

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thursday, May 7, 2020

Pam Iorio Biography	2
Steve Salem Biography	3
Wintley Augustus Phipps Biography	4
Wintley Augustus Phipps Testimony	5-9
Jim Clark Biography	10-11
Jim Clark Testimony	12-15

Pam Iorio

President and Chief Executive Officer



Pam Iorio is the President/CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the country's oldest and most effective mentoring organization. Iorio has led the organization since March 31, 2014.

BBBSA is reinvigorated as it continues to be the nation's gold standard in mentoring. In 2017, the National Board of Director's adopted a five-year strategic plan focused on building needed infrastructure for the 240 BBBS agencies across the country. In 2018, BBBS unveiled a rebranding, modernizing their look and message. In 2019 BBBSA transformed their technology to a national state-of-the-art system that tracks each mentoring match and outcomes.

Iorio, the former two-term Mayor of Tampa, Florida, (2003 – 2011) successfully led the 54th largest city in the United States, leaving office in 2011 with an 87 percent approval rating. Elected in 2003, Iorio's tenure was noted for: a revitalized downtown, including the construction of the Curtis Hixon Waterfront Park and major segments of the Riverwalk; an unprecedented reduction in crime; a massive investment in infrastructure; redevelopment throughout the city; a commitment to the arts; and fiscal soundness, with financial reserves tripling even during a recession. In 2011 she received The University of Tampa's Center for Ethics, Tampa Bay Ethics Award.

First elected to public office at age 26, Iorio was the youngest person ever to win a seat on the Board of County Commissioners for Hillsborough County, Florida. In 1992 she was elected for the first of three terms as the county's Supervisor of Elections. In 1999 she served as the president of the State Association of Supervisors of Elections, where she served as spokesperson for the organization during the highly publicized 2000 presidential election in Florida. In 2002 she was awarded Leadership Florida's Distinguished Alumnus Award for her statewide efforts on election reform.

In 2012, after three decades in public life, Iorio authored a leadership book, "*Straightforward, Ways to Live and Lead*," and helped organizations build strong and effective leaders. She also served as the Leader-in-Residence at the John H. Sykes College of Business at the University of Tampa. In 2012, Iorio was asked to serve as the interim CEO of The Children's Board of Hillsborough County after the agency went through significant leadership challenges. She served in that capacity until July 2013, setting the agency on a positive course.

Iorio graduated from The American University in Washington, D.C. with a B.S. degree in Political Science and holds a master's degree in History from the University of South Florida.

Steve Salem

President & Chief Executive Officer, Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation



Steve Salem joined the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation (CRSF) as its President and CEO in March of 2006. In this capacity, Steve has helped to build the CRSF into a truly impactful national organization. He has overseen the development of a significant national Board of Directors; the growth of the organization staff infrastructure; the creation of a broad program direction, including the development of the CRSF National Youth Development Park Initiative; and the creation of a sustainable, comprehensive resource development plan.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Steve served as Vice President of Government Relations for Boys & Girls Clubs of America, where he helped to raise more than \$500 Million for local Clubs serving our country's most at-risk communities. In addition, he has worked closely with leading youth advocates to help pass critical child safety legislation including, the Adam Walsh Child Safety and Protection Act of 2006, and the National Amber Alert program in 2003.

In his volunteer capacity, Steve serves on the Board of Trustees at the Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Research in Mystic, CT, and on the Board of Directors at the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, based in Alexandria, VA.

Steve and his wife Gregg have twin sons, Alex and Jake, and reside in Gaithersburg, MD.

Wintley Augustus Phipps

Founder, U.S. Dream Academy



Wintley Augustus Phipps is Founder, CEO, and President of the U.S. Dream Academy, an innovative national after-school program that provides mentoring and tutoring to children of incarcerated parents and children falling behind in school. www.usdreamacademy.org Founded in 1998, this organization has grown from one center in Washington, DC to seven (7) cities (San Bernardino, Houston, Salt Lake City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Orlando, and DC) across this nation and has served nearly 10,000 young people living in high-risk neighborhoods. The mission is to inspire and transform the lives of children of incarcerated parents and vulnerable young people through high-performance relationships with caring adults. The weekday program offers skill-building, character-building and dream-building activities in a safe after-school environment utilizing both one-to-one mentoring as well as state of the art technology to deliver on-line academic enrichment.

