Toward a Model for Sustainable, Youth-led Change

A White Paper About Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s Million Members, Million Hours of Service Initiative in Partnership with the Citi Foundation
Foreword
This publication provides insights into Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s (BGCA’s) Million Members, Million Hours of Service initiative in general, with a focus on the service learning pilot component in particular. The intent is to describe a small test of the resources needed to implement one tier of a larger framework of this innovative service program. What we’ve learned will help us refine the resources Clubs will use to bring the framework to life.

This publication is intended for youth development professionals seeking to gain a better understanding of service learning. It will provide guidance on how to incorporate components of BGCA’s service framework in afterschool programs generally and, specifically, in a Boys & Girls Club environment.

Executive Summary
The demands of citizenship are evolving, and Boys & Girls Clubs of America recognizes the ongoing need to provide relevant, contemporary program offerings to help young people develop as engaged citizens of good character. To that end, BGCA mapped out a comprehensive new service learning strategy to guide the development of innovative service experience opportunities for Boys & Girls Club youth. We also designed and pilot-tested a curriculum that walks Clubs through the process of implementing a youth-led service project. Our evaluation reveals that the next big challenge for Boys & Girls Clubs is to not only inspire youth to create their own service experiences that address relevant social needs they see in their communities, but also to lay the foundation for sustainable, ongoing service efforts.

“[Club teens] have learned how to express themselves in a group, they have learned how to respect someone else’s opinion, and how we can work together to make a safe environment here in East Harlem and in Manhattan.” – On the milestone MMMHS, BGCA / Citi Foundation service learning event in New York City, January 31, 2015, Marjorie Caparosa, Arts & Leadership Coordinator, Children’s Aid Society Boys & Girls Club of East Harlem Center.
Introduction

Boys & Girls Clubs have a rich tradition of helping young people develop good character through service. For more than 150 years, Clubs have engaged youth in service opportunities as a means of gaining a basic understanding of civic responsibility and civility. By learning about citizenship and giving back through service, young people develop pride in their communities and understand the importance of civic responsibility; by combining service and learning, Clubs help young people become productive, caring and responsible adults.

Over the years, BGCA has led remarkably successful service initiatives, providing Clubs with the resources, guidance and support to significantly enhance and grow local efforts, and enlisting the collective support of our national network of more than 4,100 Clubs to effect change on an unprecedented scale. Through these efforts, BGCA and Clubs together have developed a culture of giving and a spirit of civic-mindedness among Club youth. While nationally, 37 percent of 12th graders report volunteering at least once per month, among Boys & Girls Club 12th graders, that rate is much higher: 65 percent. What’s more, a large proportion of Club teens, 84 percent, express a belief in their own power to make a difference in their community (Boys & Girls Clubs of America [BGCA], 2014, p 16).

In 2013, Boys & Girls Clubs of America partnered with the Citi Foundation to build the infrastructure for a new initiative to increase the number of Club members engaged each year in community service and service learning projects. The Million Members, Million Hours of Service (MMMHS) initiative enables Clubs around the nation to involve youth in service activities in general, and service learning in particular, ensuring every Club member experiences the benefits of volunteer service, while helping them become successful and productive citizens in their communities.

More than 4,100 Boys & Girls Clubs will have the opportunity to raise members’ awareness of community service prospects and provide them with resources to undertake projects for their communities. The MMMHS initiative is in the process of testing new areas of youth-based service learning, an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs.

We began by convening an advisory committee of Club professionals and BGCA staff with relevant expertise and conducting a thorough review of the relevant scholarly publications (see “Highlights from the Literature Review” on page 4). The National MMMHS Advisory Committee developed a three-tier strategic framework for providing resources for youth to engage in meaningful service activities as well as service learning and youth-inspired service projects. To support this strategy, the MMMHS team developed resources and curriculum to support program implementation levels conducive to individual Clubs’ capacity levels.

According to data analyzed by BGCA, 69 percent of teen Club members indicated that they volunteer at least once per year, and 46 percent said they volunteer at least once per month. This information, although positive, presents a challenge for Clubs to elevate the number of teens engaged in long-term service experience opportunities where youth learn and practice critical 21st century skills in investigating a social problem and designing a project in support of a solution. Creativity, a vital
contemporary skill, can help generate new ideas to benefit communities. Collaboration helps achieve common goals. Inspiration to serve the community has to come from the teen. Young people may recognize social issues in their communities that are not even on the radar for Club staff or other adults.

