

Assessing Academic Enrichment Programs at the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center

Chatham Anastasi & Danielle Mueller

Introduction and Literature Review

In the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center, there has recently been a movement towards improving the academics of club members and increasing collaboration between the local school district and the Club, making sure that club members are doing well in school is undoubtedly a significant priority; however, it must not be forgotten that the Boys and Girls Club is also meant to strengthen students in other ways as well. For example, the Boys and Girls Club of America has Six Core Goals which serve to frame the focus of clubs throughout the country. These goals include: a) cultural enrichment, b) social recreation, c) personal and educational development, d) health and physical education, e) citizenship and leadership development, and f) environmental education. Additionally, the national mission of the club is “to promote leadership, character, health, and career development of youth, while emphasizing their social, cultural, and educational growth” (Carruthers, Busser 2000). In order to achieve this mission, the Six Core Goals must be addressed. With this project, it was our goal to make sure that these six goals were being addressed effectively and that the programs are strong and of interest to the club members. The specific goals that we hoped to address included: 1) Finding out if the academic-enrichment programs implemented currently are addressing all six of the core goals, 2) Examining the extent to which the academic-enrichment programs are enriching the lives of club members, and 3) Ensuring that the academic-enrichment programs are personally interesting to club members. Our overall goal in this project was to identify the ways in which the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center can assess and expand its academic

enrichment programs in order to accomplish its overall mission and specifically address the six core goals of the national organization.

The Boys and Girls Club of America (BGCA) serves over 4.5 million youth at over 4,300 clubs nationwide. It is one of the oldest and leading community-based youth development organizations. These clubs aim to help youth reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsive citizens. Their mission is to provide a positive and safe place for youth, where they can be supervised and supported by caring adults while actively working on strengthening their academic, interpersonal, and personal skills (Fredricks, Hackett, and Bregman, 2010). In helping youth to reach their full potential, The Boys and Girls Club of America not only aims to create academic, intellectual citizens, but to create well-rounded citizens as well, with various experiences and perspectives to take with them into the world.

The Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center has the same overarching goals of the national organization; however, the goals must be tailored to fit the needs of the members at this specific club. The Geneva BGC Teen Center serves students ten to eighteen years of age and is currently in partnership with the Geneva City School District. This means that there is a heavy focus on the academic success of club members, which is appropriately a significant priority. The Teen Center leaders however, have not forgotten the additional aspects of the national club's mission. In addition to school success, the Teen Center also has a significant focus on academic enrichment activities and "ways to discover new abilities after the school day has ended" (Teen Center Programs, 2017). Current programs at the Geneva BGC Teen Center include focuses on Character and Leadership, Education and Careers, Health and Life Skills, the Arts, and Sports, Fitness, and Recreation.

According to Carruthers and Busser (2000), some clubs are struggling to to meet the national mission and goals, as stated previously. From data collected through participant

observations and in-depth semi-structured interviews, the authors found that there was an inconsistency between the stated goals and the programs being implemented. Across many of the sites examined, "...the staff and facility resources were unavailable to effectively address these program areas" and unfortunately, "most of the staff had difficulty identifying the six core areas".

Our project had multiple goals. First, we helped the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center staff develop a greater awareness regarding the extent to which the current academic enrichment programming is reflective of both the club-specific and national goals. Second, we provided specific suggestions for new programs that would address areas of need and opportunity. Third, we focused on ensuring that the programs being implemented are of genuine personal interest to the Teen Center club members, as it is important to keep participants engaged, challenged, and returning to the club. Fredricks, Hackett and Bregman (2010) found that as students got older, they wanted more and more variety and more of a challenge in their academic enrichment programming. One participant explained in an interview that, "...sometimes we do games for little kids, which older kids don't really like and I don't really like now because I am older now." It will be our mission in this project to ensure that the programs being offered to adolescents at the Teen Center will be of personal interest to the members and will be both challenging and age-appropriate.

