

Chamber Member SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations to our March Member Spotlight-The Boys and Girls Club of Walker County. Michelle Spencer, Executive Director, shared how they are staying connected with the families they serve during the COVID-19 Pandemic. “On our front porch are activity packets by age groups, free books and parent information for families who were unable to make it to the distribution on Friday. We remind families on Facebook to use the #virtualBGCWC to show us how they are doing and share with us each day of the Social Media Challenge. We want to stay connected to our members and their families to give them, as much as we can, support at this point in time.”

Dr. William “Bill” Green, Board President shared the history of the program, “The after-school program began in January of 1999 at Gibbs Elementary and was open to all 3rd and 4th grade students with an average attendance of fifty students per day. From the beginning the program was structured to allow each student to participate in 3 activities each day: tutoring, enrichment activities and physical activities.”

“The program was expanded in 2000 to include Kindergarten through 4th grade serving 180 students each day. The 2001/2002 school year the program moved to Huntsville Intermediate School where approximately 120 students participated each day. In the fall of 2002 programming moved to Scott Johnson Elementary and was there until March of 2019.”

“Fall of 2002 the program expanded again to a before- and after-school program and began its affiliation with Boys & Girls Club of America. This after-school program became Boys & Girls Club of Walker County (BGCWC) and took on the mission to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. The affiliation allowed a full-blown Boys & Girls Club program to begin at Scott Johnson Elementary for the youth attending that school. Daily attendance between morning and afternoon programming was between 85-115 youth.”

“November 2006 the Club expanded once again to provide after-school programming at the City of Huntsville Martin Luther King Recreation Center to accommodate youth from the remaining 3 elementary, intermediate and middle schools. The program at the Rec. Center grew to serve 200 youth per day in a 5000 square foot building that had no classrooms. It was a tight fit but the Club staff provided outstanding youth programs.”

“March 18, 2019 Boys & Girls Club of Walker County combined the two existing sites into one traditional Clubhouse. The new facility is 15,000 square foot clubhouse to serve youth grades K-12th. Average daily attendance ranges between 225-275 with 479 registered members. The new Clubhouse has allowed the organization to expand/improve services in homework help and intensive tutoring, many areas of art including but not limited to ceramics, photography and dance, teen center, organized sports and more. The Boys & Girls Club also provides Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) programs. The AEL programs consist of High School Equivalency (GED) preparation, English as a Second Language and Civics classes for adults 16 and up. Also, through this program career exploration, employability skills and various employment certifications is offered. We are currently providing a Customer Service Certification.”

“We feel it is important to be a member of our local chamber because we knew it is a viable part of the community. We felt that this was the best connection for the community to know about our services.”

For more information please visit their website at <https://www.walkercountykids.org/> or on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/walkercountykids/>