To encourage Clubs to engage more youth in service opportunities, we developed a set of resources in the form of “service recipe cards” with ideas for one-time projects. But, we also wanted to help Clubs go deeper, so we focused on creating a curriculum and resources for providing more robust teen-led service experiences. The curriculum is based largely on the guiding principles and core competencies of social emotional learning (SEL), which is based on the understanding that the best learning emerges in the context of supportive relationships that make learning challenging, engaging and meaningful.

We designed a small pilot test to assess the design and implementation of the curriculum and to learn more about how this type of service learning works in the Club, moving from a staff-driven to youth-driven model in which service projects are planned and implemented over a period of time. This pilot test allowed for a thorough evaluation of the resources and the strategy and gave BGCA an opportunity to integrate feedback from participating Clubs.

With the addition of the new curriculum, Club youth have more choice in determining their level of community service commitment through a range of service opportunities offered by BGCA or initiated by their local Club. Our ongoing challenge is to advance more Clubs to the point of offering service experiences inspired by young peoples’ passions, allowing teens to create solutions to social problems they identify in their community, and supporting them as they put in place sustainable actions for positive change.

This report will briefly summarize important points from the literature review, further describe a strategic framework, and present the key findings of a pilot test of curriculum materials for engaging teen members in service learning projects. It will also convey the successes and challenges of Club implementation of service learning in its current state and make recommendations for taking the next steps in service learning programming.

**Highlights from the Literature Review**

A review of the relevant literature revealed several trends that informed the development of BGCA’s Service Learning Framework and the MMMHS curriculum pilot-tested in this project. The National MMMHS Advisory Committee identified trends in the literature to assist in developing curriculum for youth based service learning, an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs. The most important findings are summarized in this section.

Adolescents who are involved with community service or who volunteer in political activities are more likely as adults to have a strong work ethic, to volunteer and to vote. Volunteering is also associated with the development of greater respect for others, leadership skills and an understanding of citizenship that can carry over into adulthood (BGCA, 2014, p 16).

Teens with experience in service to the community are better prepared to enter the workplace and to be productive citizens of the 21st century. According to a report by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, *Reimagining Citizenship for the 21st Century*, a contemporary citizen is: informed, engaged and active;
literate in civics; proficient in core academic subjects and interdisciplinary knowledge; empowered with global competencies; and capable of participating safely, intelligently, productively and responsibly in the digital world.

Young adults aged 18-35 say they are motivated to strive for higher work quality by chances to develop solutions to problems in their community or in the real world. However, less than one-third of this group reports that they often used their learning for real-world problem solving in their last year of school. (Partnership, n.d. p. 15) The value of addressing real-world problems is high, but there are few opportunities for youth to actively engage in influencing their community through meaningful actions. This finding inspired our decision to create a service strategy that would guide Clubs in the development of more sophisticated service learning programs. As we developed both the strategy and curriculum resources, we strove to address this gap between youth desire and opportunity to make a meaningful difference.

Additionally, the Partnership study reveals that the challenges of being a responsible, effective citizen are more diverse, nuanced and complex than in the past. Meeting local, state, national and global challenges demands a broader vision of citizenship for the 21st century.

Three crucial trends identified in the report were particularly influential as we developed this project:

1) Significant and increasingly complex challenges require much more than a traditional knowledge base.
2) An increasingly international, interdependent and diverse world has fundamentally altered our civic, economic and social lives.
3) A tightly connected, digital world empowers people to connect and interact.

We also embraced the following three dimensions of citizenship and corresponding recommendations proposed by the Partnership for 21st Century Skills:

1) *Prepare all students to participate effectively as citizens.* We took this one step further by developing a service strategy and curriculum that not only prepares youth for service, but also helps them understand important issues so they can make informed decisions.
2) *Reimagine citizenship from a global perspective.* We recognize that youth are engaged in connecting the local to the global by looking more critically to the media. They often make connections between social issues across the world and those in their communities. As they do this, they are practicing information literacy, an essential 21st century skill.
3) *Focus on digital citizenship.* Youth spend much of their lives online and have the capacity to engage at a global level through web and digital connections. Digital citizenship is a key facet of the curriculum and overall service strategy.