Methodology

During the first few weeks of the semester our Master's of Arts in Education cohort visited the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center at Carter Road during two class periods to attend initial meetings with club leaders. Executive Director of the Geneva Boys and Girls Club, Chris Lavin, Assistant Executive Director of the Geneva Boys and Girls Club, Georgina Garcia,

and Geneva Boys and Girls Club board member and emeritus Hobart and William Smith Colleges faculty member, Pat McGuire were all in attendance at the meeting. During this time, the eight of us were able to gain a broad understanding of the current state of the club in addition to what areas of the club were in the most dire state of need. Chris began his talk by putting some things in perspective. He discussed the type of change he wants to see and the type of change that he sees to be possible, explaining that Geneva is similar to a big city in terms of diversity however because it is reasonable in size, it is “actionable”, meaning that positive change is possible. Additionally, Chris Lavin, who has been the club’s director for two years now, explained the state of the club upon his arrival; they were out of money and were struggling to make payroll in certain months. Chris also explained that, at the time, the club’s programs were only fair at best. In other words, the club was functioning but was arguably not enhancing the lives of the members to the extent possible. In order to address these issues, Chris and his team began to look for potential partnerships within the Geneva community and Hobart & William Smith Colleges was one of the first that emerged. This partnership has developed significantly over the past couple years and is now steady and reliable. A second partnership created since Chris took over is with the Geneva City School District. With the aid of the 21st Century Grant, a \$1.2M project, the club was able to use federal money to expand and improve its afterschool project-based learning. At the same time, they were able to access the anonymous academic records of their students. What they found there was disappointing as a large majority of these students were failing multiple classes and academic disengagement was clear. In order to begin making the changes that were needed to address this, Chris began to hire new staff members and refill some of the existing positions. He decided that he would rather have great quality programs serving fewer members really well, rather than mediocre programs serving a larger group of members poorly. In making this choice, Chris and his team

realized that they would need more money, more full-time staff, and more tutors from HWS. Chris also explained that in order to improve the program-quality, more of the club's resources would need to be utilized to their full capacity. He explained that he does feel like this is possible and that he and his team will continue striving for the best.

At the end of our meeting, Chris Lavin took us on a tour of the building. We were able to visit a variety of locations and learn about the resources available. This tour was an essential first step to what would become our service learning project on the academic enrichment programs at the club. While we looked at the resources and facilities already available at the club we learned what each area of the club was currently used for as well as what areas of the club has been better utilized in the past, but were no longer being accessed. The areas around the club that are specifically used for the academic enrichment programs include the teen lounge, the game room, the full-size gymnasium, a kitchen, the computer lab and 3-D printer, the art room and kiln, the garden out back, the black box theater, and the full recording studio. What we took away from this first meeting and tour in general was that the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center was not lacking in resources for supporting member development; what they were lacking was qualified staff who would remain at the club as well as the proper funding to attract qualified professionals that will want to stay for a number of years instead of a number of months.

Before we really began to get specific with our plans for our service project, Ken Fyfe, the Evaluation Coordinator for the 21st Century Learning Program, came to our class. Ken was of significant help in terms of making certain decisions that enabled us to get started with our project. During his presentation he warned us how common it is for people to get together and try to tackle a problem without truly understanding it in its entirety. He encouraged us to keep

asking the question “why?” in order to fully understand the issue or topic we were hoping to learn more about. Through understanding the whole process of the issue we can make recommendations that are that much more helpful and productive. Ken became an invaluable resource to us throughout the process of this project and provided us with productive feedback.

Next we formulated our driving question, researched and read relevant literature, created extensive “to-do” lists, and mapped the exact steps we needed to take in order to successfully achieve our goals and intentions for this service project. Initially we reached out to the Geneva Boys and Girls Teen Center staff by email. It was our hope to find a convenient date and time when we could come in to converse with both club staff and club members. The Physical Recreation Coordinator at the Teen Center, Terry Edwards, was the first staff member that we had a conversation with. About a week after our conversation with Terry, we were able to meet with the Executive Director of the Geneva Boys and Girls Club, Chris Lavin. In each of our conversations, our goal was to establish an understanding of the academic enrichment programs that are currently in place, the resources that the club may have but may not be using to their potential, and the hopes and aspirations that each of these individuals have for the future of the club and its programs.

Ultimately, our goal was to engage in conversations with some of the students at the club. After going back and forth with Chris, it was decided that we could join the Club members on a field trip to Buffalo Wild Wings in Auburn. This trip didn’t work out; however, we decided to move forward with our recommendations based on the conversations we had, the resources at the Club, our personal experiences and knowledge as future educators, and what we had learned through the research literature. It is our hope and intention going forward that the Boys and Girls Club Staff will be able to utilize the student focus group questions and student exit-surveys that we created in anticipation of being able to speak with the members in order to

get their necessary feedback on the current programs and possible implementation of future academic enrichment programs.

