



*Mom & Dad are worried.
This must be really bad.*

*What life is like to
me...life is heavy.*

*I miss going to school
and seeing my friends.*

These are just a few of the worries from our kids as we all grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic.

This health crisis impacts all of us...but we are in this together.

Parents are concerned about their kids, their jobs, their futures:

- *I have children and parents to care for...what if I get sick?*
- *What if I lose my job and can't pay my rent or buy groceries?*
- *If our kids do not go back to school and the Boys & Girls Club "soon" how will I be able to work?*
- *How will my kids keep learning?*



Staff leaves messages on the sidewalk in front of our Club.

How Our Club Responded Immediately to the Need

LEARNING

- We strengthened our virtual programming to ensure kids could still learn in their out-of-school time through targeted and engaging activities. A member (and community) favorite had to be story time at 3 pm every afternoon. An engaging cadre of staff read *The Magician's Nephew* by C. S. Lewis and *Holes* by Louis Sachar in their entirety, but we sprinkled in picture books and easy chapter books for all grade levels.
- Our education director Ms. Caitlyn offered online and video conference homework help, integrating other trusted mentors or tutors. Thankfully, she could decipher middle school mathematics.
- We didn't forget art. The teens made their graffiti initials along with Ms. Jessica, and the younger members followed along with watercolor mountain paintings.
- Ms. Laura shared some tips on creating a "calm down kit" for when you are feeling stress or anxiety. We all tuned in for that one. Laura is an RPE Coordinator with SAFE, a community leader in eliminating abuse through support, prevention and outreach. Laura is certified in Trauma-Informed Yoga and teaches yoga and mindfulness at our Boys & Girls Club, along with many other places in the community.



SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

- During the Stay at Home and Safer at Home Orders, staff members called current Club members and families at home so they could hear a familiar voice and have someone to talk to during this scary time. Staff also arranged small group video conferences with Club members so they could talk with their friends (with parental and guardian approval, of course). This was a lifeline to the outside world

and to each other. The chats were filled with laughter and stories about how much they missed everyone.

- We encouraged participation in a “trick shot” challenge (some of our staff set the bar high with their early, inspired entry) and hosted a virtual Lego-building contest.
- Teen nights quickly became a Club highlight, complete with friendly competition and prizes.

Overcoming This Crisis Together



The Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Clubs of Transylvania County re-opened for our summer program on June 15th with a limited enrollment of 84 members in order to meet social distancing guidelines. (We typically enroll around 350.) For those families of rising 1st through 5th graders who had *originally* enrolled in our summer program, but we were unable to serve, our Club secured an emergency COVID-19 grant through Pisgah Health Foundation to provide funding for other local summer camp opportunities. The participating camps are Transylvania County Parks & Recreation, Muddy Sneakers, and Mountain Roots. What an amazing collaborative effort to serve the children of Transylvania County!

Our kids and teens need us now more than ever before and our organization has responded with innovative programs to meet their needs. In order to minimize risk, each group has a designated space at the club, housing everything that they will need for the day to serve as their classroom. These classrooms have been filled with learning and laughter the first few weeks of reopening and we are challenging our members with Brain Gain, Summer Reading Hour, Art, and other programs designed to inspire intellectual, social, and emotional growth. All groups complete two STEAM projects each week, a few favorites being slime, a "longest working straw challenge," and "dinosaur excavation."

We know we have work to do to get our kids back on track to their great futures. We will have to stem learning losses and make sure kids do not slip through the cracks. Long-term, our Club will be vital to supporting our community. For parents and families getting back on their feet, the Club will save them money when funds have never been tighter, provide a safe place for their children to go while they are working, and offer breakfast and lunch (summer) or snack and dinner (school year) for *no cost* through a partnership with Transylvania County Schools Child Nutrition Services. For kids, the Club has already restored a feeling of safety that has been lost as they face empty grocery store shelves, the worry that friends and neighbors will become sick, school cancellations, and the 24-hour news cycle. And maybe most importantly, at the Club, kids and teens will get to be kids again: playing with friends, spending time with mentors and heroes, harvesting kale in the garden, and going on field trips to Holmes State Forest.

Several of our fundraising events like Mountain Song Festival have been cancelled, affecting our all-important funding to support our mission. Your financial support is appreciated and valued. Thank you for caring about the great futures of our children.



Happy to be back in the garden!

At first, before we realized the size and scope of this global health crisis, we thought we were just taking a couple of weeks away from school and the Boys & Girls Club. Our quarter-acre garden had been planted in the spring, but lay untended while we followed the Stay at Home and Safer at Home guidance from our Governor.

Then we realized that we would be away from each other for much longer than we imagined. A dedicated group of our staff was determined to bring the garden back to life and have healthy vegetables and fruit to share with our children and their families.



Learn more about all the kids we serve at www.bgctransylvania.org.

Whatever It Takes to Build Great Futures.