



# **BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**

**A MISSION IN MOTION FOR  
DENTON COUNTY**

## Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County – Denton County Expansion Outreach Project

Phase 1 Community Conversations Summary Report  
*Submitted July 3, 2022*

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## Executive Summary

Single moms with two jobs, traveling hours between home and work and back again, while relying on their older children to watch their younger children while their away. Couples concerned about their teenagers who just don't seem to connect with peers at school these days, and they're worried about their mental health. Recently housed parents recovering from extended homelessness, finding resources for food and shelter, but not safe places for their preteens to play out of the home.

These are just a few of the perspectives and experiences shared by community members and stakeholders concerned about the shortage of youth development programming and services in Denton County.

**Over the course of five community conversations with the voices of over 70 community members and service providers, we heard an urgent call for increased support for youth and families in Denton County – one of the nation's fastest growing areas.** Despite a small town feel that keeps longtime residents connected while attracting new residents every day, Denton County has many of the issues commonly associated with big cities: poverty, food insecurity, child care deserts, homelessness, and growing mental health concerns. Youth in families directly impacted by these issues – many in working and single parent households – are in greatest need of expanded youth services. Parents are doing everything they can to ensure their children's academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being under challenging circumstances – they just need some help.

Many services exist to help families with basic needs – food and shelter – yet community members and service providers identified three youth development services that are desired but currently lacking in availability and accessibility in Denton County:

- 1) Safe places for children to go during out of school time;**
- 2) Mental health supports; and**
- 3) Mentorships.**

Boys & Girls Clubs aims to fill the gaps in youth development services in collaboration and partnership with local schools, nonprofits, and government bodies. Together, BCGTC and its partners can build countywide relationships and infrastructure for youth services that will positively impact the lives and futures of Denton County youth and their families for years to come.

## Overview

Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County (BGCCTC) engaged Project Partners, Inc. from April 6, 2022, through June 30, 2022, to provide consulting and project management for its Denton County Expansion Outreach Project, Phase 1. The goal of Phase 1 is to obtain feedback from community members and stakeholders on existing youth development programming needs across Denton County. This feedback will inform BGCCTC’s approach to best serve youth in Denton County. Toward the Phase 1 goal, on behalf of and in collaboration with BGCCTC, Project Partners organized and facilitated a series of five (5) stakeholder conversations (i.e., community conversations) held in five (5) distinct locations in Denton County. This report provides a summary of those community conversations.

## Methodology

Denton County has a total area of 953 square miles and a population of more than 900,000 people. According to the United Way of Denton County’s most recently published full community needs assessment, “Denton County is one of the fastest growing communities in the nation.... By 2050, the US Census Bureau projects that Denton County will more than triple in size with more than 3 million people living within our county, far surpassing both present-day Dallas and Fort Worth.”<sup>1</sup>

To receive input from community members and stakeholders from all parts of the county on Denton County’s youth development programming needs, BGCCTC and Project Partners coordinated with civic leaders, churches, and nonprofit organizations to host community conversations in each of the county’s four precincts. County commissioners were instrumental in connecting BGCCTC and Project Partners with potential locations for conversations in their precincts. The United Way of Denton hosted an additional community conversation targeting service providers to give input on the county’s youth development programming needs from their perspectives. **Table 1** shows the dates, locations, and sponsoring hosts for each of the five community conversations completed.

**Table 1: Schedule of Community Conversations**

Dates and Times	Locations	Sponsoring Hosts
Tuesday, May 24, 2022 6:00 – 7:00pm	Westside Baptist Church 900 W. Bellaire Blvd Lewisville, TX 75067	Precinct 3 Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell

<sup>1</sup> *United Way of Denton County, Inc., “2017 Community Needs Assessment”* accessible at <https://www.unitedwaydenton.org/sites/unitedwaydenton/files/2017%20Community%20Needs%20Assessment%20Draft%20017%2009%2029%20%28no%20bleed%29.pdf>.