Wintley Phipps is a world-renowned vocal artist—Grammy Award nominee in 1988 and 1989, pastor, motivational speaker, and education activist. For more than thirty-five years, he has traveled the world delivering messages of hope, advocacy, and equality. On behalf of the U.S. Dream Academy and young people, he has spoken to varied audiences in the thousands throughout Europe, Australia, Asia, Africa, North and South America. He has performed on *Saturday Night Live* and been the special guest on the Emmy award-winning series *Super Soul Sunday* on the Oprah Winfrey Network. He is the author of **The Power of a Dream** (1996) and **Your Best Destiny** (2015). Phipps has attracted an entire new generation of fans as his performance of *Amazing Grace* has received over twenty million cumulative viewers on YouTube.

Born in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, Phipps moved to Montreal at an early age and then studied at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama, where he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in theology. He went on to earn a Master of Divinity degree from Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Phipps has three sons with his wife Linda Diane Galloway Phipps and currently serves as the senior pastor of the Palm Bay Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Palm Bay, Florida.

TESTIMONY FOR
THE JUVENILE JUSTICE AND YOUTH CRIME HEARING:
MENTORSHIP OF JUVENILES

MAY 7, 2020

Mentoring Youth to Prevent Delinquency and Reduce Violent Crime

WINTLEY A. PHIPPS
U.S. Dream Academy, Founder/CEO/President
wphipps@usdreamacademy.org



Introduction: It is my honor to join this august group of youth development charities, serving some of the most vulnerable youth populations in America. Because of the influence of my friend Chuck Colson, I was inspired to make my life's work helping Children of Incarcerated Parents and Children with Multiple Risk Factors, find paths to brighter futures. I feel privileged, to say, that decades since our meeting, I continue carrying on Chuck's legacy and the work he began in 1976, one year after his release from prison. His words continue to motivate and guide me in my work. Chuck once said: After three decades of prison ministry, I can tell you that resentment and bitterness are the rule, not the exception among prisoners and a resentful population can easily be radicalized. He also said the best way to keep a man from acting on his resentment, is to free him of it. Our work has shown that Mentoring, Tutoring, Character building and visions of success, free children of bitterness and resentment and place them on paths to achievement and success. Two important principles have inspired me and guided me. The first; every 10,000 children we keep out of the Juvenile Justice system, saves our nation 1.5 billion dollars annually and adds even more to this nation's economy, community, and productivity. The second, as Frederick Douglas once said, "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."

Overview of Key Message

For the past 21 years, the Dream Academy has been mentoring, equipping, and tutoring youth to prevent delinquency and reduce violent crime. The results have been remarkable. In 2009, the Dream Academy led a violence-reduction strategy initiative backed by DOJ. In Ward 6 in DC, DOJ used the Dream Academy to sub-grant \$900,000 to 14 other grantees who led violence reduction strategies in a defined community. The final report showed, according to the local police precinct, a 33% reduction in violent crime during the time of our active engagement. I have included the final comprehensive report that illustrates the impact the strategy led by the Dream Academy had in one year. It was clear that our work eased the burden on law enforcement and with support and funding, I believe we can build on the efficacy and success shown in the work we have done.

Over the years we have learned that children and youth exposed to violence (as victims, witnesses, or offenders) are impacted in several negative ways which may have a lasting impact on both the individuals involved and the communities in which they reside and for Law Enforcement in these communities. Research has found that a complex combination of individual, relationship, community, and societal factors contribute to the risk of youth violence (CDC, 2016). As both the impact and the source of youth violence is broad, the solutions to address them must be equally multifaceted to reduce violence, the burgeoning burden on law enforcement and re-establish a relationship of trust between law enforcement in communities hardest hit by violent crime and drug addiction.

In communities with a high sense of safety, residents and law enforcement often work collaboratively to reduce crime as they share an ultimate end goal - to preserve their thriving community. A thriving community's foundation is built on safety. I founded the US Dream Academy over 21 years ago, and I am humbled to say we helped lead the way in shining a light; on innocent young people - hardest hit by the impact of violence, crime and incarceration in our country, the children of men and women who were incarcerated.

