

March 13, 2017



Co-Chair Senator Rod Monroe
Co-Chair Representative Barbara Smith Warner
Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Monroe and Representative Smith Warner,

Please accept this letter as testimony related to HBs 5516 and 5517.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Greater Santiam operates five service sites in Lebanon and Sweet Home, serving children from age 3 – 20. Our organization which serves 600 local children a day and nearly 6,000 a year, is driven by a mission to provide critical programs, services and opportunities designed to prepare any child for success, in school, work, post-secondary education, and life.

Nearly three years ago we had the good fortune to secure funding to start up and eventually expand our Training Teens for Tomorrow (T3) program in Lebanon, and a Great by 8th program in Sweet Home via the Oregon Youth Development Council. I was especially interested in this opportunity as I was fairly new to the Boys & Girls Club, but came to the Club with 23 years of experience in Workforce Development, including seven years as Executive Director of The Oregon Consortium & Oregon Workforce Alliance.

With funding from the YDC we were able to move swiftly to implement T3 in Lebanon where we partnered with Lebanon Community Schools and dove straight ahead to serve the district's highest risk, alternative ed. students. Over the course of the first year students in the alternative ed. went from an attendance record of less than 50% to over 90%, 70% of students engaged in a work experience (paid and/or unpaid), and 90% made progress toward their GED or high school diploma. Over the past two-plus years the program has had a remarkable impact on the students who are engaged. A few shining examples include Tony – who was placed in a paid work experience with the city, completed his high school diploma with support from the T3 coordinator, was then hired full time by the city, and is now attending LBCC with support from his employer.

Juan, who is featured on the enclosed Impact Report had a similar experience as Tony. Juan never thought he'd finish high school or even his GED. With the help of T3 he was able to become involved in something he enjoyed, learn new skills, take part in a strong mentor-partnership, and has returned to main stream high school, where he plans to graduate and move on to post-secondary education in the trades.

I could go on and on about the impact of T3. Great by 8th's impact is similar. In this program we work with 8th graders in the Sweet Home School District who are at-risk of disconnecting. These students have little leadership related to education at home, but

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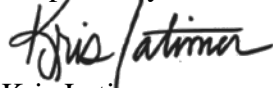
through Great by 8th they learn resiliency skills, get homework help, and begin to think about careers and related education. Program staff then stay with the student as they transition to high school, helping them navigate this very tenuous transition. Success with this program is over 90%.

Childhood poverty in Linn County is 27% - compared to 22% for the State and 13% for Benton County. 29% of Linn County children live in food insecure homes – compared to 24% for Oregon and 21% for Benton County. Dropout rates are also dramatically higher in both Sweet Home and Lebanon. In Sweet Home over 17% of children are identified as homeless and at Foster Elementary, over 70% of the student population live in households with incomes below the poverty level. I know you won't disagree when I say we need more programs like T3 and Great by 8th in our rural, economically challenged communities, not fewer.

Neither of program would be possible without the support of the Youth Development Council. Both T3 and Great by 8th are making a real impact – supporting economic development and opportunity for all by investing in and supporting are youth. Please help us keep the rubber to the road by keeping funding available for programs that are getting real results for rural youth.

If I can provide any additional information or answer any questions, please contact me at 541.258.7105 or kris@bgcgratersantiam.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kris Latimer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kris Latimer
Executive Director



Our Mission

BGCGS provides critical programs, services and opportunities designed to prepare any child for success – in school, work, post-secondary education and life.

2016

IMPACT REPORT



The Club Experience

Boys & Girls Clubs fill the gap between school and home. We provide welcoming, positive environments in which kids and teens have fun, participate in life-changing programs, and build supportive relationships with peers and caring adults.

“ Without this experience my life wouldn't be as great as it is now. ”

Juan Torres
Youth of the Year

I was introduced to the Club through the Training Teens for Tomorrow (T3) program. T3 set me up with a work site at the Boys and Girls Club in the facilities and maintenance department.

At the Club, I worked on projects that included building renovation and installing a security system. I also had hands on experience with other projects that will help me pursue a career in the plumbing industry.

Thanks to the Club I've developed qualities that will help in future employment. Developing work ethic, overcoming obstacles, and becoming a leader are some of the many things I've learned.

Without this experience, my life wouldn't be as great as it is now. Thanks to the Boys and Girls Club community for all you have done for me and thank you for inspiring me to be the best I can be.



The Need in Our State

Every day 185,000 kids in Oregon leave school with nowhere to go.¹ They risk being unsupervised, unguided and unsafe.

Our Reach



Member Demographics



Demonstrating Our Positive Impact



ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The Need

33% of young people in East Linn County fail to graduate from high school on time.²

What We Do

We provide homework and tutoring programs that help kids develop good study habits. Think Big, Be Great by 8th, and Training Teens for Tomorrow all prepare members for academic achievement.

Our Impact

Among our teen-aged Club members, **95%** expect to graduate from high school, and **67%** expect to complete some kind of post-secondary education.

The Need

25% of high-school youth in the United States were involved in a physical fight in the past year.³

What We Do

Programs like Junior Leaders, Torch Club, and Key Stone empower youth with the skills and abilities to become leaders in the community with a passion for helping others.

Our Impact

93% of Club teen members volunteer in their community at least once per year, while **80%** volunteer in their community at least once per month.



GOOD CHARACTER AND CITIZENSHIP



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

The Need

21% of young people ages 3-21 in East Linn County are overweight or obese.⁴

What We Do

Everyday, members are learning healthy habits at the Club. These include healthy eating and meal prep, active lifestyles, and healthy choices.

Our Impact

90% of Club members ages 9 and older report getting at least an hour of physical activity on five or more days per week.

How You Can Help



With your generous support, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Greater Santiam will create opportunities to help more kids and teens achieve great futures. To make a donation or to learn about other ways you can help, contact **Kris Latimer, Executive Director, Boys and Girls Clubs of the Greater Santiam, 541.258.7105**. Visit <http://www.bgcgratersantiam.org>

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
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<http://www.bgcgratersantiam.org>

¹ America After 3PM, Afterschool Alliance, <http://afterschoolalliance.org/AA3PM/>

² <http://schools.oregonlive.com/>

³ <http://www.childtrends.org/indicators/physical-fighting-by-youth/>

⁴ <http://www.childhealthdata.org/docs/nach-docs/oregon-pdf.pdf?sfvrsn=0>