Friday, June 10, 2022 10:00 – 11:00am	United Way of Denton County 1314 Teasley Ln Denton, TX 76205	United Way of Denton County
Tuesday, June 14, 2022 5:30 – 6:30pm	GracePointe Church 3000 E. McKinney St Denton, TX 76209	Precinct 4 Commissioner Dianne Edmondson
Tuesday, June 21, 2022 5:30 – 6:30pm	Sandy Jacobs Government Center 1029 W. Rosemeade Pkwy Carrollton, TX 75007	Precinct 2 Commissioner Ron Marchant
Thursday, June 23, 2022 5:30-6:30pm	First Refuge Ministries 713 S. Fifth St Sanger, TX 76266	First Refuge Ministries

Project Partners prepared event flyers for the community conversations and county commissioners, site hosts, and affiliated representatives invited local community members and stakeholders to attend using a variety of communication methods (e.g., emails, Facebook posts, word of mouth, etc.). BGCCTC provided participation incentives for each of the community conversations to encourage RSVPs and attendance, except for the United Way-hosted event targeting service providers. Incentives for community members included dinner during the conversation, meals-to-go, goodie bags for children, and access to BGCCTC’s Mobile Clubhouse for adults to tour and children to “play and learn with our trained staff while we meet.” These incentives were advertised on the event flyers (see **Attachment 1**). Through donations to BGCCTC, surprise bicycle giveaways were provided at the end of community conversations at two sites at which a high number of children were in attendance. **Table 2** shows the counts of participants by primary role/perspective categories and the number of children (ages 0 – 18) the participating community members had with them in attendance and in total, regardless of whether the child was present at the event.

**Table 2: Number of Community Conversations Participants by Primary Role Categories**

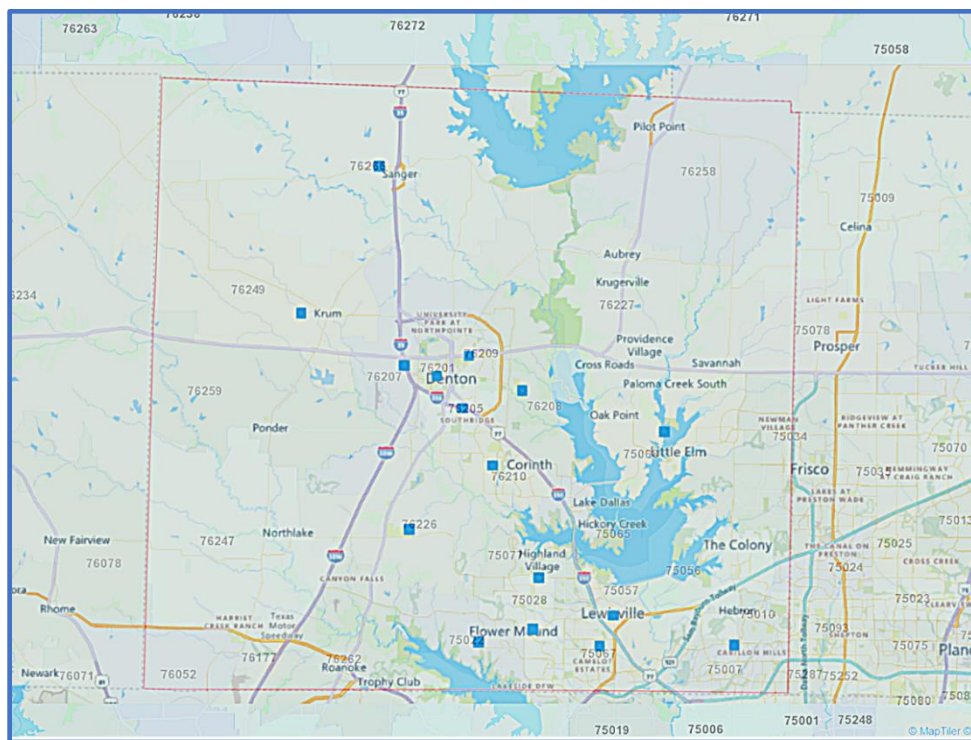
Participant Category	Number
<b>Community Members</b>	53
<b>Parents of Children Ages 0-18</b>	24
<b>Children (Ages 0-18) of Attending Adults</b>	52
<b>0-5 years</b>	9
<b>6-11 years</b>	15
<b>12-14 years</b>	17
<b>15-18 years</b>	11
<b>Children Attending the Mobile Clubhouse</b>	19
<b>Service Providers (Individuals)<sup>2</sup></b>	19

<sup>2</sup> This count includes only service providers who attended the Community Conversation at the United Way of Denton County.

