

September Kingdom Opportunity: Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford has developed a lasting relationship with the Asylum Hill Congregational Church, receiving funding and volunteer assistance from the Church.

*The Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford (BGCH), the founding organization of the National Boys & Girls Clubs movement, began in 1860 when four local women opened their homes to disadvantaged boys and the Dashaway Club was formed. Mary and Alice Goodwin, Elizabeth Hammersley, and Louisa Bushnell, formed the Club to serve the boys in the community, as a response to Father David Hawley's call to action. To remedy the negative environment on the streets, these female reformers created an alternative to the over-crowded slum environment in which the boys lived. **What started in Hartford has grown into the largest youth serving organization in the world.** Over a century and a half later, BGCH continues to be in the forefront of youth development, working with young people from disadvantaged economic, social and family circumstances, while establishing innovative partnerships throughout the community. BGCH opened its doors to girls in 1986, which now comprise nearly half of the organization's Club membership.*

Today Boys & Girls Clubs across America annually serve over 4 million young people, through membership and community outreach, in 5,000+ Clubs throughout the country and BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide. For 164 years, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hartford has strived to fulfill its mission of enabling all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Our organization serves over 7,000 youth through membership and community outreach, helping them grow into healthy, productive, successful young people prepared to achieve great futures.

BGCH's mission and programming strongly aligns with many of Asylum Hill Congregational Church's core values. *Our youth face huge challenges every day. Each day when the bell rings, thousands of Hartford's children and teens leave school with no safe place to go. BGCH is a positive place for kids, a place they can turn to for support, guidance, and care. Our staff is here to help them make the right decisions by focusing on developing their academic success, self-esteem, building positive social skills, and strengthening their leadership skills. BGCH works to help youth of all backgrounds develop the qualities needed to become responsible citizens and leaders. All programs are designed to drive positive outcomes for youth and reinforce necessary life skills.*