Findings

After observations of the current resources at the B&GC, reviewing the literature, and engaging in discussions with Executive Director Chris Lavin and Physical Recreation Coordinator Terry Edwards, we were able to identify common themes and suggest concrete recommendations. The two major themes that emerged included current academic enrichment programs and current challenges. Besides our feedback from Chris and Terry, we were also able to utilize research from one of our colleagues who was also studying the Teen Center. With this combination of findings, we were able to form analyses and ultimately create recommendations for the club.

Current Academic Enrichment Programs. Current academic enrichment programs at the B&G Club include use of the art room, the gym, the computer lab, the game room, and the Black Box Theatre.

Art Room. The director of the art room in the Teen Center is Elizabeth. The art room seems to appear more popular for the younger members at the teen center (middle school students). They work on a variety of art projects and learn how to create art through many types of media. There is a kiln in the art room that allows for the possibility of creating pottery.

Gym/ Athletics. Terry Edwards is the Physical Recreation Coordinator at the Teen Center. He works hard to make sure that the members of the club stay active in ways that are both structured and organized. The fifth and sixth graders stay separate from the seventh through twelfth graders for the athletic programs. Everyday the members vote on what kind of game or sport in which they would like to engage. The game with the most votes is the one that is played for that day. Once a game has been voted for once during a week, it is removed from

the voting options for the remainder of that week so that each week brings a variety of sports and active programs. In the past, the Boys and Girls Club has even created a version of “March Madness” at the club with awards for the winning teams. This keeps the kids intrigued and promotes a friendly form of competition. Sometimes the members from the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center play athletic teams from other after-school programs such as Hillside Children's Services. They have traveled to other cities like Rochester, to engage in this friendly competition.

Computer Lab/ Video Games in Lounge. After the computers in the computer lab have been used for homework, members can use them for leisure time, such as playing computer games. In the student lounge, there is a gaming system and a television for members to play on as well.

Game Room. The game room is a big open space at the entrance to the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center. There are a couple pool tables that are available for the members to use.

Movies in Black Box Theater. Although the black box theater is not always used as a theater, it is the perfect place to gather a large group of students if there is a presentation to be given and a movie to screen.

Current Challenges

Two of the most substantial challenges currently being faced by the Club regarding the nature and focus of the academic enrichment programs include a lack of staffing and personnel and the appropriate utilization of resources.

A lack of staffing and personnel. Chris Lavin described the lack of staffing at the GBC Teen Center as the “single greatest challenge.” He explained that it is difficult to keep staff on

board as providing high enough salaries for retention is unrealistic at this time when so much else needs to be provided for financially. This is an issue for multiple reasons. First, not having enough staff means that the adult:child ratio is not managed effectively. With a larger amount of children, there must be a greater number of staff members in order for the proper level of guidance and care to be administered. Second, with staff members leaving after just a few months, it is difficult for club members to develop lasting bonds with their club leaders. Similarly, even if they do build bonds, those relationships are broken when that staff member decides to move on from the club. Being able to retain staff would make a significant difference as stronger, more meaningful relationships would likely be created and the attendance and retention of club members may arguably rise as well because of this.

Utilization of resources. Another challenge Chris mentioned was that the facilities have the ability to offer so much to young people in the community, however, a great deal of the club's resources are not currently being used to their full potential. He went on to explain that this is actually in connection to the lack of staff. It is difficult to fully utilize some of the more complex resources, such as the recording room, if there are not properly educated/certified staff members to help use those resources correctly. In regards to the recording room, there was, at one time, a staff member at the club who knew how to use this space and who helped students record and make CDs that they could take home. The kids loved this and they were very sad to see this staff member go. Since he left, the recording studio has sadly remained inactive. Similarly, the Teen Center facility has a 3D printer and up until last year, there was a staff member at the Teen Center who was able to teach club members how to use it. According to Sports Coordinator Terry Edwards, this was a "fan favorite" at the club as young people were able to see their drawings become something tangible right in front of their eyes. Unfortunately however, this staff member left the club and the 3D printer has not been used since. So along

with maintaining a steady personnel, there is also the issue of having staff who are properly trained to use (and teach members how to use) the club's more significant resources.

Interview with Chris Lavin

Director Chris Lavin had many ideas about how to combat the club's two largest challenges. He first described his ideas regarding potential future programs and then explained some of the new improvements that had recently taken place at the club. Finally, he discussed the idea of having an Academic Coordinator who would organize the various collaborations with Hobart & William Smith Colleges.

