club professionals and volunteers.

Over half of members say they persist and learn from mistakes when faced with difficulty.

Club Members Report Using Social-Emotional Skills When Experiencing Challenges

But Young Adolescents Don't Fare as Well





Avoiding Health-Risk Behaviors

Since the inception of BGCA's NYOI survey, Club members in ninth through 12th grades have reported doing better than the YRBSS national average on key health-risk behavior measures, including abstention from alcohol, marijuana and cigarette use. The pattern holds when BGCA compares 2017 NYOI data for high-school-age Club members to the 2015 YRBSS national averages.

BGCA compared regularly attending Club members and youth nationally by grade level. Across almost all health-risk behavior indicators, with each successive grade, the difference between Club members' abstention rates and those of YRBSS respondents increased. In other

words, teens who stay connected to the Club as they get older seem better able to resist engaging in high-risk behaviors than their counterparts nationally at the same ages.

To illustrate, the charts on page 26 compare Club high-school-age respondents in the 2017 NYOI survey to respondents in the CDC's 2015 YRBSS by grade level on abstention from risky behaviors in the 30 days prior to taking the survey. Looking at the first chart on abstention from alcohol use, the decreasing percentages suggest that as high school youth get older, they are less likely to abstain. But the decrease in abstention rates is much smaller for Club members. The difference between Club members and YRBSS youth widens with each successive grade, and by 12th grade there is a 26-percentage-point difference between the two groups.³⁸ This pattern

By 12th grade, Club members' rate of abstention from alcohol use is 26 percentage points higher than that of their peers nationally.

Teens who stay connected to the Club as they get older seem better able to avoid health-risk behaviors than their counterparts nationally.

is observed across all risky behaviors examined here, such that by 12th grade, Club members report higher rates of abstinence from marijuana use (an 11-percentage-point difference) and cigarette smoking (an eight-percentage-point difference) in comparison to their peers nationally.

For several years, we have observed this pattern of widening differences in abstinence rates as Club members and youth nationally progress through high school for almost all of the health-risk behavior indicators included in the NYOI and YRBSS surveys. Other external and BGCA research has found that participation in quality after-school programming leads to less involvement in health-risk behaviors, among other positive outcomes.³⁹ Our NYOI data suggests that members who stay involved with their Boys & Girls Clubs throughout their teen years are reaping some of those benefits.

