

Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club of Greater Charlotte Provides Safe Remote Learning Sites for Children of Working Families

Thanks in large part to this funding resource, The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Charlotte (TSA-BGC) was able to provide safe remote learning site options for working families during this pandemic. Fewer than 2% of TSA-BGC's Club members live above the federal poverty level; 90% qualify for free or reduced lunch; and 83% attend a Title I school. Many members' parents are essential workers, often people of color, working in the service industries. Furthermore, 63% of members live in single-parent households. Without safe options for remote learning, these children would have had to navigate virtual school unsupervised at home—that is, if they had access to internet at all.

This grant enabled TSA-BGC to build out its digital infrastructure to support higher-speed internet to support multiple school workstations as well as to purchase personal protective equipment, or PPE, to ensure the safety of both Club staff and children. Sanitizers, masks, and cleaning supplies have helped to maintain healthy conditions for the children since the Club reopened on August 17 as a remote learning site. Since then, TSA-BGC's Marsh location has served a total of 63 unduplicated students who otherwise would not have had access to internet, supervision, homework support, and safe peer interaction at a time of significant social isolation, which is not good for developing youths' mental health.

From the start of remote learning to December 18, 2020, the Marsh Club has served 63 children in remote learning, the Belmont Club has served 86 children in remote learning, and the Milton Club has served 77 children in remote learning.

Impact Story:

At the beginning of the year, a six-year-old boy struggled with the virtual platform of his first grade "classroom." Because he was a part of the remote learning site, he received the support of not only his teacher, but also of the Belmont Club staff. Together they helped him to remember his classroom log-in codes and taught him how to use Zoom and Canvas, the online learning platform so that he would not miss assignments or feel embarrassed to ask for help. His teacher even brought assignments to him at the Club to further encourage him and worked in conjunction with the Club staff to keep him on track. Now he is excelling in school despite a difficult year to be in the first grade.

Impact Story:

A Charlotte-Mecklenburg School teacher needed to register her two children at the Club. She explained that she had been to several other programs that day and that they were just too expensive. She said that she and her husband made reasonable salaries, but childcare costs were simply out of their reach. But they had to work and could not do so from home. Leaving their children home unsupervised was out of the question. So they were desperately hunting for a solution. When she came to The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club, she could not believe the annual program cost per child is only \$5 (the rest of which is provided for by generous donors). She was extremely appreciative and kept thanking the staff. The unit director said, "My heart truly went out to her."