Potential Future Programs. As the relatively new director of the Geneva BGC, Chris Lavin had already begun to think about some potential programs for the future. First, he explained that he is hoping for the addition of an agriculture program which could be done in partnership with Cornell's Agricultural faculty, staff, and students. Ideally, with the creation of this program, students would learn how to work hands-on, grow food, make products, and learn skills from the business perspective as well such as keeping the books, marketing, and managing money. A second program Chris is hoping to develop is a culinary program. The Teen Center facility has a full kitchen, and is even anticipating renovations in the near future. Chris would love for local chefs to come in and teach cooking classes to club members as he mentioned that there has been a lot of expressed interest in cooking among the Teen Center's current members. This potential program could allow for countless opportunities and collaborations with the larger Geneva community as food could be donated, sold in fundraisers, or used in community meals.

Recent Improvements. In the past couple years, since Chris has taken over, some new improvements have already been made. He explained that when he arrived at the Teen Center

just two years ago, it was essentially just “an after-school play place” lacking structure and any significant focus on the academic success of the club members. He explained that the club appeared to be a fun place for kids to go hang out with friends and unwind after school but when he eventually checked their academic reports, he knew a change had to be made. Since he has been in charge, the academic focus of the club has grown substantially. In doing this, Chris created a mandatory Power Hour (before him it was not mandatory) in which club members are mandated do schoolwork for 1 hour upon arrival at the Teen Center, with the help and support of tutors. Although he explained that this has unfortunately turned some of the older club members away, he reported that it has drastically improved the overall grades of the club members. When asked about this loss and gain, Chris explained that while it is sad to lose older members, he would feel that he and the club had failed their members if they had provided a place for them to go hang out but had not allowed (or helped) them to graduate from high school.

In addition to this change, Chris explained that “the single biggest improvement this year” was increasing the amount of time members have with tutors from 1 hour to 2 hours. When asked about the benefits of this expansion, Chris explained that there are several. First, because a longer time is being spent together, the relationships between members and tutors are growing significantly stronger, which arguably increases attendance of members as well as retention. Also, because the time devoted to academics is now doubled, more work is being done, more subjects are being covered, and more questions are being asked. Students overall, are delving deeper into their studies than ever before. Finally, the tutors feel more connected to the club and feel that they hold a more significant position, as they are spending more time there, so their dedication, and consequently their desire to stay on board, has arguably increased as well.

Academic Facilitator/Coordinator. Ideally Chris would like to see the Club hire and Academic Facilitator/Coordinator in the near future. This person would coordinate and organize the various roles of Hobart and William Smith students within the Teen Center. For example, Chris mentioned that he would be open to hiring HWS students that are qualified to work with specific resources to come teach students how to use them properly. For example, Computer Science and Art students could work with the 3D printer and Music students could work with the recording studio. This would further enrich the bonds between tutors and members and would be a successful way to ensure proper utilization of the club's current available resources.

Interview with Terry Edwards.

In addition to speaking with Director Chris Lavin, we also spoke with Physical Recreation Coordinator Terry Edwards who, having worked at the club for seven years, had a lot of insight about where the club has been and where it seems to be going. He first explained that there has been an academic gain but an attendance loss with the stricter implementation of Power Hour and then he explained that the club needs more staff, as we had also heard from Chris.

Academic Gain, Attendance Loss. Terry spoke enthusiastically about how the academic enrichment programs are extremely necessary to capture and maintain the interest of members at the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center, especially the interest of the older members who are in the high school years of ninth to twelfth grade. Since the introduction of the academic "Power Hour" there seems to have been a noticeable decrease in the amount of high schoolers present at the Teen Center. The main aspect of the club that was attractive to the older cohort of members was their access to a variety of programs and activities that were focused on something other than their school work. Finding the ideal balance between the two type of activities and programming is a difficult feat as both are important; however, grades and

performance in school is prioritized. Terry also emphasized how the academic enrichment programs are taking a backseat to the academic-focused “Power Hour”. When students arrive at the club after the school day is over, they cannot engage in any of the academic enrichment programs until their homework is completely finished and they have completed at least an hour of academics in total. As mentioned above, each aspect is undoubtedly important, however academics has recently taken the spotlight as the first priority of the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center.