Statistics have shown that this population of young people may be more predisposed to distrust law enforcement because of the very up close and personal ways they have encountered the police in their communities – perhaps by witnessing the arrest of a parent in their home, or seeing their parent brought into a courtroom handcuffed with guns nearby. These images conjure up fear and distrust and must be combatted with character building, caring mentors, and new opportunities for growth and support. We discovered that our young people exposed to multiple risk factors were seeking the same kind of relationships with law enforcement that many others seek – one of trust and support. When we, as a community, provide the right preventative tools, supports and structure in the life of a young person, this improves their physical and emotional well-being and reduces contact with Law Enforcement.

Statement of the Problem

It is estimated that nine million young people are growing up in under-resourced environments without the support of mentors (Bruce & Bridgeland, 2014). Risk factors for these youth vary, but are often defined by economic adversity, peer difficulties, family stress, academic challenges, problem behavior and mental health concerns (Herrera, Dubois & Grossman, 2013). It is estimated that more than five million youth under 18 have had at least one parent in prison at one time or another, leading to an “adverse childhood experience . . . distinguished by the unique combination of trauma, shame and stigma (Hairston, 2007). Developmental disruptions in children have also been linked to trauma associated with a parent’s arrest (Johnson & Easterling, 2012), while having an incarcerated parent was associated with a 10% increase in risk of antisocial behavior (Jarjoura, 2016). One meta-analysis of 40 studies on COIP found that antisocial behaviors were present more consistently than any other factors, including mental health issues and drug use (Martin, 2017). While more studies are needed to determine the exact cause, data also shows that COIP are significantly more likely to be suspended or expelled from school, and to drop out of school at higher rates than children of non-incarcerated parents (Aaron & Dallaire, 2010). Additionally, children can be negatively impacted by the incarceration of any adult member of the household, not just a parent (Nicholas & Loper, 2012), and the impact of family disruption may last beyond the period of parental incarceration (Murray, Farrington & Sekol, 2012). These factors combined can increase a child’s risk factors for future incarceration. (Dallaire, 2007; Martin, 2017).

Recommendation: Mentoring In-person, Cloud (Virtual) and Blended

The Dream Academy proposes an innovative virtual mentoring strategy to increase mentor participation and extend our evidence-based mentoring model to serve thousands more vulnerable youth in highly-disadvantaged neighborhoods to reduce incidences of juvenile crime, substance abuse and bullying, increase academic success, protective factors and career development opportunities, thus reducing the burden of law enforcement in high risk communities. Supporting an *AIM for Your Dreams initiative: Access, Inspiration and Mentoring for Youth* through a multi-year project can save lives, reclaim bright futures and lighten the load of Law Enforcement.

The scope of challenges that COIP face, as well as their peers in the same under-resourced schools and neighborhoods, is formidable. Formal mentoring has been an effective strategy to mitigate challenges facing these youth and contributes to observable improvements in behavior, relationships, and emotional well-being (Rhodes, 2008; Jarjoura, 2016). Mentored youth appear to gain improvements in peer and parent relationships and school performance, while also engaging in substance and alcohol use at lower levels (Raposa et al, 2019). Studies have found mentoring effective for preventing psychosocial problems like delinquent behavior (DuBois & Karcher, 2013). Youth with elevated individual or environmental risk appeared to benefit more from mentoring than those without such risks (Tolan et al, 2014). Even small to moderate improvements in youth function can have an important influence on positive youth development, especially during key periods of development (Tanner-Smith et al, 2018).

Dream addresses the problems of vulnerable youth through trauma-informed programming and mentoring specifically tailored to disrupt the negative impact of multiple risk factors and increase resilience and perseverance. Dream's approach is rooted in the evidence based Developmental Relationship Framework (DRF) developed by the Search Institute built on the principles of the evidence-based 40 Developmental Assets. The DRF focuses on identifying and strengthening the internal and external Developmental Assets youth need to thrive and reach their fullest potential. Dream trains all staff and mentors to ensure each interaction with a child is characterized by the five developmental elements that make relationships transformative in young people's lives: Express Care, Challenge Growth, Provide Support, Share Power, and Expand Possibilities. Our findings, through a study with American Institute of Research (AIR), was that young people greatly benefitted from experiencing a Developmental Relationship with their mentors. AIR noted improvement in perseverance and decrease in behaviors such as violence, substance abuse or property offense.