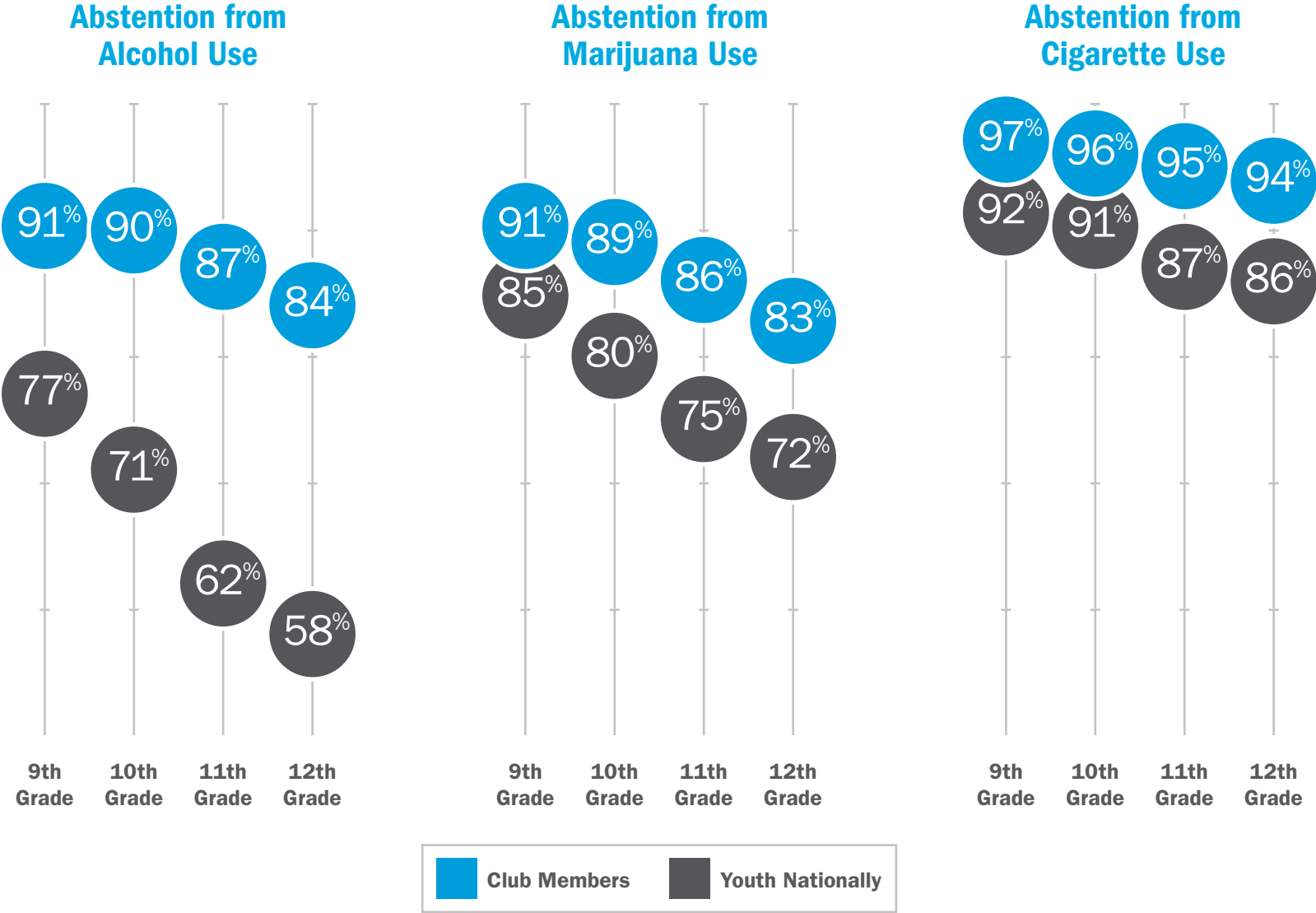
For this reason, BGCA continues its three-year initiative to increase teen Club membership. Non-military Boys & Girls Clubs increased teen membership by 1.5 percent in 2016, the “Year of the Teen.”

The 2017 theme was “Year of the Teen Voice.” More than 3,000 Club teen survey respondents provided input on what they need to have more influence over Club programming to improve its quality and deepen their engagement. BGCA worked with Clubs to increase teen participation in programming to retain existing teen members and recruit new teen members.

The theme for 2018, the final year of the initiative, is “Year of Teen Impact.” BGCA will offer training opportunities for Clubs to help them build their overall strategy for serving teens, improve their teen programming, articulate the specific outcomes they wish to achieve for teens, and develop appropriate outcome measurement mechanisms to demonstrate their impact.

Club Teens Are More Likely to Abstain from Alcohol and Drug Use than Teens Nationally

The Difference Is Larger for Older Teens



HIGHLIGHTS FROM BGCA STUDIES



BGCA complements its youth outcome measurement efforts with formal, third-party evaluation and other types of studies to inform the development, implementation and enhancement of Club programs and services and gauge their impact with additional empirical rigor.

National Economic Impact Study

BGCA's 2015 national return-on-investment study shows that Boys & Girls Club services and programs produce significant, lasting value for youth, families and communities.⁴⁰

- Every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs returns \$9.60 in current and future earnings and cost-savings to their communities. The greatest benefits are from Club members' improved grades and reduced alcohol use and their parents' earnings.
- Clubs spend \$1.64 billion annually on operating costs, resulting in \$15.7 billion in lifetime benefits to youth, families and communities.
- Boys & Girls Clubs help increase the earning power of parents, as well as of youth when they become adults.
- Boys & Girls Clubs also contribute to major societal savings by helping to prevent costly expenditures for health care, public assistance programs, and criminal justice system involvement.