Lack of Staff. When asked what he saw as the Teen Center’s greatest challenge, Terry emphasized that the academic enrichment programs could really use, and would benefit from an increase in staff as well as time. Time is not really a viable change, since there are other programs that use the space in the evenings. Finding more staff, and more permanent staff, is something that would allow the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center to be able to support and sustain a greater variety of academic enrichment programs. Additionally, hiring staff who are qualified to work with the more intricate resources, such as the 3D printer and the recording studio, is crucial if the club wants to be able to utilize all of its facilities to their full potential.

Analysis and Recommendations

After analyzing our findings from observations of the club’s resources, our discussions with Terry Edwards and Chris Lavin, and reviewing relevant literature, we developed several recommendations for the Teen Center. These recommendations fall into two main categories. The first is those programs stemming from the club’s collaboration with Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and the second is focused on the collaboration with the Geneva community/local community members. In terms of the collaboration with HWS, we would like to

forward two different ideas. The first is a group of internships based on each department corresponding with the club's resources. For example, a Theatre intern teaching in the Black Box Theatre and a Computer Science intern teaching with the 3D printer. These internships could be filled as needed and would add skilled staff to the club allowing for the full usage of resources. The second idea regarding the HWS collaboration would be implementing a Readers' College course at the colleges which specifically focuses on the Teen Center. A Readers' College is a half-credit course which has the potential for a service learning component. This could be taught yearly or every semester. This would add staff to the club and could address a new challenge each time it is taught. The community collaboration would continue to address the need for well-qualified staff as the Geneva community is home to many skilled people who are passionate about their work and sharing those passions with others.

Recommendations Regarding Staff and Personnel

HWS Internships. In order to get more staff on board and to utilize all available resources/facilities at the Teen Center, one potential initiative would be to create a series of HWS Internships. This would entail first finding an advisor (professor in respective field) for each internship who would be in charge of hiring new interns, mentoring them, and assessing their work. Internships would include: Dance, Theatre, Computer Science, Art, Environmental Studies, and Music. There would be 1-2 interns per field and the positions would be refilled as needed. Responsibilities for each intern would include: creating lessons to teach at the Teen Center 1-2 times per week, teaching these lessons, and being a resource for club members if they have questions in regards to those lessons. This would not only add more staff and ensure that all resources at the club are being used to their full potential, it would also create an

opportunity for staff-member relationships as HWS interns would be a part of the staff for an extended period of time (if possible, until they graduate from the colleges).

HWS Readers' College. An additional recommendation involving HWS would be to create a Reader's College course specifically focused on the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center. A Reader's College is a half-credit course that can include a service learning component. The first step to creating this would be finding a professor to teach it. This professor would need to have a solid working relationship with the Teen Center leaders and would most likely need a background in Education or Child Development. Once the course is created, students enrolled would work both in the club, and in the classroom, addressing the current status of the club, assessing potential room for change, and coming up with ways to implement that change. Their professor would serve as a guide, a mentor, and a trusted partner to the Teen Center throughout this process. This course could be offered once every semester, or once each year and could focus on a new avenue of change each time.

Community Involvement. A final recommendation for the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center would be to recruit community members who are willing to contribute to club programming. This would not only bring more staff members into the club, but would also serve as a way to ensure that all available resources in the facility are being used to their full potential. Similar to the HWS Internships, bringing qualified community members from each "field" into the club would be a resourceful way to teach club members how to use each resource. The first step in creating such a program would be to identify a Community Involvement Advisor. This advisor could then work to recruit and/or interview community members to assess their qualifications, their ability to teach their skills effectively, and their ability to work with young people. Once these individuals were identified, they could begin to create lessons, working together with the Teen Center staff to ensure that their plans match up with the ability level, the

age level, and the interests of the club members. Community members could come in 1-2 times per week and may need to teach the same lesson twice so that half of the club members could attend one lesson and the other half could attend the second lesson in order to keep numbers manageable.

Program Recommendations

Once there are a sufficient number of qualified people on board, ensuring that all resources are being used will become a much more realistic endeavor. The following list of programs would be taught by both HWS interns and community members and some may even be co-taught.