The COVID-19 crisis and the sudden closure of schools in March 2020 forced Dream to accelerate a virtual mentoring and afterschool program delivery strategy to maintain vital relationships with our DreamKids, DreamTeens and Parents/Caregivers. During school closures, we utilized free platforms such as Zoom and Google Hangouts to support video conferencing mentor sessions.

In today's world, fighting a global pandemic and social distancing will require youth organizations to radically shift their delivery models to ensure those most vulnerable will still have access to mentoring and other wrap around services to support positive youth development. Constantly evolving technology along with visionary ways to use it, will rapidly position virtual mentoring as a viable, scalable option. However, there is limited research on virtual mentoring in high risk populations. What studies are available are promising and we seek to quickly add valuable research to the field of virtual mentoring to accelerate its most effective use and answer critical research questions. We seek to use technology to remove barriers to high-quality mentoring that existed pre-pandemic and face the new, yet unknown challenges that may exist post-pandemic.

One review of the virtual mentoring model found that it can reduce barriers associated with in-person meetings, address the issues of limited mentor availability, and allow greater flexibility in choosing a mentor that meet the needs of a mentee (e.g., choosing a mentor from a certain

profession) (Ibid.). Virtual mentoring can be particularly helpful to youth who lack resources to meet their mentor in person. Furthermore, today's youth are familiar with web-based communication, and the high penetration of cell phones and popularity of social media suggest that virtual mentoring is not only feasible but may be preferred for many youths. Just like in-person mentoring, how virtual mentoring is implemented matters. Clear guidelines to govern mentor-mentee communication and set realistic expectations, and structure to facilitate activities and support mentoring relationships are needed for successful implementation of virtual mentoring (Kaufman, 2017). MENTOR recently updated its *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* (EPPM) to provide additional recommendations for virtual mentoring (Garringer et al, 2019), and Dream has ensured that our practices remain in alignment with EPPM, as our Recruitment, Screening, Training, Matching, Initiating and Support Standards in particular are directly influenced by many new Recommendations.

Twins—Deborah/Zion (mentee) and Tanesha (mentor)

In Philadelphia, two young people had a father incarcerated. After waiting for a year, Deborah and her twin brother Zion entered the Dream Academy at eight (8) years old. One of the twins—Deborah, underperformed academically and had to repeat 2nd grade. The following year, Deborah was matched with Tanesha, an Engineer who signed up to mentor at the Dream Academy. Once the connection was made, mom, mentor and the Dream Academy worked together to expose Deborah and Zion to new opportunities that opened up a world of possibilities for their future. Deborah is today an honor roll student on the road to college already paved with several college acceptance letters. Zion received a full scholarship to attend the University of Pittsburgh for Baseball and competed in an international tournament observed by Major League Baseball scouts. This is one of many stories of the powerful impact of mentoring! It made every difference for twins—Deborah and Zion.

Organizational Profile

The U. S Dream Academy (Dream), founded in 1998, aims to connect young people living with multiple risk factors, especially children of incarcerated parents, to high quality, structured mentoring relationships and a daily afterschool program to build skills, character and dreams to help increase positive life outcomes. Currently, Dream operates seven Learning Centers in partnership with Title I public schools in Baltimore, MD, Houston, TX, Orlando, FL, Philadelphia, PA (with proposed expansion to neighboring Chester Community Charter Schools), Salt Lake City, UT, San Bernardino, CA, and Washington D.C., in neighborhoods with documented patterns of high poverty, high arrest rates, and low academic achievement among residents. We have served nearly 10,000 young people and their families, the large majority African American (75%) and Latinos (22%). For the past three years, our Orlando DreamTeens have boasted a 92% on-time high school graduation rate.