Upon arriving at the community conversation location, each participant received and was asked to complete a registration slip to provide demographic information for the purpose of this summary report and to indicate whether they would like to receive news and updates from Boys & Girls Clubs via email (see **Attachment 2** for copies of the registration slips used). Participants also received an information sheet with general conversation guidelines including the voluntary nature of participation, and the ability to opt out of participation and/or Project Partners' voice recording of the conversations for notetaking purposes (see **Attachment 3**). Listings of community members and service providers who agreed to participate in the community conversations are included in **Attachment 4**, with contact information if provided by the participant.

As desired for gathering viewpoints from across Denton County, community member participants were residents from several zip codes across the county (see **Figure 1**).

**Figure 1: Geographic Distribution of Zip Codes in which Community Member Participants Live**



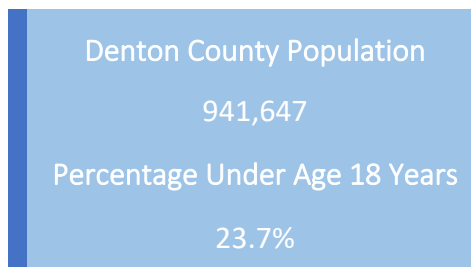
Source: Community Conversations Registration Slips prepared by Project Partners and completed by individual participants. Map created with 3D Maps in Microsoft Excel and MapTiler at <https://www.unitedstateszipcodes.org/>.

At least two Project Partners team members, the BCGTC Senior Vice President of Operations, and several BCGTC Mobile Clubhouse staff attended each community conversation. A Project Partners team member facilitated each conversation using a list of core questions for

community members and a slightly modified list of questions for the conversation with service providers at the United Way-hosted event. The lists of questions are shown in **Attachment 5** and the basis of the summary of participants’ responses in the section below.

## Response Summary

Community conversation participants agree: Denton County is a great place to live. That was the overwhelming sentiment in response to the icebreaking question, “What do you like about Denton County?” Participants emphasized the strong sense of community, friendliness, diversity, and collaborative spirit of Denton County. Even as Denton County grows – bringing new businesses, families, and other residents – participants note that the community retains a small-town feel, with neighbors knowing neighbors, and everyone being willing to help anyone in need – “all you have to do ask.”



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Estimates, July 1, 2021 (V2021) –Denton County, Texas; United States," Quick Facts, accessed July 1, 2022, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/dentoncountytexas,US/PST045221>.

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*“When something is going on, if there’s a need, somebody always steps up. If I have an issue and say, ‘Hey, does anybody have this item?’... We can find it within a couple of hours.” — Community Member*

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Accordingly, participants recognize that the time is now to ask for more help for the youth of Denton County. As the United Way of Denton County stated in its last overall community needs assessment, “With such exciting growth comes not only great opportunity, but great challenge as the needs of our community grow as well.”<sup>3</sup> From the perspectives of Denton County community members and stakeholders, that statement also applies to families’ challenges filling gaps in the availability and accessibility of youth programs and services for their children, especially those in working and single-parent households with limited economic means.

With excitement about the prospect of Boys & Girls Clubs coming to Denton County, community conversation participants expressed their hopes and desires for what new youth development programming and services might look like. Without exception, participants at each community conversation were responsive to the questions presented for their feedback and actively engaged in discussion.