Dance Program. A dance program at the Teen Center could take advantage of several existing resources and opportunities. First, the Black Box Theatre is well suited for dance classes both in terms of the nature of the space and the floor. Second, the St. Peter's Community Arts Academy currently offers dance classes at the Teen Center on Tuesday evenings. While B&G Club members attend tap and other classes, there is a significant opportunity for HWS dance majors and local volunteers to offer culturally relevant and appropriate classes targeted towards students at the Teen Center. Dance opportunities can be offered to students who are at all levels of acquiring dance skills. Some classes can focus specifically on stretching practices and beginning technique, while other classes might help members advance their current knowledge of dance with more moderate to advanced techniques. If we could secure a dance teacher who was able to teach B&G Club members weekly, we could perhaps use the space to put on dance recitals for families and community members to attend. Members from the teen center could also display their skills and even teach younger members of the B&G Club at the Goodman Street location.

Theatre Program. Utilizing the same space as the dance program, a theatre program would be ideal in order to get the most out of the Teen Center's Black Box Theatre. This space, while working perfectly for dance, could also serve as a great space for acting classes or the development of performances. At HWS, the theatre program is constantly growing. In the past two years alone, a Theatre major has been established and a brand new, state-of-the-art Performing Arts Center has been built bringing more and more theatre students and theatre artists to campus. HWS's theatre-for-social-change troupe, MOSAIC NY, is always looking for new places to hold performances and with them, spark important dialogue about relevant issues on a local-community level, a national level, or on an international level. According to members of the company, these actors would definitely be interested in performing at the Teen Center during the school-year.

Between the talented Mosaic NY and the large number of theatre majors at the Colleges, the opportunities for staffing/teaching theatre are endless. Not to mention the fact that a great deal of theatre majors are also involved in the college's Teacher Education Program, making them skilled leaders both on stage, and in a classroom setting. The program leaders would first need to begin by teaching basic fundamentals such as how to effectively use facial expressions, body language, and voice. They could then shift the focus to techniques, teaching various genres of theatre and using the teachings of various theatre revolutionaries. Once fundamentals and techniques are learned, the classes might begin focusing on short skits. These could be assigned or could be chosen by the club members themselves if they have a preference. For example, if they are reading/studying a specific play at school in their ELA class, perhaps they want to stage a few scenes from it to connect to it on a personal level. Or, maybe they would like to work with a topic that is of personal relevance to their lives or to their community. Skits could be performed for parents, families, and even Club members at the Goodman St. location

depending on if the material is appropriate. This would give students a great deal of confidence as well as a real sense of agency. Participants would have something to work for, to show off, and most importantly, something to be proud of.

Computer Science/3D Printing Program. In an age where technology impacts the way we live our lives each and every day, it is important for members of the Teen Center to acquire the necessary computer skills that they will need to be successful. This is especially important as students advance into the later years of middle school, high school, higher education, and the workplace. The Teen Center already has two major resources already available that will help to support this type of initiative, a computer lab and 3-D printer are already in place. Additional opportunities such as website design, program development, typing classes, and software skills (Microsoft Office, Google Drive, Photoshop, etc.) would be wonderful additions. The Teen Center would need to make sure the proper software is available and downloaded onto the computers. In addition, there would need to be trained staff who could be secured to run these types of programs on the computer as well as work with the kids on 3-D printing. Computer Science majors from Hobart and Williams Smith Colleges could be great coordinators for such a program. It may even be possible for their involvement and time teaching at the Boys and Girls Club Teen Center to be implemented within the context of a service learning course. The ability to use technology efficiently and confidently is an invaluable skill in today's world.

Art Program. Although the art room at the Teen Center is already in use, its resources could certainly be expanded. By implementing a more robust art program, members of the Club would learn various artistic skills and would be challenged to try to new things. Two of the underused resources in the art room at the Teen Center are the pottery wheels and kiln. With these, students have the opportunity to create tangible and useful items that they can give as gifts, keep for themselves, or donate to those in need. Some other potential arts that have the

same uses include knitting, crocheting, making jewelry, and painting. Each one of these skills is useful and could work in a philanthropic way, encouraging members to use their creativity to help others, or as a way of fundraising, helping to raise money for the club, schools, or special interests. One major outcome of an art program could be murals created by members either in the community or in the local schools. These murals would be something students would be proud of, they would be a way for these young people to leave a legacy in Geneva, and they would be a way to make the community even better! Subjects of the murals could be voted on and could stress images of social change, of environmentally-friendly living, or of something specific to Geneva/the Finger Lakes. There are many local artists in Geneva who could help with this and the talented visual art and architecture students at HWS have also expressed that they would be more than willing to work with the Teen Center members to create something for the community as well. This is something that has the potential to include the entire community and to make a huge, lasting impact on our city.