Another influential study, *Making the Case for Social and Emotional Learning and Service-Learning Research* by the Collaboration for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) provides an overview and description of both social and emotional learning and service learning as tools to improve the lives and academic performance of students. The study describes how the two practices are interrelated, establishing an essential connection between service learning and social emotional learning (Fredericks 2003).
CASEL has identified five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies the committee used as principles to guide curriculum development:

   1) Self-awareness.
   2) Social awareness.
   3) Self-management.
   4) Relationship skills.
   5) Responsible decision-making.

Research indicates that institutions that teach social emotional learning competencies foster student attachment to school and receptivity to learning, factors which are strongly linked to academic success (Blum et al 2002). Further, SEL can increase the capacity of all students to become knowledgeable, responsible, caring, productive, nonviolent and contributing members of society (Zins et al., 2001). Research indicates social emotional learning can strengthen the ability of youth to be capable service providers, while quality service learning can build SEL competencies. (Fredericks, 2003). This symbiotic relationship between service learning and SEL was another guiding principle that shaped our curriculum.

**BGCA’s Service Strategy**

We set out to create resources to help Club professionals galvanize youth to work in collaboration as a way to understand their individual role in relationship-building, and to create meaningful contributions that benefit their fellow Club members, as well as the local and global community.
We began by creating a strategic framework that outlined the full range of service learning opportunities we believe are possible in a Boys & Girls Club. This Service Learning Strategy defines service experiences at three different levels of engagement. With each tier, intensity and duration of the experience increases, improving a participant’s skill and capacity to undertake additional aspects of the service learning process.

The service strategy framework offers three levels of entry and engagement for Club members. BGCA’s service strategy is structured as a three-tier continuum. At Tier 1, Clubs engage youth in one-time service activities planned by adults (e.g., serving lunch at a soup kitchen). In Tier 2, service activities are planned by youth to address issues they identify in their communities. In Tier 3, projects are characterized by social innovation. Service experiences are ongoing and sustainable and are inspired by youth in partnership with leaders in the community. For example, youth participants might start and maintain a new food bank or community garden.

Undergirding the entire continuum of Club service opportunities are the principles of social emotional learning, which fosters receptivity to learning and increases the capacity of students to become knowledgeable, responsible, caring, productive, nonviolent and contributing members of society. By thus defining three tiers of service learning, BGCA is now prepared to help Clubs offer progressively richer, more engaging opportunities, moving from one-time, staff-driven volunteer experiences to sustained, youth-led service initiatives.
New Program Resources

More than 250,000 Club members have participated in MMMHS service activities developed by local Clubs or as part of nationally organized BGCA events, such as MLK Day of Service. These entry-level experiences are based on one-time, staff-driven volunteer community service activities. Youth are presented with a wide range of volunteer service activities in which they can participate, such as planting trees or picking up trash to improve their communities. In partnership with the Citi Foundation, BGCA supplied Clubs with new resources for engaging in this type of service activity, and successfully involved 1,600 Clubs in using the resources to carry out service experiences.

These experiences, which fall into Tier 1 of our Service Strategy, yield an abundance of positive outcomes: self- and social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. This approach to service learning, however, is limited in its efficacy, because such opportunities do not keep youth involved in long-term efforts to address the social problems of the community. Additionally, youth are not afforded opportunities to recognize social problems for themselves, because these one-time service activities are organized by Club staff.

BGCA also developed a new curriculum to guide Clubs in implementing projects with the elements of Tier 2 of our strategy. Because the majority of service opportunities in Clubs fall into the realm of Tier 1, we focused on building Clubs’ capacity to implement Tier 2 projects to facilitate an incremental move along the service learning spectrum of sophistication and impact.

Tier 1 is designed to introduce youth to ideas about how one can be influential in the community. These introductory service experiences answer two major questions for youth: How can I make a difference? What are the ways I can make a difference? These experiences act as foundational service building blocks that get members thinking about their next action of service to the community. Tier 1 offers youth regular opportunities to serve others, learn about their communities, and the needs of their community. One of BGCA’s main goals is to ensure that service becomes a true part of the everyday Club experience and that we increase the amount of youth engaged in service activities in a given year.