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<sup>3</sup> *United Way of Denton County, Inc., “2017 Community Needs Assessment”* accessible at <https://www.unitedwaydenton.org/sites/unitedwaydenton/files/2017%20Community%20Needs%20Assessment%20Draft%20017%2009%2029%20%28no%20bleed%29.pdf>.

Question 1: What are the best resources/things/highlights available to you and your children currently? What do you like best about what is available to youth? What are the best resources/things/highlights the community has to offer?

Participants reported that the best resources for Denton County families and youth come from four categorical sources: churches, schools, social service nonprofits, and local government departments (e.g., libraries, parks, and recreation).

### Churches

Several specific churches were named as providers of resources for family members of all ages, including Westside Baptist, GracePointe, and First Baptist Church of Sanger which participated in the community conversations. Conversation participants especially acknowledged churches for their willingness to provide youth and family resources at low- or no-cost to community members who could not otherwise afford services. For example, parents highlighted churches' free "Vacation Bible Schools" (VBS) and low-cost camps as valuable resources during the summer to give their children a supervised place to go and have fun, though each VBS is typically only a weeklong and the cost of camps remain out of reach for some families. Churches are also common providers of "Back to School" events at which students can receive free school supplies and services such as haircuts and sports physicals. Throughout the year, churches provide youth and family programs and community meals on a frequent though potentially limited basis, such as on worship days, for special events, or during religious holiday seasons. Participants noted that communities are particularly well-served during the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons.

Denton County Children who are  
*Food Insecure*  
28,860  
(13.8% of children under 18 years)

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, "Child Food Insecurity in Texas, 2019" accessed July 1, 2022, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/7889-child-food-insecurity?loc=45&loct=5#detailed/5/6515-6768/false/1729,37,871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133/any/15218,15219>. "A child (under 18 years old) is defined as being food insecure if he or she lives in a household having difficulty meeting basic food needs, as defined by the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey."

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*"My kid is going to like 10 different VBSs this summer. And they're free. And he's going to two church camps and all he had to do was to help our church with a spaghetti dinner. [Now] he doesn't have to pay for camp. I'm going into the hospital next week, but I have childcare because I planned it. That's when my son is going to church camp all week. I planned that carefully."*  
— Community Member

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### Schools

Schools are an essential day-to-day resource for families and their children during the school year. As one participant put it, in each community, "the hub is the ISD." Community members

value the schools for providing nutritious meals for their children; academic instruction; and arts and sports programs during the school day for all students, with additional extracurricular activities available, particularly for high school students. Elementary schools are also noted providers of on-campus after school and child care programs during the school year. Some schools have additional social services on campuses such as food pantries, mentorship programs, and academic support services provided through partnership with nonprofits, such as Communities in Schools. Furthermore, participants highlighted school counselors and teachers as knowledgeable about general community resources and able to introduce individual students, student groups, and families to assistance for needs and issues unable to be addressed at school.

### *Social Service Nonprofits*

Local nonprofits providing basic needs (e.g., food, shelter, clothing) featured prominently in community conversations about best resources currently available to Denton County children. The United Way of Denton and several other organizations participating in the community conversations, such as First Refuge Ministries, Salvation Army, and Christian Community Action, were highlighted as go-to places for information and referral, as well as direct aid. Nonprofits mentioned for offering access to arts and sports programming included Explorium Children’s Museum, Art Room, Denton G.O.A.L. (Guys and Girls Operating as Leaders), and the YMCA. As aforementioned, nonprofits offering academic-focused services frequently operate within and through the school districts.

Students in Denton County  
School Districts who are  
*Experiencing Homelessness*

2,436

*Source: Denton County Homeless Coalition, Denton County Homelessness Leadership Team, and United Way of Denton County, “2020 Denton County Homelessness Data Report” accessed July 1, 2022, <https://www.unitedwaydenton.org/sites/unitedwaydenton/files/2020%20PIT%20Count%20Data%20Report%20Final.pdf>. Data reported by districts’ Homeless Liaisons in March 2020.*

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*“We’ve seen a growing partnership and collaboration with agencies, particularly in supporting poverty, that our children are experiencing in this area. That has grown tremendously for us since the pandemic. We’ve been doing it for many, many years, but it’s really increased since the pandemic began.”*  
— Service Provider

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### *Local Government Departments*

Denton County residents also have access to services and programs provided by the county, 41 cities and towns, and two state universities. Community conversation participants across the county highlighted their nearest libraries, parks, and recreation centers as best resources for their families and children, especially elementary school-aged children and younger. Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension 4-H Clubs and Family and Community Health Programs also provide youth development programming. Costs of access to local government programs vary.