Jim Clark

President and Chief Executive Officer of Boys & Girls Clubs of America



Jim Clark is President and Chief Executive Officer of Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), the nation's largest facility-based youth development organization with a primary focus on creating great futures for young people who need Clubs most. In this role, Mr. Clark leads a 111-year old network of 4,300 Boys & Girls Clubs that serve 4 million young people annually in all 50 states and on U.S. military installations across the globe.

Since joining BGCA in 2012, Mr. Clark has spearheaded a major restructuring of the national organization and guided BGCA through the launch of an exciting new strategic direction, the Great Futures Impact Plan. Through this plan, Clubs are increasing their impact on the young people they serve by focusing on three priority outcome areas – Academic Success, Good Character and Citizenship, and Healthy Lifestyles. The next evolution of this plan, the Great Futures 2025 strategic plan, will be launched in 2018, providing an even greater focus on building organizational capacity, further improving program quality and consistency, positioning BGCA as the leading advocate for youth in the United States, and growing the Boys & Girls Club Movement.

By introducing innovative programming that supports these outcome areas, such as state-of-the-art STEM initiatives and programs to combat summer learning loss, BGCA is increasing its impact on youth across the country. As a result of this work, Boys & Girls Clubs served 438,000 youth each day in 2015 – an increase of nearly 16% since he joined the organization – while the Boys & Girls Club Movement reached an all-time record with cumulative revenues of more than \$1.805 billion. Additionally, BGCA emphasizes its service to Clubs and the youth they serve in the critical areas of child protection and safety, executive and board development, increasing high school graduation rates, and combatting childhood obesity. For these and other efforts, BGCA has been ranked the #1 youth serving organization by *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* for 22 consecutive years.

Mr. Clark began his career at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in 1979, where he served in several senior leadership roles in distribution, sales, marketing, and customer service operations. He led new business development, mergers and acquisitions, and process improvement initiatives, and ultimately served as Senior Vice President of the news outlet until 2004.

During his career in the publishing industry, Mr. Clark was an active board member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee, one of the largest and most successful local BGCA affiliates. In 2004, he became President and CEO of the organization, where he led eight consecutive years of revenue growth and added 17 new service locations during his tenure. Through the development of a dynamic growth and impact agenda focused on literacy, high school graduation, and college preparation, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee significantly increased average daily attendance and more than doubled its staff under his leadership. Additionally, as a result of the organization's work and proven outcomes in literacy, Mr. Clark secured a \$4.1 million "Investing in Innovation" (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education to take the program to scale.

Mr. Clark holds a Business Administration degree from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and currently resides in Atlanta with his wife and their two sons.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

**Jim Clark, President & CEO
Boys & Girls Clubs of America**

The Role of Youth Mentoring in Youth Crime Prevention and Early Intervention

Honorable Commission Members,

Thank you for inviting me here today to speak to you about America's youth, and the ways Boys & Girls Clubs use mentorship and early intervention, to combat juvenile crime. I applaud the Commission and Attorney General Barr for taking on this important work, which will impact our nation's future for years to come.

For 160 years, Boys & Girls Clubs has served some of our nation's most vulnerable populations. Over three centuries, we've faced and worked through demanding periods, including wars and the Great Depression. Today, amid this unprecedented time, Boys & Girls Clubs are more committed than ever to serving America's children and teens. Each year, Boys & Girls Clubs serve more than 4.7 million youth at 4,700 sites across the country, including on Native lands, in affordable housing communities, in schools and on U.S. military installations worldwide. In nearly every Congressional district around the country, you'll find Boys & Girls Clubs serving all children and teens, and especially youth who need us most.

Boys & Girls Clubs change lives and are a sound investment. A study conducted by the Institute for Social Research and the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan, found that every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs returns \$9.60 in current and future earnings, as well as cost-savings, to American communities. Much of the proof is in our outcomes. Teen Club youth consistently report lower levels of alcohol, cigarette and drug use when compared to their peers nationally, and 88 percent believe they can stand up for what they believe is right (even if their friends disagree). Eighty-one percent of Club youth also say they believe they can make a difference in their communities.