While Tier 2 offers a path to in-depth service learning experiences, we recognize the challenges all Clubs have getting all Club members interested and involved in this type of deep-engagement experience due to staff capacity, restrictive size of the Club, operational hours and resources. Tier 1’s resource, the Service Recipe Guide, allows for a greater number of youth in a single day to have service experience.

While Tier 1 introduces the investigation of community needs, a critical component of Tier 2 service learning is the emphasis on exploration, identifying social needs and taking steps to making changes through community service. Further, these activities are positioned to help youth to become self-aware, socially aware, develop self-management skills, understand relationship skills, and understand responsible decision-making. These components are the prerequisite and the building block to Tier 2, which requires a focused practice of 21st century learning competencies.

Four key components characterize the curriculum design:

1. Effective programs provide repeated opportunities to practice new skills and behaviors within the program structure and beyond to real-life situations. Resources developed for the pilot test are based on the S.A.F.E. curriculum design model, in which:
• Activities are Sequential.
• Activities Apply active learning techniques as a way for Club members to practice skills.
• Focused time is dedicated to skill development.
• Activities are Explicit, targeting specific skills.

MMMHS resource design follows this model to align with proven, evidence-based practice in the after school time space as it relates to social and emotional learning.

2. Activities are designed to promote essential social emotional core competencies, including self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills and responsible decision-making.

3. We identified competencies youth need to meet the demands of 21st century citizenship, as defined by the 21st Century Partnership; those competencies became the learning objectives of the activities in the curriculum.

4. Instruction follows these guidelines:
   • Each group has 8-15 members.
   • Facilitators teach specific 21st century skills.
   • Time and attention is dedicated to practicing skills.
   • Use multiple media to support various learning styles.

The Pilot Test
BGCA then carried out a pilot program to test this curriculum. Clubs participating in the pilot test implemented the eight-week service learning curriculum; resources provided by BGCA included a facilitator’s guide outlining eight learning sessions, posters, banners, evaluation materials and the www.1hourequals.com web channel, which provides a centralized public access point for relevant information. The facilitator’s guide includes background on service learning, directions and detailed steps to implement each of the eight modules, with the final module culminating in a community service project based on a specific community need identified by Club members.

Pilot Sites
BGCA and the Citi Foundation selected 10 local Boys & Girls Club organizations in the Citi Foundation’s Pathways to Progress primary markets: New York, Newark, Boston, Washington, D.C., Miami, Chicago, St. Louis, Dallas, Oakland and Los Angeles. Each organization was tasked to select one Clubhouse in their organization to pilot conduct the MMMHS Tier 2 service learning pilot with a group of at least 15 core Club members ages 13-18 who would participate in eight modules as defined by the pilot curriculum, a four-month commitment. With the support of the Citi Foundation, BGCA was able to provide each local Club with funding to offset the cost of implementing the program.

In addition to financial support, the BGCA and Citi Foundation partnership hosted a series of distance trainings and coaching calls for the Club facilitators responsible for implementing the program. These sessions were designed to create an environment in which staff could share promising practices they used during each module and work through challenges of the modules as a group. Facilitators were also
asked to complete module evaluations, which were used to drive the conversations of the coaching calls to address real-time challenges and concerns.

**Community Need Selection and Impact**

It is clear that local Clubs are influenced by both regional and national contemporary social problems. The service learning framework introduced into the pilot testing Clubs provided a space for youth to have discussions and make decisions about how to best address these problems. The modules provide guidelines for groups to explore multiple community needs and social problems with a goal of narrowing down to one that would drive the culminating project. Some of the identified community needs were: teen violence and the influence of inner urban centers, hunger, homelessness, police and youth interactions, school climate and culture, the devaluation of African-American youth in community and environmental stewardship.

After the community need was identified, the core group at each local Club divided into various committees to begin the actual planning of the project. Various committees were formed, such as logistics, marketing and outreach committees to ensure the successful implementation of the culminating service project. Each Club was charged to recruit additional teens to participate in the project. As a result, 458 youth, 59 volunteers, and 56 community leaders engaged in projects that addressed the aforementioned community needs.