Environmental Studies Program. Being conscious about the natural world and the environment is an integral aspect of the “environmental education” core goal of the Boys and Girls Club National Organization. Currently, the Teen Center has a garden out back that members can take care of during the warmer months of the year. Additionally, the Teen Center itself sits next to a large field that could possibly be transformed into land suited for planting and harvesting crops. Additionally, there is plenty of space for environmental educators to come in and teach students about gardening and caring for different fruits, vegetables, and plants. At the same time, members could also learn how to properly compost food scraps, soil, vegetation, leaves, manure, etc. to create fertile soil to then be used on their plants. Food scraps from the kitchen (and the potential culinary program) could be a great asset to learning what kinds of foods and which parts of certain foods can be used in compost. In the future, the Boys and Girls

Club Teen Center might want to partner with the Geneva School District and be in charge of composting all food scraps from the local schools. Jacob Fox, Hobart class of 2016, currently works for the company Organix Green Industries in Seneca Castle, New York. He could be a great point of contact for getting a composting program off the ground as his company specifically takes food waste, paper products, and other compostable materials from local residents and businesses in order to convert it into organic soil and fertilizers.

In addition to composting, the Teen Center members could be taught about the importance of recycling and how to recycle properly. Members could take what they know and what they have learned from the environmental program and advertise environmentally-friendly practices to implement each and every day around the Geneva community, the school districts, and even the Goodman Street site. Ultimately, Teen Center members could become the voices for a “going green” lifestyle and encourage those around the community to make small lifestyle changes to their daily routines that make all the difference such as conserving water, electricity, and reducing their share of plastic and overall disposable products. The environmental program could tie in nicely with the life skills/ home economics programs. Chris Lavin has already expressed his interest in teaming up with Cornell’s Agricultural faculty, staff, and students in order to implement a hands-on agricultural program for the members of the Teen Center. Once members learn how to grow and care for produce, they can also learn the skills from the business side of things gaining perspective and experience with book keeping, marketing, advertising, and managing money.

Music/Recording Studio. The opportunity to express oneself through music is something of which many adolescents would likely take advantage. A well-equipped recording studio is already in place at the Teen Center making the possibility to have a strong music program, a very real opportunity. In the past, the Teen Center had community members helping out in the

recording studio. In recent times, however, we have had to move on from the Boys and Girls Club due to other opportunities that came along. At Hobart and William Smith Colleges there is a strong music department that undoubtedly has incredibly passionate students that would most likely love to take some time to share their passion with others.

Music majors, minors, or enthusiasts could get involved at the club through many avenues such as service learning courses, a possible internship, or a reader's college course. Their time at the club could be spent giving music lessons (vocals or instruments) to members, creating a choir, band, or orchestra if interest is present from the members, and perhaps putting on local performances for community events such as Geneva Night Out, local events and fundraisers, and even performing for/ teaching Goodman Street members basics of music and performing. The skills needed to utilize the recording studio to its greatest potential will need to come from someone who has been trained as to make sure the equipment is used properly by a professional. However, once a partner has been found to operate the recording studio, recording opportunities for the kids, both individually, as well as in groups or bands can be reintroduced to the club. Furthermore, opportunities to possibly produce CDs or albums of sorts can also be made a possibility for those members who are interested in pursuing music more seriously.

Culinary Program. The Teen Center facility already has a full kitchen that is used each evening to prepare dinner for the members. This being said, the fact that a large kitchen space is already available and in use at the Teen Center opens doors for many more possible uses. Chris Lavin has spoken of his interest in starting a culinary program at the teen center. Essentially, his vision involves a collaboration between the Teen Center and local chefs and restaurants from the Geneva area. We have already reached out to individuals who work for both Beef & Brew as well as FLX Table who could be possible partners in this potential

program. Once some local chefs are board it would be our hopes that they could come in once a week to teach cooking classes to the members at the Teen Center. In addition to learning these culinary skills and safety procedures in the kitchen there is also an opportunity to give back to the Geneva community by making and donating food to organizations who could pass the food along to those who truly need it such as homeless shelters and churches. A culinary program would be a wonderful way to simultaneously support members of the Teen Center as they become develop more independence, while creating a great way to give back to the community when possible.