Summer Brain Gain



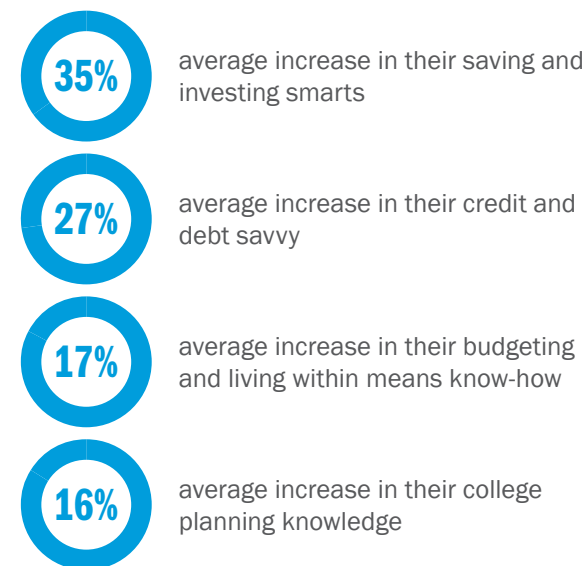
BGCA's Summer Brain Gain program is designed to promote and sustain learning in Club members of all ages during the summer months. The 2015 randomized control trial of Summer Brain Gain's modules for elementary school youth found⁴¹:

- Overall, Summer Brain Gain participants experienced no significant losses in early literacy, math or reading. This is encouraging, because research indicates that most youth lose about two months of grade-level equivalency in math skills over the summer months, and low-income youth lose more than two months in reading achievement.⁴²
- Summer Brain Gain participants in fourth and fifth grades had notably higher gains in math than control group youth, and participants in first through third grades had slightly greater gains in early literacy than control group youth. None of these gains, however, were statistically significant.
- The study did not find that the curriculum had a demonstrable impact on participants' 21st century skills or interest in reading.



Money Matters: Make It Count

Club youth who completed this program, which builds the financial management skills of members ages 13 to 18, had a⁴³:



Participants with spending money showed significant behavior improvement upon completing the program: 79 percent (an increase of 11 percent) said they started saving money and 43 percent (an increase of eight percent) said they were sticking to a budget plan.



Triple Play: A Game Plan for the Mind, Body and Soul

Participants in the Triple Play family of programs, which strive to improve the overall health of members ages 6 to 18⁴⁴:

Increased time spent engaging in physical activity

- 35 percent engaged in vigorous activity for an hour or more at least five times per week by the end of the study (an increase of 10 percentage points), compared to no change among the control group youth

Improved their eating habits

- 51 percent made improvements to their eating habits, compared to only 21 percent of control group youth
- 52 percent ate breakfast more often by the end of the study, compared to 38 percent of control group youth

Improved their relationships with peers

- 44 percent improved peer interactions by the end of the study, compared with 33 percent of control group youth

Making Every Day Count: Boys & Girls Clubs' Role in Promoting Positive Outcomes for Teens

This study examined the overall impact of Clubs on adolescents during the critical transition from middle to high school. Young teens were more likely to demonstrate more positive outcomes when they attended the Club at least 52 times per year. The positive effects were greater when they attended at least 104 times per year. These young teens were more likely to report⁴⁵:

Academic Success

- Decreased number of times skipping school
- Increased academic confidence
- Increased school effort

Good Character and Citizenship

- Higher levels of community service involvement
- Increased levels of integrity (knowing right from wrong)
- Decreased levels of shyness
- Decreased levels of aggression



Healthy Lifestyles

- Increased levels of future connectedness (how much youth think about their future and how their current activities help them prepare for it)
- Decreased numbers of negative peers as friends
- Decreased number of times stopped by the police
- Lower likelihood to start carrying a weapon, smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, smoking marijuana and sexual intercourse