The purpose of the pilot test was twofold: We wanted to understand how service learning works in a Boys & Girls Club environment specifically and what experiences need to be revised to enhance the experience for facilitators and youth who have this type of service experience in Boys & Girls Clubs. Several communication tools, including module evaluations, coaching calls and focus groups, were used to gain information from youth, facilitators and volunteers. This input will inform how BGCA will approach rewriting the curriculum and how we’ll conduct additional research to identify supplemental experiences to enrich the program. We also recognize each Clubhouse within an organization is unique; thus, it is imperative that the rewrite of this program encompass several approaches that Clubs can employ to reach the same outcome.

**Case Study: #KnowYourRightsNYC**

The Children’s Aid Society East Harlem Center Keystone Club participated in the pilot test of BGCA’s new service learning curriculum. Their project culminated in a successful action organized by teens around a topic they identified as relevant in their community. More than 65 participants collaborated in this milestone community event to raise awareness of police brutality and racial profiling in New York City.

As East Harlem Club members completed the eight curriculum modules in the Service Learning Guide, they discovered a critical insight: One reason police might not treat teenagers with respect is that teenagers don’t know enough about their legal rights. With this in mind, Club teens created and distributed a survey to determine the impact of police brutality and racial profiling in their community, particularly on teens. As they collected and evaluated survey data, participants found a high percentage of teenagers in Manhattan did not know what their legal rights are when interacting with police. To address that issue, participants designed a service project called #KnowYourRightsNYC, reflecting on the relationship between teenagers and police.
The group convened a community summit at which participants discussed ideas for effecting positive change and ways that teens could provide feedback to community leaders. Club members invited the New York Civil Liberties Union, the police department, and other community members and activists to the event. Teen videographers and photographers documented the proceedings, creating video and graphics that could be shared worldwide.

Under the guidance of the Club staff, the youth planned and produced an informational summit recruiting more than 40 teenagers from different youth programs around Manhattan for a day of training workshops, games and discussion and focus groups with an emphasis on teaching legal rights, sharing ideas and brainstorming solutions for positive change regarding relations between police and teens. They were successful in relaying correct, useful and important information to their peers, as well as giving them a forum to express themselves about a sensitive topic in a safe environment. Youth also reached out to their local NYC police precinct and the New York Civil Liberties Union, and hosted adult representatives from both organizations, making sure their voices were heard and effecting change.

The Children’s Aid Society East Harlem Center has concrete plans to continue to address this social issue. Youth are planning to attend an East Harlem Anti-Violence Youth Force event, hosted by New York City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. By joining and participating in this task force, they will be able to explore ways they can continue the conversation about improving police/teen relations, as well as reach out to larger groups of peers regarding their “Know Your Rights” topic. Also, as an outcome of completing the curriculum, they brainstormed ways to tie #KnowYourRightsNYC with social entrepreneurship. They were also inspired to investigate the possibilities of starting an interactive website where teens could learn about their rights by playing “Justice Jeopardy,” an interactive game they created. The website would also include other information and resources on the topic.

“BGCA has done a wonderful thing. What they have done is try to channel different Clubs to begin to do community service, but to do it in a way that’s global.” – David Giordano, Club Director, Children’s Aid Society Boys & Girls Club of East Harlem Center

Findings & Recommendations

The MMMHS pilot test consisted of eight, 90-minute modules designed to provide a framework for a culminating service learning project. The framework follows a project-based or service learning approach to assist youth in successfully planning and implementing a project from start to finish. For eight weeks, with the help of a Club staff facilitator, youth worked together to plan at least one culminating service project based upon the experiences that the modules yielded. Module sessions guided groups through the process of developing a project based on the ideas Club members were passionate about, social issues they connected with, and needs they identified in the community. The following tasks were completed during the module experience:

- An exploration of community needs and an investigation of methods for addressing this need.
- In-depth primary and secondary research to gather information on specific community needs.
- Analysis of research findings and presentations of those findings to determine a final action.
- Development of a project plan.
- Promotion of a service project.
• Recruitment of additional Club members and teens to join the day of service and demonstrate learning by the implementation of the service project and a presentation to community stakeholders.

21st century skills are a prerequisite for success in the contemporary workplace. Each module of the curriculum was designed to support specific 21st century student outcomes. The eight-week service learning process is designed to build the necessary skills young people need inside and outside the classroom. The process required Club members use the knowledge and skills they acquired in other educational and social environments in the MMMHS experience. The modules incorporated the following life and career skills, to some degree, requiring Club members to navigate conversations and activities using skills they have developed and refined in other environments: flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility.