Today in America, so many youth face risk factors in their peer groups, their homes, their schools and their communities which present challenges that threaten to overcome their ability to cope and thrive. These problems, often out of their control, make them particularly vulnerable to environments and behaviors that can make it seem impossible to succeed. Issues such as poverty, family instability, failing schools, and neighborhood violence persist, all exacerbated by an ongoing opioid crisis that has exposed and accelerated substance abuse in families and across entire communities.

Youth exposed to even one persistent risk factor are more likely to initiate or escalate unsafe behaviors or become a victim of crime or abuse. Regrettably, many youth are exposed every day to multiple risk factors in their homes or communities, greatly increasing the likelihood that they could fall off course and interact with the juvenile justice system.

Relations between youth – particularly adolescent males – and law enforcement in many American communities are too often marked by mutual fear and distrust, fueling a vicious cycle that erodes the safety and well-being of our young people. In communities affected by violence, for instance, most citizens are law abiding. Yet the crime and violence committed by a few creates stress and elevates dangers that children must navigate every day and affects their prospects for a successful future.

Because when kids are exposed to violence, long-term harm is insidious, increasing risks for alcoholism, drug use, school dropout, depression, and delinquent or risky behaviors.

Youth impacted by risk factors at all levels need highly targeted support, to redirect them from problem behaviors and forge a path forward to be productive and valuable contributors to their communities.

Boys & Girls Clubs are optimally positioned to build positive, collaborative partnerships between local law enforcement and the communities they serve. Through the years, we've worked with White House Administrations, as well as our Congressional supporters, to create solutions for young people. For more than two decades, Boys & Girls Clubs of America and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) worked closely together to meet the specialized needs of youth involved in the juvenile justice system and gangs.

Today we are here to continue that progress. We see three key opportunities where we can enhance our work and impact even more of America's youth:

1. By increasing investment in youth mentoring programs
2. Prioritizing early intervention and prevention
3. Making emergency investment in youth serving programs during critical times

Since 2008, with grant funding from the Department of Justice (DOJ) and OJJDP, Boys & Girls Clubs have supported at-risk kids and teens through the Youth Mentoring program. Our mentoring approach unites powerful mentoring elements already present in Clubs with formal mentoring practices and evidence-based prevention programs. The program provides a combination of individual mentoring, group, and peer mentoring services. Mentoring is site-based and provided by Club staff, volunteers, and peers, with ongoing efforts to recruit minority male mentors.

Boys & Girls Club mentoring services target communities where youth are more likely to face risk factors. We provide mentoring on Native lands and in public housing developments, in urban centers and in rural areas. Nearly all of these target communities have been impacted by opioids.

Clubs have greatly increased their mentoring impact and reach by implementing research-based enhancements to mentoring practices. Most recently, we integrated trauma-informed practices into our mentoring approach, to better support youth who may have gone through different forms of trauma that impact their well-being.

The eastern panhandle of the state of West Virginia has child poverty rates from 19 percent to 22 percent, and overdose death rates that are among the highest in the state. The Boys & Girls Club of the Eastern Panhandle has worked with key community partners, focusing on increasing the availability of social-emotional development and wellness programming in the community, which includes a dedicated prevention specialist who trains and coaches mentors on effective delivery of prevention programs and mental health first aid. Other activities implemented by the prevention specialist include a "kinetic approach to talking" – mentors check in with mentees while playing active games and creative writing activities intentionally designed to help mentees process emotions, a critical part of helping young people to cope and build resiliency. Mentees in the program ages 12-17 started a chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions, organizing activities and going into local middle schools to lead discussions.

For the last 13 years, Boys & Girls Clubs have mentored an average of 30,000 youth ages 6-17 each year through the National Mentoring Program. Youth targeted for the program include those involved with the juvenile justice system at every level, from contact with and/or referral by police to re-entry. There is also a focus on populations under the age of twelve, given that exposure to risk factors at an early age increases the likelihood of delinquent behaviors and/or substance abuse.

One key way we can continue helping our kids is to prioritize prevention and early intervention, each of which reduce the potential for community violence, gang participation and engagement in high-risk activities. Boys & Girls Clubs have the scale, scope, and most importantly, the trust of communities and community leaders to help lead this critical work.