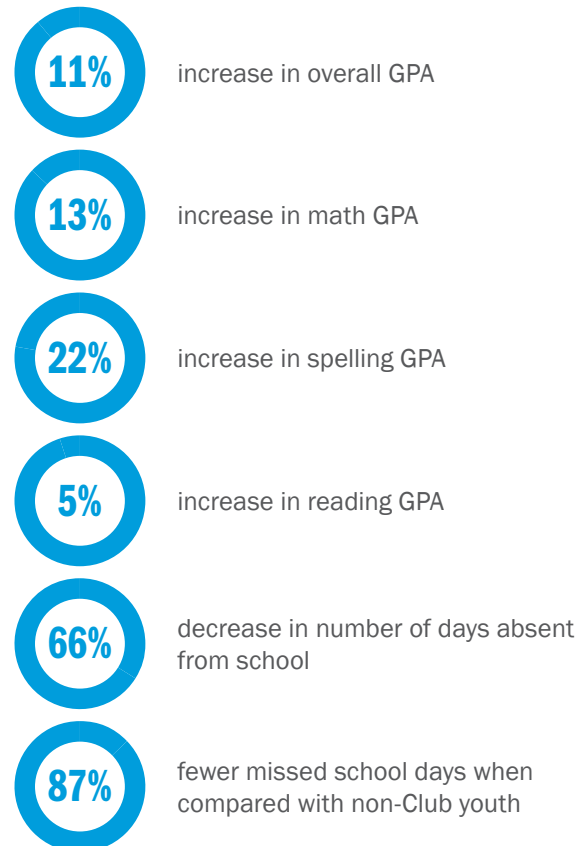
Gang Prevention/Intervention Through Targeted Outreach

Compared to their peers, high-risk and gang-involved youth with more frequent participation in BGCA's prevention and intervention programs experienced⁴⁶:

- Less contact with the juvenile justice system
- Fewer delinquent behaviors (stealing less, less likely to start smoking marijuana)
- Higher grades
- Greater expectations of graduating from high school or receiving a GED
- More positive social relationships and productive use of out-of-school time
- Disengagement from gang-associated behaviors and peers

Project Learn

Participants in this Club-wide program, which reinforces and enhances the skills and knowledge young people learn at school, had significantly better academic outcomes than Club youth who did not participate in Project Learn and non-Club youth⁴⁷:



SMART Leaders

This “booster” program is for teens who complete the Stay SMART component of the risk-behavior prevention program SMART Moves. Participants demonstrated⁴⁸:

- Less alcohol use than their peers
- Less marijuana use than their peers
- Reduced cigarette use
- Lower overall drug use and increased drug use knowledge

ABOUT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA



Boys & Girls Clubs provide a safe, affordable place for children and teens during critical out-of-school time. They offer life-changing programs and services to youth across the nation and on U.S. military installations worldwide.

Mission

To enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Vision

Provide a world-class Club Experience that assures success is within reach of every young person who enters our doors, with all members on track to graduate from high school with a plan for the future, demonstrating good character and citizenship, and living a healthy lifestyle.

Our Scope

4,300 Clubs are located in schools, public housing communities, on Native lands, in rural areas and inner cities—wherever youth need us most.



Endnotes

- 1 Mannes, M.; Lewis, S. and Streit, K. (April 2005). *Deepening Impact through Quality Youth Development Strategies and Practices*, report prepared for Boys & Girls Clubs of America (Minneapolis, Minn.: Search Institute).
- 2 *Optimal* means that the Club environment is consistently providing the Club member with positive experiences in a specific area, experiences that are consistent with positive youth development and what young people need. *Fair* means that the member's responses fall somewhere in the middle. A child might describe it as "fine" or "just okay." It is not consistently good, nor is it clearly negative; it has room for improvement. *Needs Improvement* means that the member's responses reflect an experience that was overall negative, or strongly lacking in certain areas. There is clearly room for growth.
- 3 A regression framework is a method of statistical analysis used to evaluate the strength of relationships between variables. This type of analysis allows researchers to examine how strongly a specific variable may be associated with a particular effect by factoring out other variables that might also influence the effect. Researchers can then calculate a level of statistical significance for associations that they find; that is, they can rule out with some degree of confidence whether a particular finding occurred by chance. The level of statistical significance is noted with a p value; a p value of less than one percent ($p < 0.01$) is considered a very strong level of statistical significance, and a p value of less than five percent ($p < 0.05$) is considered a strong level.
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- 20 The sample size of regularly attending Club teens ages 13 to 18 was 21,437.
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NYOI

National Youth Outcomes Initiative



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