Our pilot test yielded the following accounts of successes, challenges and recommendations from participating Club members and facilitators.

Module Implementation

In the four months spanning October 2104 through February 2015, 100 Club members ages 13-18 at piloted an eight-module service learning curriculum at 10 local Boys & Girls Clubs. Evaluations administered after the pilot test helped determine to what degree youth were honing their freshly acquired 21st century learning competencies. The following findings provide a small lens into the degree to which the service learning curriculum was successful in supporting 21st century learning.

When we asked the participants if they took on new challenges during the module experience, 61 percent of those who responded agreed. A sample of respondents indicated the following as new challenges assumed:

• Discussing a [social business venture] and coming up with a strategy.
• Asking questions and expressing my thoughts about an issue.
• Planning activities that would appeal to 100 teens.
• Evaluating surveys and breaking them down into groups that can be interpreted into useable, primary source info.
• Answering our own questions from our research.
• Organizing my community assets into categories that focus on different community topics

When asked whether they learned a new skill or idea, 71 percent agreed that they indeed learned a new skill during the module experience.

A sample of respondents indicated the following skills or ideas were gained:

• How to respond back to a counter-argument that I wasn't expecting during the focus group.
• Organizing committees and making decisions as a group.
• The skill of working together (collaboration) to come to conclusions and decisions.
• How to address a social issue.
In a focus group conducted by BGCA with participating youth at one pilot site, Club members noted that they walked away with a better understanding of public speaking, working in groups, using what they learned in formal learning environments in their personal lives and networking with organizations to facilitate a process. When asked about their personal experiences during the modules, the group noted that the objectives for each module were clear and that they were guided by relevant discussions and activities that helped them to grow closer in cultivating a service project. It was noted that the experiences in the modules were influential in understanding the tactical steps needed to develop and implement a meaningful service project.

While the participants recognized the benefit of the modules, they found it difficult to complete all of the tasks and activities in the 90-minute sessions. They reported that some modules can easily take 3-4 hours to implement, and suggested revising the suggested times to coincide with the time the youth are at their Boys & Girls Club after school.

Over the course of the pilot, BGCA held five distance-coaching sessions with Club staff facilitators. Over the course of those sessions, the following qualitative insights were gathered based upon their personal experiences implementing the curriculum and driving the service learning process.

**Curriculum Design & Implementation**

**Areas of Success**

- Facilitators found it helpful to have a comprehensive curriculum resource with all needed materials, not requiring supplemental reading or external resources.
- Teens responded very well to the embedded opportunities to go into the community to gather information about the community needs. They found it rewarding to get out of the Club and see parts of their community they may not have paid attention to before. It also inspired discussions about disparity between community areas.
- Teens felt empowered by collaborating with their peers and other community members. Participating in the program gave them opportunities to do group work, make decisions and solve problems together. It was satisfying for them to see their projects through each step of the program process to completion.

**Challenges**

- Some modules required more than the 90 minutes slated for each module, according to staff reports. Several teens felt the timeframe felt compressed or rushed, and found it difficult to remember what was covered from week to week.
- The pilot was implemented in the fall, which competes with beginning of the school year, making it difficult to recruit and retain teens for the service learning program. Also, fall has many holidays to work around. In some regions, inclement weather during this season is also a challenging factor.
- Members enjoyed the module activities and building new skills, especially in the area of project management, but they are not making the connection between these skills and those they are learning at school.
• The curriculum was designed to be implemented by skilled volunteers, but Clubs were unable to secure participation from such volunteers, and it was a challenge for the Club professionals to facilitate the program.

Recommendations
• Revise service learning modules and create an alternate version accommodating challenges in staffing, space and competing programs
• Recommend Clubs be flexible with the allotted time for each module.
• Consider implementing service learning experience program in the spring.
• Provide additional training to help Club staff make connections between in-school and out-of-school-time experiences and to encourage staff to connect with local teachers in efforts to make connections between school work and projects in Clubs.
• Develop a framework for securing skilled volunteers.