Health & Fitness Program. Adolescents, arguably more than any other age group, need to be taught how to make sure they are practicing safe and healthy living and that they are taking care of themselves, even when it may seem difficult to do so. Creating a Health & Fitness program at the Teen Center would benefit not only its members, but the entire community as a whole. Healthy teens make for a healthier community. Student athletes at the colleges are no strangers to healthy living and balancing that with sports and schoolwork is something they have learned how to do, therefore, these students might be the perfect teachers/leaders for this program. Topics that could be taught in these classes include diet and nutrition, workout programs, mental health care such as stress reduction, skin care practices, hygiene, staying away from drugs, and practicing safe sex. As teenagers, it is often difficult to learn some of these things from older, potentially-distant health teachers at school. It would arguably be more beneficial to these teenagers to hear it from other young people, like students at the colleges, who have been in their shoes not too long ago and who will have real insight and tips for staying healthy. A final product from these classes could be the creation of posters and presentation on healthy living. These could be presented for parents, families, and most importantly, for the

children at Goodman St. who will then have the opportunity to get a head start on learning about healthy living.

Life Skills/ Home Economics. It may seem old-fashioned to teach Home Economics but realistically, the skills taught in these courses are truly essential for teenagers to learn as they will soon be moving away from home. Skills that could be taught in this program at the Teen Center include managing money, such as writing checks, saving up, and budgeting. These skills are crucial and are not always taught by parents, especially when parents are too busy doing these things themselves. Teaching them at the Teen Center would lighten the load for parents and would help create competent teens prepared to enter “the real world.” Other skills taught in this program could include home-keeping skills such as doing laundry, ironing, sewing, and cooking (which will also be taught in the culinary program). These skills will also help these teenagers be, and maybe more importantly, *feel*, like they could be ready to move away from home when the time comes as they will begin to feel less reliant on their parents/guardians. Finally, this program could teach skills needed for applying for jobs and colleges alike such as creating a resume, learning how to interview successfully, learning people-skills, and learning how to make appointments, create and stick to a schedule, and manage time. While all of these skills are clearly essential for success, it is often assumed that students will pick them up on their own, learning from friends or from watching parents and relatives. The truth of the matter is however, that many students are not learning these skills, and those that are could always use the extra practice. As one of the main goals of the Geneva Boys and Girls Club (and the national club) is creating teenagers who are ready to graduate high school and “enter the real world”, teaching these skills at the Teen Center makes perfect sense, and would be helping the club achieve its mission.

Conclusion

After a semester of collaborating with the Geneva Boys and Girls Club Teen Center, we feel confident that its future is bright. With its incredible resources and significant opportunities for collaboration, the potential for growth is extensive. Using our experiences from the Hobart and William Smith Teacher Education Program, our knowledge as future educators, the Hobart and William Smith Education Department, supportive community members, and passionate Teen Center staff members, we were able to create an exhaustive list of sustainable and practical academic enrichment programs that have real potential for future implementation. We have no doubt that the skilled and dedicated Teen Center staff, along with its greater Geneva and Hobart & William Smith Colleges partnerships, will be able to bring many these ideas into reality in order to further the success of this incredible program and its promising members.

Bibliography

Boys & Girls Club of Geneva Teen Center Programs. (2017). Retrieved from

<https://bgcgeneva.org/teen-center/programs/>.

Carruthers, C. P., & Busser, J. A. (2000). A qualitative outcome study of boys and girls club program leaders, club members, and parents. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 18*(1), 50-67.

Fredricks, J. A., Hackett, K., & Bregman, A. (2010). Participation in boys and girls clubs: Motivation and stage environment fit. *Journal of Community Psychology, 38*(3), 369-385.

Appendix A
Student Focus Group Questions

- What is your favorite program at the Teen Center? Why?
- Have your interests changed since you started at the club? Why or why not?
- If you could change one thing about the current programs what would you want to change?
- Imagine that the B&G Club was able to create a _____ program.
 - How would you feel about that kind of program?
 - What would you want to do?

Appendix B
Academic Enrichment Program Survey

- Rank the following present academic enrichment programs from 1-5, 1 being your favorite activity, 5 being your least favorite activity. Add comments if you would like.
 - Art Room
 - Gym
 - Computer Lab/ Video Games in Lounge
 - Game Room
 - Movies in the Black Box Theater
- Rank the following revised/proposed academic enrichment programs from 1-5, 1 being your top choice, 5 being your least favorite choices. Add comments if you would like.
 - 3-D Printing
 - Recording Studio
 - Acting in the Black Box Theater
 - Cooking Classes
 - Dance Classes
 - Pottery
 - Environmental Projects
 - Robotics/ Invention Studio