



Behind The Blue Door

Late Summer Edition, 2025



TAKING A LOOK BEHIND THE BLUE DOOR

Welcome! We're so excited to bring you the very first edition of our quarterly newsletter - a special peek into the heart of Boys & Girls Club of Meriden and what makes this Club home for so many individuals. Each quarter, Behind the Blue Door will give you an inside look at the incredible moments, inspiring youth, and meaningful impact happening every day. From success stories, to kid highlights, to upcoming events, we can't wait to share what makes our Club so special.

Whether you're a current Club Kid or parent, Alumni, Meriden resident, staff, or just curious about what's all the hubbub at the Club, join us as we take a look behind the blue door—where we do whatever it takes to build great futures.

WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BLUE DOOR?

The significance of the blue door lies in what it represents: The blue door represents the gateway to a better future for youth. It's a metaphor for the welcoming, safe, and supportive environment that Boys & Girls Clubs provide — a place where young people can discover their potential, build confidence, and gain the tools they need to succeed. Behind the blue door is where challenges are met with support, and dreams are nurtured into goals.



MERIDEN NEEDS
CLUB KIDS
NEED YOU

What you'll find
behind the blue door

Club Reflections
& Updates

Cuno Camp &
Camp BGC

Learning Center

Message from
the Executive
Director

Upcoming
Events





CUNO CAMP TURNS UP THE HEAT FOR SUMMER FUN

Cuno Camp offers a safe, fun, and engaging summer where kids build friendships, explore new activities, and grow through themed weeks, creative play, and outdoor adventures—all in a welcoming environment that keeps kids excited to come back each day.

BEST. SUMMER. EVER.

This summer at Cuno Camp, kids enjoyed weekly themes like Olympics and Carnival Week, learned new skills through art activities, cooled off during daily swim time, tie-dyed shirts, explored nature, built leadership in group challenges, made s'mores, and took part in archery, air rifle, and woodcrafts. From bounce houses and dunk tanks to field games and talent shows, every week was packed with fun, learning, and unforgettable memories.



KOVA' ROSE H. 5

SCHOOL:
Mayberry School

MY SUPERPOWER WOULD BE:
Going through doors and walls without opening them

THE BEST ICE CREAM MIX IS:
Vanilla & Chocolate together, like a twist

A NEW WORLD RULE SHOULD BE:
Taking care of the plants

WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT BCGM:
The pool!



LEILIANA C. 9

SCHOOL:
Israel Putnam

MY SUPERPOWER WOULD BE:
To be super fast!

THE BEST ICE CREAM MIX IS:
Cookies & Cream with cookie dough

A NEW WORLD RULE SHOULD BE:
If you don't have something nice to say, don't say it.

WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT BCGM:
Getting to see my friends, doing arts and crafts, field trips, olympic week, and the counselors!



CAMP BGC BEATS THE HEAT WHILE MAKING MEMORIES

COOLEST. SUMMER. EVER.

What an incredible summer it's been! We've shared laughs, adventures, and special memories with new friends, returning campers, and even some who've been with Camp BGC for six years! From themed weeks like Under the Sea and Spirit Week to splashing at Osgood Park and leaping through Fun City's trampolines and ball pits—we've conquered fears, celebrated victories, and built friendships we'll carry with us long after summer ends.

As our summer camp season comes to an end, I'm grateful for your trust and support. It's been a joy spending the summer with your children—watching them grow, explore, and create lasting memories with friends. From themed weeks to daily laughter echoing through our indoor camp, you've made this summer a success. On behalf of the entire Camp BGC team, thank you for being part of our family!

LEARNING CENTER CORNER

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF MERIDEN LEARNING CENTER

These past few months at BGC Learning Center have been a whirlwind of excitement and growth. In June, we celebrated our Preschoolers' graduation, which marked the second graduation of a Preschool class at the Learning Center! Seeing our youth flourish is the driving factor behind the success of our staff, and we know that learning does not just happen inside the classroom, it can happen everywhere! Over the summer, our preschoolers visited Valentin Karate in Meriden and Veterans Memorial Park Splash Pad in Middletown. Back in the classroom, our kiddos are learning English, Spanish and American Sign Language through fun, age-appropriate activities. Preschoolers have also been working on their fine motor skills in our outdoor learning space! The upcoming theme for our classroom is Under The Sea / Beach!

OPEN ENROLLMENT!

SET YOUR CHILD UP FOR SUCCESS

The Boys & Girls Club of Meriden Learning Center Difference
Centered in Social-Emotional Learning · Outdoor Playspace · Indoor Gym Available · AM & PM Snack Provided · Enriching Field Trips · Hands-On Experiences · Dramatic & Sensory Play · Language & Literacy Education · Focus on Parent Involvement

We are currently accepting applications for the upcoming school year. Call to tour & enroll today!

EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT: A new curriculum is launching in September, designed to create a rich learning environment for every child.

REFLECTIONS FROM BEHIND THE BLUE DOOR

BRAND NEW PLAYGROUND

From June 19th - 21st, our incredible community joined us to build a playground for the 1,200 youth who walk through our doors annually. Without the support and determination of every single one of our volunteers and partners, this would have never been accomplished. Thank you to EVERYONE who helped build this playground - from shoveling mulch and digging holes, to mixing concrete and raking stone, all across 3 parcels of land which were purchased from the City of Meriden.



A very special thank you to the following community partners: La Rosa Construction Co., The L. Suzio York Hill Companies, Meriden Lions Club, Fosdick Fulfillment, KABOOM!, Dalio Philanthropies, Superior Rental, A to Z Rental, Taino Smokehouse Prime, Jersey Mike's Subs, Hubbard Park Pizza of Meriden, Meriden Parks & Recreation Department, and Carabetta

LEARNING CENTER GRADUATION 2025



We are so proud to celebrate a special milestone in June — the graduation of our amazing preschoolers! This moment marks the end of a beautiful chapter and the beginning of an exciting new journey. Congratulations, Graduates!

YOUTH OF THE YEAR 2025

Congratulations to Briar R. for being awarded the 2025 Boys & Girls Club of Meriden's Youth of the Year, in recognition of their demonstrated leadership, service, and academic excellence. They were also granted the Thaddeus Sobieski Youth of the Year Scholarship. Way to go, Briar!



NEW PRESIDENT: BOARD OF DIRECTORS



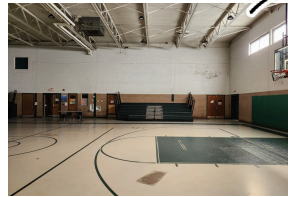
We are excited to welcome Jennifer Denne into her new role as President of the Boys & Girls Club of Meriden's Board of Directors. When asked why she accepted this position, she said: "It is my hope to continue to create a safe space for our local youth and young adults. I grew up in Meriden and have many wonderful memories

of camp at the [Boys & Girls] Club. I'd like to help ensure our local youth can say the same in the future. The Club is expanding its opportunities and making some wonderful improvements under Larue's leadership. I look forward to all that is instore for the future of the Boys and Girls Club of Meriden." Thank you Jennifer for your commitment to, and leadership towards, the mission of ensuring all youth realize their full potential. We're excited for this journey.

UPPER GYM RENOVATION HAS BEGUN



From 1955 to today, our gym has been a cornerstone for countless games, practices, and memories — and now it's getting a major glow-up! Keep your eyes peeled... Grand reveal to come early Fall 2025.



FIRST ANNUAL SCIENCE FAIR

The Afterschool Enrichment Program hosted its very first science fair in May, where kids performed a myriad of fun experiments such as clouds in a jar, lava lamps, volcanoes, hydraulic claws, slime, models of the solar system, and more!



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BGC Family:

Over the past six years, our organization has experienced a period of exciting transformation and growth and I'm proud to say thanks to your continued support, we are stronger and more impactful than ever before.

When I reflect on where we were just a few short years ago and where we are today, the progress is undeniable. We've made significant improvements across our Club to ensure our young people are welcomed into a safe and warm environment every day.

In the six year's I've had the pleasure of leading the Club. Our after-school program has grown from 60 to 180 students. This growth reflects the trust families place in us and our ongoing commitment to providing a safe, supportive, and fun space for learning.

One of our most exciting recent additions is the acquisition of three parcels of land adjacent to our property. What was once unused and overgrown has been transformed into a beautiful outdoor play area, giving our members much needed space to run and play. As we plan for the next 3-5 years, our vision is clear. We want to renovate the remaining portion of our facility...

...originally built in 1955. This space has served our community well for decades, but it's time to bring it up to modern standards.

The progress we've made is a direct reflection of the Club's partnership with the board of directors. As we turn the page to a new chapter, we extend our deepest gratitude to Patrick Ferry for his outstanding leadership and dedication during his tenure as President. Under Patrick's guidance, the Club achieved meaningful growth laying the foundation for a brighter future.

We welcome Jennifer Denne as our new President. Jennifer brings a wealth of experience, passion, and vision to the role. I am excited to work with Jennifer building on our success and exploring new opportunities in the future.

With deepest regards,

Larue A. Graham, Jr.
Executive Director / CEO



LOOKING AHEAD AT THE UPCOMING SEASON

AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM
ENROLLMENT IS OFFICIALLY OPEN!



AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

September 2, 2025 - May 22, 2026

Monday - Friday
School Dismissal - 6:45PM

Empowering youth between the ages of 5-18

WE FOCUS ON THE THINGS THAT MATTER

- ✔ Homework Assistance
- ✔ STEM Enrichment
- ✔ Sports & Recreation
- ✔ Arts
- ✔ Character & Leadership Programs
- ✔ Health & Life Skills
- ✔ Education & Career Development
- ✔ Family Engagement Events

Snack & dinner provided daily

\$55 PER WEEK

+ Annual Membership Fee: \$75

Transportation available for \$25/wk; call for availability
Financial aid is available for those who qualify.
All accounts must be up to date prior to registration

LEARN MORE
& REGISTER TODAY!

www.bgcmeriden.org/afterschool
(203) 235-8185

Or scan the QR code



GREAT FUTURES START HERE.

35TH ANNUAL ALUMNI GOLF TOURNAMENT
COME GOLF WITH US FOR GREAT FUTURES!



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF MERIDEN
THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL
ALUMNI GOLF TOURNAMENT
FUNDRAISER
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2025

**GOLFING FOR GREATER FUTURES.
FORE!**

Hunter Golf Club | 688 Westfield Rd., Meriden
Taino Smokehouse Prime | 1388 E. Main St., Meriden

THE EVENT

- 7:30AM** REGISTRATION & HOT BREAKFAST
- 9:00AM** SHOTGUN START!
- 2:00PM** RECEPTION LUNCH AT TAINO SMOKEHOUSE PRIME, INCLUDING LUNCH, RAFFLES, AUCTIONS, AND NETWORKING

THE PRICE

- \$165** INDIVIDUAL GOLFER
- \$660** FOURSOME
- \$65** RECEPTION
- \$100+** SPONSORSHIPS

VISIT THE WEBSITE OR CONTACT JAIME GIANINI FOR SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

THE REGISTRATION

ONLINE WWW.BGCMERIDEN.ORG/GOLF
EMAIL JGIANINI@BGCMERIDEN.ORG
OR SCAN THE QR CODE

BY PHONE (203) 235-8185 EXT. 3
ASK FOR JAIME GIANINI

BY MAIL 15 LINCOLN STREET, MERIDEN CT. 06451
MAKE CHECK OUT TO:
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF MERIDEN

THE IMPACT OF ONE GOLFER ON ONE MERIDEN CHILD

- 1** ANNUAL BGC MEMBERSHIP
- 3** WEEKS OF AFTERSCHOOL ENRICHMENT
- 7** DAYS OF ART & OPEN PLAY
- 8** DAYS OF SPORTS & RECREATION
- 15** HOT DINNERS & NUTRITIOUS SNACKS
- 15** DAYS OF STEM ENRICHMENT
- 15** DAYS OF HOMEWORK ASSISTANCE



GREAT FUTURES START HERE.

BASKETBALL FOR YOUTH
CHECK OUT THE NEW STARTERS DIVISION!

BASKETBALL FALL YOUTH CLINIC

SEPTEMBER 2 - OCTOBER 30
TUESDAYS & THURSDAYS
GRADES 1-4: 6:15PM - 7:15PM
GRADES 5-8: 7:15PM - 8:15PM

ANDREW DIDOMENICO STARTERS DIVISION INSTRUCTIONAL LEAGUE



BASKETBALL STARTERS DIVISION

SEPTEMBER 8 - NOVEMBER 12
COED FOR KINDERGARTEN & 1ST GRADERS
MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS

LEARN MORE
& REGISTER TODAY!
www.bgcmeriden.org/bball
(203) 235-8185
Or scan the QR code



\$75 / PLAYER

+ Annual Membership Fee: \$75

Winter Youth Basketball Leagues will begin November 2025
Evaluations for Winter Youth Basketball Leagues are as follows:
Nov. 3 Don Maletto: 6:00PM-8:30PM - Tex Burt: 8:30PM-7:00PM
JV McGoldrick: 7:00PM-7:30PM - Varsity McGoldrick: 7:30PM-8:00PM
Nov. 4 Cuno: 6:15PM-6:45PM

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.

2025 SILVER CITY WINE TASTING & BREWFEST
JOIN US FOR AN EXCITING FUNDRAISER!



Presented By Rotary of Meriden



2025 Partner Organization BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF MERIDEN

2025 SILVER CITY WINE TASTING AND BREWFEST

FRIDAY
OCTOBER 10

5:30PM - 8:00PM
MOUNTAIN MIST OUTDOOR CENTER
576 High Hill Road Meriden, CT. 06450

Reserve your tickets now at
<http://silvercitywinetastingandbrewfest.ludus.com>

Sample tons of local brews, wines, and more!
Featuring light fare from local restaurants
Music by Remove Before Flight & Scarpati Sings

For any questions or more information, please contact Yvonne Fontanez
at yndfontanez@gmail.com



TICKETS

\$35 in advance | \$40 at door

Must be 21 or older to attend