Engaging Volunteers
BGCA designed the curriculum to be implemented with integral involvement by skilled volunteers throughout. However, we offered volunteers the option of participating at various commitment levels. In reality, most volunteers chose to participate on a one-time basis, supporting Clubs’ culminating activities. While this support added valuable contributions to the participants’ experience and the positive impact on communities, not having volunteers engaged throughout the entire program cycle made it difficult to implement the curriculum as designed.

Recommendations
BGCA and corporate partners start the volunteer engagement planning process at the same time with an allowance for volunteer capacity-building in the timeline. Build out corporate infrastructure to support volunteer engagement at the local levels.

Revise the volunteer engagement model to work directly with local Clubs to ensure skilled volunteers are available for an 8-12 week commitment. Act as co-facilitators of the service learning curriculum modules.

Program Visibility
BGCA developed a unique and progressive activation strategy to help bring the MMMHS initiative to life for Clubs, youth, the community and the public utilizing creative visual support, social media engagement, live Club events and a Web presence.

Areas of Success
• BGCA created a public relations toolkit for participating Clubs, who reported the kit gave them an easy-to-follow blueprint for promoting their efforts.
• Many Clubs assigned a teen to blog, photograph or document the pilot experience, allowing them to practice active digital citizenship, one of the three dimensions of 21st century citizenship.
• In an effort to give the participating teens and Clubs an organized voice in social media, BGCA developed a dedicated hashtag, #1hourequals, which allows for information and news about the program to be easily accessed and promoted all over the world. All Clubs, members, parents,
volunteers and the general public have the capacity to share on the topic of their service experiences.

- The tangible impact one person can make with one hour of service was artfully conveyed with successful story-telling visuals and innovative copy. These images both illustrated and inspired the kinds of service learning opportunities for teens.
- Created the URL www.1hourequals.com, giving the general public access to information about this service initiative.
- Club Implementation grant and Events encouraged Clubs to plan, share and celebrate their stories.
- Clubs and members created their own #KnowYourRights hashtag to reach a digital and global audience, an excellent example of self-promotion and outreach.

Challenges

Lack of skilled volunteers presented a challenge for this aspect of the project as well. Without volunteer communications professionals, Club staff were forced to take on additional responsibilities outside their professional expertise.

Recommendations

- Provide Club staff with more extensive training in the use of the PR Toolkit.
- Engage teen participants to execute components of the PR strategy, such as sharing the #1hourequals hashtag.

The Future of MMMHS

Thus far, we have outlined guiding principles, designed a program and pedagogy, and identified competencies aligned to the first levels of a service strategy built within the guidelines of social emotional learning. The next steps for BGCA involve fusing new directions suggested by the pilot test with specific goals for the advancing the momentum of the overall MMMHS initiative.

We recognize the need to continue building the infrastructure of Tiers 1 and 2 and charting the course for Tier 3 to provide a well-rounded delivery model to local Clubs. As youth matriculate through each tier of the MMMHS initiative, the intensity and duration of the service experiences increase, thus increasing leadership skill and capacity. In the service continuum, Club members will view their local and global world critically, make assumptions, support or challenge their assumptions, and create a space to contribute favorable solutions. This level of specificity has armed us with an ability to develop resources for local Clubs that will increase the number of Club members involved in service from 250,000 to 350,000 by December 2015.

Beyond that, BGCA’s organizational vision is that 1.2 million youth leaders will contribute 6 million hours of community service by 2018, resulting in $70 million of economic impact in local communities across America (calculated using the widely agreed-upon Independent Sector’s Value of Volunteer time equation). This organizational goal is one that will be supported by multiple partners and multiple programs, including those that fall under the MMMHS initiative.

The Vision
BGCA has embarked on a clearly defined strategy that places youth in a pipeline of service and leadership. We envision increased civic engagement and leadership capacity, and development of the entrepreneurial mindset of Club youth. We will provide experiences that help youth understand how they can make a difference, and show them how to create systemic and sustainable change through social entrepreneurship. We believe that the implementation of the entire service strategy, with opportunities for youth participation in all three tiers, will increase our impact, increase the number of youth involved in volunteer service, and make mastery-level service experiences such as service learning and social innovation a reality in Boys & Girls Clubs.

In partnership with the Citi Foundation, BGCA plans to continue rolling out the MMMHS initiative to all Boys & Girls Clubs, ensuring that more Clubs possess a foundational knowledge about MMMHS and how it can be adopted into their program structure.

