



SOCIAL DISPARITIES AND RACISM RESPONSE AND ACTION

SEPTEMBER 18, 2020

Executive Summary

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston (BGCGH) acknowledges its responsibility to support all kids and families in our community and help them through challenging times like those being experienced now. The public health crisis brought on by this pandemic has laid bare the deadly impact of the disparities that pervade health care in our most vulnerable communities across the country, and the tragic and appalling death of George Floyd in Minneapolis are stark reminders that racism and discrimination remain prevalent in our society.

At Boys & Girls Clubs, we take a stand for the future of America's children. We stand against racism and discrimination. We stand for safety, health, dignity and equitable opportunity. Boys & Girls Clubs has always been a catalyst for change, and we are long overdue for change in this country. As a city and a nation, we can and must demand change to ensure these basic rights for black people and any others who face systemic injustices.

Children and teens – especially young people of color – need to be heard. They need mentorship from a trusted voice. They need to know that adults will stand up for them to ensure the great futures they deserve, and they deserve to be safe – not just at a Boys & Girls Club, but everywhere.

Immediate Action

The injustice surrounding the senseless killing of Houstonian George Floyd has strengthened our resolve to move forward with a stronger and louder voice. Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston continues to answer the call to action to continue building positive, supportive, inclusive environments that are trauma-informed, where young people of all races and backgrounds are encouraged to express themselves and have difficult conversations about racism and injustice. BGCGH is here for the vulnerable communities we serve in times of joy and sadness.

*"The time for change is now!
and I'm looking forward to
working with my Club (BBTTC)
to do my part in ensuring this
change happens."*

*– Isaiah L., Houston Best Buy
Teen Tech Center*

The following are examples of actions taken to show our youth, our staff and our community that we stand together during these times. We are here to listen. To be a part of the convening of ideas. To be a part of the ultimate solution.

September

BGCGH teens participated a virtual conversation on racial equality, featuring ESPN and The Undefeated's Clinton Yates, Bob Kendrick, President of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and Major League Baseball players.

August

A holistic and multi-pronged approach of BGCGH's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts were introduced to the Board of Directors. The focus is on four priority pillars, each of which include actionable priorities.

BGCGH teens participated in a national, multi-city Teen Empowerment Town Hall which tackled timely issues of social and racial justice impacting teens in America today.

July

BGCGH Board Chair Julius Young accepts a position on the Boys & Girls Clubs of America Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Taskforce where he will serve alongside BGCA Board of Governors to develop meaningful, action-oriented solutions to our Clubs role in addressing social injustice and racial inequities that impede the success for our kids and teens.

Houston ISD superintendent featured as part of national panel addressing social disparities and inequalities in education.

June

A joint statement was released by the Texas Family Leadership Council on COVID-19 and systemic racism. BGCGH joined other non-profits from across the state of Texas as a signatory for this publication.

BGCGH launched new teen social injustice initiative called Be The Change You Want 2 See to amplify youth voices and activism.

May

Initial message sent to all staff regarding acknowledging the racial and social injustice surrounding the senseless killing of Houstonian George Floyd.

Who We Are

Employees

56% African American
36% Hispanic
6% Caucasian
1% Asian

Leadership

55% persons of color
10% increase in change
year over year



Club Members

59% African American
42% Hispanic
4% Caucasian
1% Asian
3% Multi-racial
1% Native American

Board of Directors

30% persons of color
9% increase in change
year over year



Next Steps

This work is not easy. It will be slow. It will be hard. But, it is a challenge that we take seriously. We will move forward with sensitivity, humility, and diligence. We see you, we hear you. We know that strengthening our commitment to our values is important. While we have responded with immediate action items, we are currently working on developing short- term and long-term plans that will address the need to further the progress on racial equality. A few of our solutions include:

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force

BGCGH Board Chair Julius Young, in recognition of his leadership in social and racial justice, was invited to serve on Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Task Force, a national initiative. This task force is charged with developing and monitoring strategies to create meaningful, action-oriented solutions for Clubs in addressing social injustice and racial inequities that impede success for kids and teens, with a focus on black, brown and indigenous youth. As Houston is one of the most diverse cities in the country, Julius will provide valuable counsel and leadership in this role.

Be The Change You Want 2 See

In June, BGCGH launched the new teen social justice initiative called Be The Change You Want 2 See. The initiative focuses on amplifying youth voices and activism through circle and intentional conversations, artistic expression and service projects. The goal is to educate and inspire teen Club members to be catalysts for change in Houston and our nation.

In August, teens from BGCGH participated in a national, multi-city Teen Empowerment Town Hall which tackled timely issues of social and racial justice impacting teens in America today. In addition to Club members from BGCGH, teens from the Twin Cities (Minneapolis/St. Paul), Metro Atlanta, St. Louis, Washington D.C. and San Francisco provided a voice to the townhall. They engaged in lively discussions on topics including police reform, criminal justice reform and grassroots activism.

Call to Action

The response in our community and around the world represents a need for change. We have seen the profound effect the protests and demonstrations are having right here in our own community. BGCGH is committed to the call to action for change, but to do this, it will require all of us coming together to listen, share, continually educate, and collaborate. As a member of the Greater Houston community, we are encouraging you to create an action plan, put this plan into action, be prepared to listen, and hear with empathy.

Everywhere we look today, there are questions, but few answers. There is not a playbook for all of the challenges that we are currently facing. However, we know that talk will not solve anything without action. The future of our community rests in the hands of our youth; and how we choose to support and stand with them today will be a point of inflection in our history.