

Out-of-School Time Stories

21st Century Community Learning Center Spotlight: The Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier



The Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier is a cornerstone of youth development in northeast Georgia, providing critical support to families via 23 club locations. With the help of 21st Century Community Learning Center (21st CCLC) funding, the only federal funding stream dedicated to afterschool and summer learning programs, Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier has built robust afterschool and summer programming that provides academic support and helps youth reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens.

The 21st CCLC-funded afterschool program serves over 500 students, with an estimated 85% coming from single-parent households and an estimated 90% of families qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch. The Club provides critical support for working parents by ensuring their children have safe and supportive environments, that all homework is completed, and every child receives a snack before they go home.



Youth Served (21cclc):
500+



Ages Served:
K-12th Grade

Counties Served:
Forsyth, Habersham, Hall

Programming Offered:
Afterschool and Summer

Website:
<https://www.boysgirlsclubs.com>





Academic Acceleration

At the heart of the club's academic support lies a robust, data-driven approach, made possible through longstanding partnerships with local school districts: Gainesville City, Forsyth County, Habersham County, and Hall County Schools. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier receives real-time academic updates on students' reading and math levels, milestone scores, report cards, and behavioral reports that inform individualized tutoring plans for each student. **Certified teachers, funded via 21st CCLC, use this data to tailor instruction and provide targeted support in reading and math.** "We're able to be innovative and address deficiencies that the school day may not have time to cover," said CEO Steve Mickens. This dynamic alignment between school day and afterschool educators ensures that academic interventions are precisely tailored, bridging gaps in foundational skills and empowering students to reach their full potential.

During the summer months, the club offers an eight-week summer camp that provides opportunities for weekly educational field trips to museums, aquariums, and cultural landmarks, blending education with real-world experiences. Certified teachers and specialized instructors guide each group, ensuring both academic support and opportunities for character development.

Improved in English/Language Arts:

79.5%



Improved in Math:

77.5%

Improved in Attendance and Behavior:

88.9%

Improved in Health/Wellness and Physical Activity:

100%

*Percentage of participating 21cccl youth

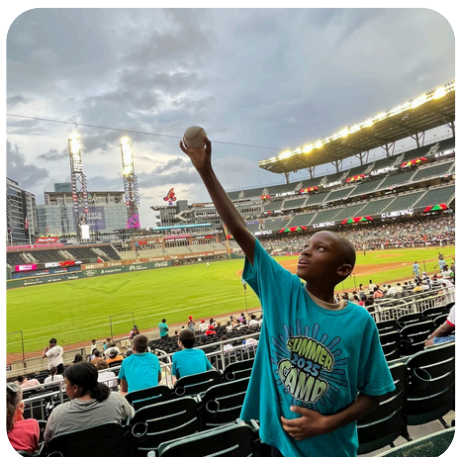


Supporting the Whole Child

Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier's reach extends far beyond academics — students engage in hands-on activities like kayaking, mountain biking, chess, piano, and even archery, expanding their horizons and discovering new talents. 21st CCLC funds allow youth to participate in these and many more enrichment activities that their families could not otherwise afford.



These programs give our kids a world-class club experience.



This whole-child approach is central to Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier's mission. The program emphasizes character development, healthy lifestyles, and workforce readiness. Students engage in community service, leadership training, and evidence-based programs like SMART Moves, which teaches conflict resolution and decision-making.

Transportation, often a significant barrier for working families, is fully covered by 21st CCLC funding. Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier provides daily transportation to and from the club, ensuring access for all students regardless of their family's circumstances or location. "That was a game-changer," Mickens noted. "It allowed us to serve more kids and ease the burden on parents."



Demonstrated History of Success

The impact of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier is demonstrated by their 100% high school graduation rate and absence of teen pregnancies since 2006. Students pursue higher education, enlist in the military, or enter the workforce, all while making positive contributions to their communities and the local economy. “That’s the return on investment,” Mickens emphasized. **“They’re earning livable wages, paying taxes, and buying homes in the same communities that supported them.”**

Many young people who have participated in the Boys & Girls Clubs programs grow into inspiring examples of full-circle community investment. Several graduates have come back to work for the organization in full-time roles, becoming mentors and role models for the next generation. Their journeys attest to the lasting impact of the club—youth who once benefited from guidance and opportunity now invest their skills and passion into helping new members thrive. **By tutoring, volunteering, or simply staying connected, they embody the program’s vision: building resilient, empowered citizens who strengthen their communities, pay it forward, and inspire those who follow in their footsteps.**