**Next Steps**

The curriculum supporting Tier 2 of the strategy will be revised, to include a guide developed specifically for teens, and made available to all Boys & Girls Clubs. However, Clubs will continue to determine, based upon size, facility and capacity, at which level of the service strategy they will operate.

BGCA will facilitate the development of a model for ongoing social innovation and global development/social entrepreneurship to support Clubs in Tier 3. In addition to helping Club members develop ongoing service efforts driven by their own passions, this will also aid in the development of critical workplace-readiness skills. As we develop this model, BGCA will continue to study the best methods for engaging Clubs at the third tier, including providing supportive resources, appropriate messaging and impactful means of engagement.

BGCA has projected the following goals:

- Refine and enhance the program resources, strategy and volunteer engagement components for Tiers 1 and 2.
- Implement Tier 1 and 2 projects at 15 Clubs, engaging 30 AmeriCorps volunteers.
- Directly impact 11,050 youth in the second phase of the MMMHS pilot project with the aggressive implementation of Tiers 1 and 2.
- Integrate the service learning curriculum into Keystone and Torch Club (BGCA’s small-group leadership clubs for teens and tweens), with 55,000 youth volunteers participating in Tier 2 experiences.

**Program Enhancement**

We will utilize what we have learned through this project to increase engagement with the 4,000 Clubs in our network. In future implementation applications, BGCA proposes to:

- Refine the service strategy based on key learnings.
- Refine an integrated volunteer engagement strategy for Citi employees.
- Revise the service learning curriculum, adding a teen handbook, and developing branded, professionally designed final print resources.
- Develop programmatic implementation strategy and logic models for Tiers 1 and 2.
- Develop in-person trainings specifically for service learning facilitation and implementation.
Improving Partnership Awareness and Visibility

We seek to increase awareness and visibility of BGCA’s partnership with Citi Foundation and the Citi Foundation’s support of the MMMHS initiative by:

- Gathering success stories and photos from Clubs who have participated in service activities, projects and events to demonstrate the impact of Clubs or youth on myclubmylife.com.
- Supporting Clubs in local media and promotional efforts with PR toolkits and other resources.
- Continuing to promote development of thought leadership content through website, social media, media and BGCA/Club/Citi channels. This includes continued promotion of the #1hourequals hashtag, which gives Club members and staff multiple opportunities to directly show their impact in the community.
- Inviting three MMMHS participants to attend the 2015 Keystone Conference and present their service learning projects to Keystone Conference attendees. They will discuss their brainstorming process, the challenges they faced and the outcomes of their project. By doing so, we will highlight the importance of service and increase the awareness of the MMMHS amongst Club teens, as this conference is created for teens by teens.

Finally, BGCA will move forward with a strategic plan for evolving the focus of service learning in Clubs from staff- to youth-inspired social projects that help young people develop 21st century skills. At Tier 3 of the service strategy, community engagement is elevated to a higher level, characterized by the creation of partnerships, the development of new businesses based on social needs recognized by youth, and the implementation of ongoing efforts toward positive social change.

Sources


Blum, R.W.; McNeely, C.A.; and Rinehart, P.M. (2002). Improving the odds: The Untapped power of schools to improve the health of teens. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Center for Adolescent Health and Development.

**Acknowledgments**

**Boys & Girls Clubs of America**

For more than 100 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, more than 4,100 Clubs serve nearly 4 million young people annually through Club membership and community outreach. Clubs are located in cities, towns, public housing and on Native lands throughout the country, and serve military families in BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide. They provide a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun, friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours. Learn more at [http://www.bgca.org/facebook](http://www.bgca.org/facebook) and [http://bgca.org/twitter](http://bgca.org/twitter).

**The Citi Foundation**

The Citi Foundation works to promote economic progress and improve the lives of people in low-income communities around the world. We invest in efforts that increase financial inclusion, catalyze job opportunities for youth, and reimagine approaches to building economically vibrant cities. The Citi Foundation’s "More than Philanthropy" approach leverages the enormous expertise of Citi and its people to fulfill our mission and drive thought leadership and innovation. For more information, visit [www.citifoundation.com](http://www.citifoundation.com)