Boys & Girls Clubs and law enforcement agencies share a strong bond. Over 90 percent of Clubs have an ongoing association with local law enforcement, and 56 percent have a member of law enforcement on their board. Fifty-five percent of Clubs have members of law enforcement as mentors for Club youth. These relationships build deep ties and trust between youth and law enforcement, to the point that the Club is seen as a resource to help law enforcement connect and form relationships with often hard-to-reach youth. One out of 3 Clubs work with law enforcement to recruit high-need or at-risk youth to the Club, to benefit from mentoring services.

Still boundaries continue to exist among young people and law enforcement. In a survey of Club teens, 87 percent said they believe law enforcement officials are hardworking and do a good job. However, 52 percent stated they are afraid to interact with law enforcement. Clubs continue to elevate young people's opportunities to interact with law enforcement and educate them on how communities can work together. The police chief of Kenosha, in Wisconsin, shared that over a six-year span, juvenile crime decreased 47 percent, thanks in large part to their partnership with local Clubs.

A great example is Boys & Girls Clubs of Monterey County in California. They have held "Gang Prevention Summits" where law enforcement officers shared real world stories to show teens alternatives to violence.

Similarly, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City in Missouri works with police to strengthen youth support systems. Police officers are introduced to youth as leaders and role models making a positive impact in the community. This also allows officers to become youth advocates and better understand challenges and issues of the community they serve.

There is an enduring need for strong, collaborative partnerships between local law enforcement and the communities they serve. Boys & Girls Clubs are optimally positioned to continue building these relationships. As a leading advocate for 4.7 million youth in rural, urban, Native and military communities, Boys & Girls Clubs are on a mission to keep kids safe and on track for long-term success.

Today in our society, we are also facing new challenges to this work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The risk factors that kids face at home and in their communities are magnified – putting them at even higher risk than ever before. Any extended periods like this can increase risk factors and create trauma for kids and teens – everything from the lack of a positive influence or mentor, to much worse, such as mental or physical abuse.

It will be even more critical that we support programs that provide positive mentors and early intervention, like those at Boys & Girls Clubs, as these youth will need focused outcome driven development programs to help them succeed.

As we begin to recover from this crisis, children will be some of the most vulnerable to changes in our economy and society. This moment in time will undoubtedly shape their development as young adults. Its impact will have long-term implications on their ability to succeed. We must all support them to find pathways to future success.

In closing, my thanks once again to this Commission for inviting us to these critical hearings so that we can share the impact this work has and will continue to have on the young people of America. We ask that as you look forward, the following investments can be made to support our nation's youth.

Increased investments in youth mentoring programs such as the National Youth Mentoring Initiative through the DOJ and the OJJDP, can make a significant difference in communities. Mentors offer steady positive influences, guidance, and support, that lead to increased confidence and self-esteem, improved academic performance, positive decision making and relationships to help a child realize their true potential and avoid engaging in risky behaviors. We are very grateful and proud of the support we receive each year through the Youth Mentoring program. Unfortunately, the need is so great for so many vulnerable youth, that even with this significant support, only half of Clubs that apply for Youth Mentoring grants can receive funding.

Prioritizing prevention and early intervention with youth will reduce the potential impacts of community violence, gang activity and engagement in high-risk activity.

And emergency investments for youth-serving out of school time organizations that provide mentoring, due to the COVID-19 crisis will continue to be a critical need. The impact to communities and additional trauma at-risk youth are facing will be significant, especially now that out-of-school time is all the time. We urge you to advocate for funding to support critical youth serving organizations in the out-of-school time in the economic recovery funding, so we can continue critical services such as mentoring. This support will also help offset increased costs and demand for services to mitigate impact incurred due to shutdowns including, lost program revenue and the significant impact on private sector philanthropic support.

For every dollar invested in Boys & Girls Clubs, \$9.60 is returned in current and future earnings, as well as cost-savings, to American communities. We continue this positive investment by maintaining and increasing these programs that have become so critical to communities.

We believe that by strengthening these programs with youth development organizations, like our more than 4,700 local Boys & Girls Clubs, we can catalyze this transformative work in communities around our country at a time when it's needed more than ever before.

Thank you again for your time.