



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF LAWRENCE

# CLUB NEWS

Winter 2025

## NATASHA BALLOU MAKES HISTORY AS OUR FIRST FEMALE BOARD PRESIDENT!

From Club member to Board President, Natasha Ballou's story embodies the transformative power of the Boys & Girls Club. Her journey began at age 10 when she first walked through our doors looking for a safe place after school. Today, she makes history as our first female Board President, bringing her remarkable leadership experience and deep passion for our mission to this vital role.

"The Club gave me the opportunity to try different things and discover who I could become," Natasha shares. "Now, I want to help our younger members find their own path to success."

As a Club member, Natasha embraced every opportunity—from sports to community service and active participation in the Keystone Club. These early experiences shaped her future and fueled a lifelong commitment to our mission.

Her professional journey is equally inspiring. After earning her economics and finance degree from UMass Amherst and a master's degree from Harvard University, Natasha has built an exceptional career in financial services. Today she serves as an Executive Director within the Commercial & Investment Bank at JP Morgan Chase, where she oversees the North America Client Operations and Onboarding team within Investment Middle Office Services. Her leadership abilities have earned her numerous accolades, including induction into the 2017 BGCL Alumni Hall of Fame and recognition as a 2024 Women's Bond Club Rising Star representing JP Morgan Chase Commercial and Investment Bank.

As Board President, Natasha brings both professional excellence and personal understanding to her role. Her story demonstrates what's possible when we invest in young people and give them the tools to succeed. We're excited to write this new chapter in our Club's history with Natasha at the helm.



## MESSAGE FROM MARKUS

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we turn the page on 2024, we are grateful for the incredible year we have shared at the BGCL. This past year has been one of growth, achievement, and resilience. Together, we expanded opportunities for our youth, deepened our partnerships, and continued to provide a safe, supportive environment where kids can thrive.

From launching innovative programs to the remarkable academic progress of our members, 2024 showcased the strength of our mission: empowering youth to reach their full potential. We celebrated countless successes, from inspiring stories of individual triumphs to the collective energy of events like our Hall of Fame Induction and Christmas Party. These moments remind us why our work is so important.

As we step into 2025, we are committed to building on our successes by enhancing programs, increasing accessibility, and ensuring every child has the tools to succeed. This year, we aim to strengthen partnerships, amplify youth voices, and invest in resources that support the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of our members.

Through the unwavering support of our staff, volunteers, families, Board of Directors, and donors, our mission comes to life. Thank you for being part of this journey and believing in what we can achieve together. Here's to a new year of promise, opportunity, and greater impact for the youth of Lawrence. Together, let us make 2025 a year to remember.

With gratitude,  
Markus Fischer, Executive Director



## 'TWAS A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A JOYFUL NIGHT!

Ho, ho, ho—it was a merry holiday indeed at our 2024 Christmas Party! This year's event brought smiles to over 600 kids, thanks to the incredible generosity and support of our community. It was a joyous evening filled with the true spirit of the season.

Tuscan Brands set the stage by providing a delicious Christmas dinner, creating a festive atmosphere for everyone to enjoy. Adding to the holiday magic were more than 1,000 gifts—ranging from toys to gift cards—donated by organizations and individuals such as Bank of New England, St. John's Prep, Royal Jewelers, Central Catholic, Team Zingales, South Church, and the Thomas Burkardt family, to name a few. These thoughtful presents made sure every child felt seen, valued, and celebrated.

This special night wouldn't have been possible without the help of over 100 volunteers, including board members, community supporters, alumni, and donors. These wonderful individuals served meals, handed out presents, and spread holiday cheer throughout the evening.

We are deeply grateful for everyone who contributed to making this celebration such a memorable experience for all. Your kindness brought joy and hope to so many children and families and serves as a shining example of what we can achieve together. We look forward to continuing this tradition and building on this remarkable community spirit for many years to come!

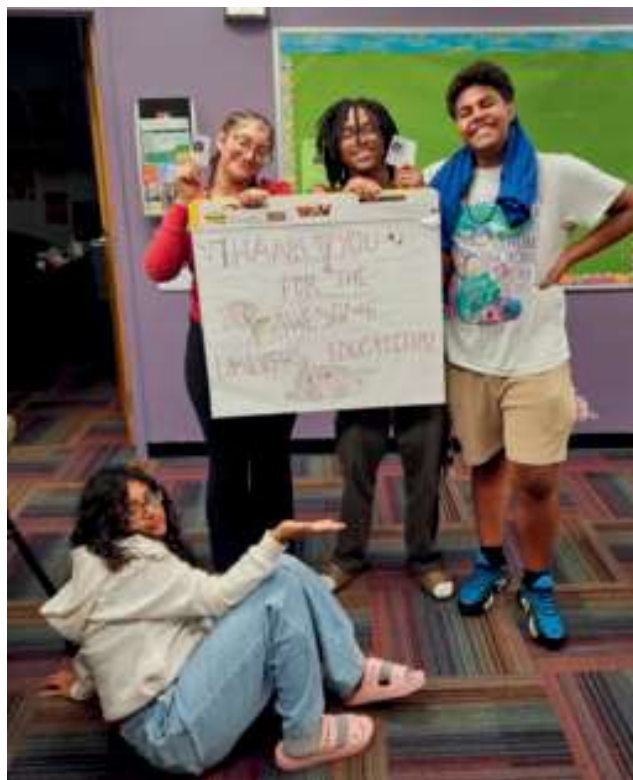
## DRIVING TOWARD SUCCESS

The Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence is thrilled to provide its members with a unique and invaluable opportunity through its Driver's Education program, in partnership with Merrimack Valley Auto School.

