

Pennsylvania House Committee on Children and Youth

Hearings on After School Programs

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Transcript from Philip C. Jackson
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Introduction and Background

My name is Philip C. Jackson and I am the Board President for the Pennsylvania Boys and Girls Club Area Council. The Area Council is a statewide organization representing the 17 Boys and Girls Club's located within the State. The purpose of the Area Council is to provide a forum through which Clubs can discuss items of mutual interest, such as programs, successes and failures, and fund raising challenges. Further the Council provides an avenue for additional training and board development. The Pennsylvania Club's serve over 115,000 youths between the ages of 6-18 through our 17 Club's with over 80 separate units.

I have been a Board volunteer with the Boys and Girls Clubs for over 23 years and am also Board President for the North Penn Valley Boys and Girls Club located in Lansdale Pennsylvania. Professionally I have been in Banking for over 30 years and am currently the Market President for Univest National Bank and Trust Co. located in Souderton, Pa.

The Pennsylvania Boys and Girls Club's are members of Boys and Girls Club's of America, headquartered in Atlanta, Ga. Nationally, there are Clubs located in virtually every state serving over 4,000,000 youths. Boys and Girls Club of America is the national governing body through which all members adhere to consistent operating standards, pursuit of common mission, and have access to training and program development. For over 100 years the Boys and Girls Clubs of America have been serving the youth of America enabling them to be caring, productive, and responsible citizens.

What We Know

After school programs are defined as safe, structured activities that convene regularly in the hours after school. These programs offer activities to help children learn new skills, provide mentoring opportunities, and help them develop into responsible caring adults contributing to their communities.

Nationally we know that after school hours are a critical time for our youth. It is a peak time for juvenile crime and risky behaviors, such as alcohol and drug use. Most experts agree that after school programs offer a healthy and positive alternative. Nationally it is estimated that at least eight million children and youth are left alone and unsupervised when they leave school. Access to after school programs, although limited, is critical to providing our youth with viable alternatives for their healthy risk free development.

What We Know In Pennsylvania

In Pennsylvania, through studies conducted by the Afterschool Alliance, we know that nearly 17% of the K-12 self-care youth would be likely to participate in an after school program if one were available in the community. We know that this applies to 26% of Pennsylvania's K-12 youth who are responsible for taking care of themselves. These children spend an average of more than 6 hours per week unsupervised after school. In contrast, only 9% of Pennsylvania's K-12 youth participate in afterschool programs.

In Pennsylvania, the Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCA's, religious organizations, and public schools are the largest providers of after school programs.

Pennsylvania Boys and Girls Club After School Programs

The Mission of the Boys and Girls Club's is to: "Enable all young people, especially those who need us the most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens."

Our programs are designed to develop young boys and girls between the ages of 6-18 in five areas:

- Education and Career Development
- Sports, Fitness and Recreation
- Character and Leadership Development
- The Arts
- Health and Life Skills

We provide programs in the above areas free of charge to our members through 17 Clubs and 80 units in Pennsylvania. Our members pay annual membership dues of no more than \$20 per year, however, no youth is declined membership if they are unable to pay the annual dues.

Our premier after school program is our Project Learn development program. This program enhances the skills and knowledge our members learn at school during their hours at the Club utilizing high yield learning activities. This includes our very successful "Power Hour" homework and learning enrichment program after school.

In many of our Club markets these programs are offered with the support and coordination of the local school districts. Through coordination with local teachers and students we have had a meaningful impact on the lives of our youth members, their parents, and educators.

Many of the components in our five major areas of impact are offered in the afterschool hours. These include fitness programs, leadership programs through our Key Club organization, and arts and technology programs.

Of course the limiting factor has been our access to a reliable consistent source of funds to offer these programs. The Boys and Girls Clubs depend primarily on contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, and government. Each Club conducts its own fund raising, consequently, the availability of our after school programs varies according to the success of fund raising. With access to dedicated funds for this purpose, our after school programs can be offered to more young boys and girls throughout the state in more of our locations.

The value of after school programs has been well documented. Your commitment to providing funds for these programs will place Pennsylvania at the pinnacle of youth development throughout the country. The Boys and Girls Clubs are well positioned to deliver these programs through its access to youth (currently over 115,000), locations (over 80 units), and history of providing successful programs.