



February 5, 2024

HB 4082: Summer Brain Gain at Boys & Girls Clubs across the state of Oregon

Summer at The Club is full of laughter, learning and a little lounging ... as all good summer breaks should be! For 10 weeks in the summer, The Club offers in-person, full-day educational and social-emotional programming in 22 communities across Oregon. In Salem area alone, approximately 530 youth will be served by the Boys & Girls Club in summer 2024.

Research has shown that achievement and opportunity gaps between students from low-income families and their higher-income peers widen during the summer months when school is out. During the summer, low-income youth have lesser gains—and in some cases losses—in reading aptitude, greater exposure to violence and crime, and further weight gain for those with obesity.

Summer is often a lost opportunity, especially for under-served youth. But it doesn't have to be. Summer has tremendous potential to support academic learning, social emotional learning, and healthy development in youth.

Low-income children and children of color are much less likely to have access to summer enrichment experiences due to the challenges of availability, accessibility, and affordability, depriving them of these critical learning opportunities. Club-wide, 89% of members qualify for free or reduced lunch and 69% are ethnically or racially diverse.

- A safe, supportive and fun environment with caring adult mentors
- Computer labs with high-speed internet & reading programs to prevent summer learning loss
- Daily fitness & healthy habits programs
- A Fine Arts program that encourages youth to develop new skills, express themselves, and expand individual creativity.
- Professionally trained youth development staff that see the potential in each child
- Two fresh and nutritious meals and a snack. This is particularly important during the summer when families lose the benefit of school lunches.

This summer, the Boys & Girls Club of Salem, Marion & Polk Counties will offer:

Grades 1-5 will travel *All Around the World in 10 weeks*. Regions and activities they will explore include:

- Africa – Flags of Africa, African Dance, Landscape Dioramas, Ghanaian Art

- India – Exploring India Through Architecture, Yoga
- Egypt – Making Papyrus, Egyptian Sweet Cookies, Sacred Animals, Language of Ancient Egypt, Pyramid Building
- Brazil – Introduction to South American Handicrafts, Making Pao De Queijo (cheese rolls), Exploring Taino Culture and Petroglyphs

Middle and high school youth participate in activities like:

- Young Entrepreneurs - Middle school youth explore the intricacies of small business ownership in our Be Great by 8th Program.
- Summer Teen Employment - Teens participate in Oregon Youth Corps, receiving paid employment and specialized training in conservation work. During their 9-week program, the complete beautification projects throughout the community and receive valuable on-the-job training.
- Business Beavs in Action - The Club's Training Teens for Tomorrow program partners with Oregon State University's (OSU) College of Business to offer this week-long entrepreneurship camp for high school students. At the end, teens are awarded a business course credit through OSU.

Funding for summer programming is critical, especially for marginalized populations, to ensure youth have opportunities for academic enrichment in safe, enriching environments that promote their well-being and opportunities to explore and thrive.

A representative from an area Boys & Girls Club would be eager to participate in the Workgroup.