This program helps teens earn their driver's license by funding the full \$700 discounted cost, which includes driver's education classes, on-road lessons, the driving exam, as well as the car and sponsor used for the test. Members are required to pay a \$100 deposit, which is refunded when they successfully obtain their license. If a member doesn't pass the exam on the first attempt, the program will cover the \$125 fee for a single retake.

There are currently 65 members in the process of completing the program, with more than half already successfully earning their licenses. This initiative empowers young people to take the steering wheel of their lives, providing them with greater independence and access to opportunities like employment and community involvement. With many teens in the Lawrence community facing barriers to getting licensed, this program fills a critical need.

This life-changing effort has proven to be a great success, with more teens eager to take this important step toward independence. Join us in supporting every member of the Boys & Girls Club as they strive for success and create a future rich with possibilities and hope.





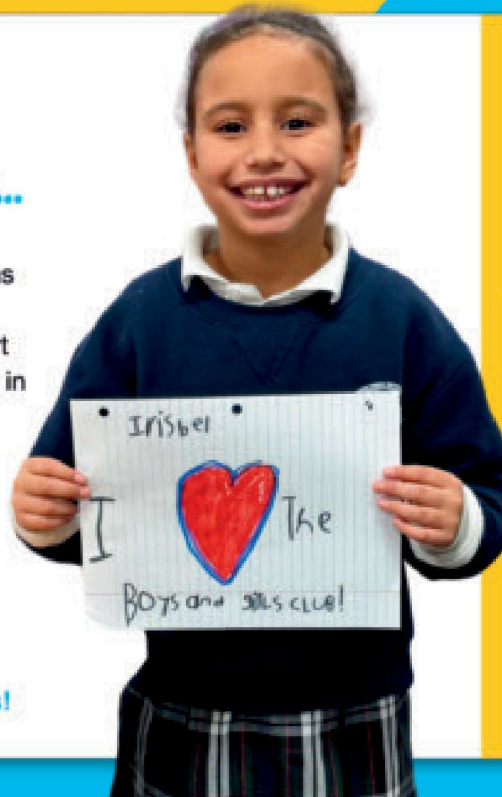


## My goal this year at the Boys and Girls Club is to...

As we dive into a new year, let's celebrate the dreams and determination of young minds like Irisbel's! Her goals remind us that every child deserves the support and opportunities to achieve their full potential—both in the classroom and beyond.

Your donation can make these aspirations a reality. From providing academic resources to supporting extracurricular activities like swim team, your generosity helps our children make waves for the future.

**Donate Today and Help Irisbel Achieve Her Goals!**



get first  
place in  
swim  
team and  
to get  
good  
grades  
-  
Irisbel, 7  
”

## RUNNING FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE: THE 2025 BOSTON MARATHON

The 2025 Boston Marathon isn't just a race; it's a celebration of community, perseverance, and purpose. The Boys & Girls Club of Lawrence is honored to be one of the 174 organizations selected for the Official Charity Program, where runners pledge to raise funds for causes that strengthen and support their communities.

This year, three dedicated runners—Hugo Compere, Simon Gitau, and Kyle Helfrich—will represent the Club on Marathon Monday, each with a personal connection to the mission of empowering and helping local youth thrive.

Hugo Compere grew up in an underserved community and deeply values the transformative opportunities the Club offers. “The Boys & Girls Club is a pillar in the communities it serves,” he says. “I am delighted to run again this year to support the Club.”

Simon Gitau, a seasoned marathoner, is excited to dedicate his Boston Marathon journey to the Club. Similar to his past races that supported important causes, he believes this fundraising effort will have a meaningful impact on the local youth served by the BGCL.

Kyle Helfrich, a North Andover native with strong Lawrence ties, sees the Club as essential in offering a safe, enriching space for underprivileged youth, making this race especially meaningful to him.

Funds raised will help the Club continue its work, providing children with the resources they need to grow and succeed. Let's cheer on Hugo, Simon, and Kyle as they hit the pavement on April 21. Together, we can cross the finish line for a stronger, healthier community!



*Scan here to  
donate and  
learn more  
about this  
campaign and  
our runners!*





136 Water Street  
Lawrence, MA 01841

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
LAWRENCE, MA  
PERMIT #360

978.683.2747

[www.lawrencebgc.com](http://www.lawrencebgc.com)

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

CAREER FAIR: 3/5

AUCTION: 4/5

GOLF TOURNAMENT : 6/16

SUMMER PB FUNFEST: 6/26



For questions or comments, contact Sarah Hogue, Director of Development  
at 978-683-2747, x128 or at [shogue@lawrencebgc.com](mailto:shogue@lawrencebgc.com).