For example, fees to participate in sports programs through parks and recreation can be prohibitive to families with limited economic means. Participants noted that libraries have a near daily and year-round role in providing a free place for families to take their children, and some offer special activities such as makerspaces and book clubs. Libraries are also primary providers of free internet access and digital resources to research, work, or study.

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*“Growing up, we had some rough times, and there’s always been something inside the community [to help us]. That’s one thing that really sets [our community] apart from a lot of other places.... You know, if you’ve been doing great all your life, awesome, and then all of a sudden something comes up; the pandemic is a great example. And then you can’t pay your electricity next month. There’s going to be at least eight different programs out there that’s gonna help you. You just have to find them.”*  
— Community Member

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Question 2: What do you wish children/your children could have more access to?

Across all community conversations, participants emphasized their desire for more youth development programs providing three services to meet prevalent existing youth and family needs: **a safe place for children to go during out of school time** (e.g., after school and over summer break); **mental health support**; and **mentorship**. Participants noted an insufficient number of programs providing those three services to fill gaps in areas throughout Denton County, especially for youth in economically disadvantaged households. While recognizing that there are great youth development programs of limited sizes, duration, affordability, and/or geographic accessibility in different parts of the county, community conversation participants were in widespread agreement that Denton County needs a larger capacity infrastructure of youth development programs that are affordable, accessible, and ongoing throughout the year.

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*“When we do pre and post tests and surveys... one thing, I don’t care what grade they’re in — elementary, junior high, or high school— they will say to us, ‘We don’t have any place to go after school.’ They can come into the schools and have something. But they need a safe place to go after school.*

*Most of the places in town, you have to pay for a lot of stuff. And we’ve changed out here now. We have a lot of people living below poverty level, and their children... they don’t have any place to go.”*

— Service Provider

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Denton County Students who are  
Economically Disadvantaged

45,765

(34.2% of students)

Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, “Economically Disadvantaged Students in Texas, 2020-2021” accessed July 1, 2022, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/8224-economically-disadvantaged-students?loc=45&loc=5#detailed/5/6515-6768/false/2043,1769,1696,1648,1603,1539,1381,1246,1124,1021/any/16743,16744>. “Economically disadvantaged students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch or other public assistance.”

*Safe Places for Children to Go During Out of School Time*

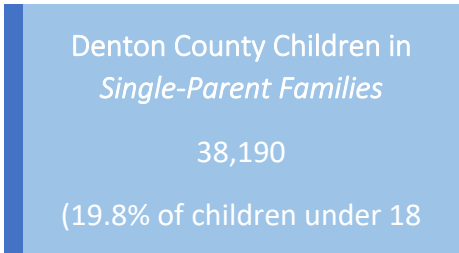
In discussing the need for safe place for children to go after school, during the summer, and during other out of school time periods, community conversation participants frequently stated relevant widely accepted truths about the demographics of Denton County. For example, participants self-described “blue collar communities” in all quadrants of the county with parents working multiple jobs, thus unable to be home when their children get out of school. Likewise, participants reported the high number of single parent households – primarily single moms – combined with the parents’ employment requirements mean that when school is out for the summer, children may be left home alone without support. When the children are left alone, parents, community members, and service providers worry about what the children may be accessing on the computer or television, who they may encounter outside in the neighborhood or apartment complex, and what they are doing. In addition to protecting children from dangerous situations, community members and service providers desire that children can benefit from out of school time engaging in activities that will strengthen their social-emotional, academic, and/or physical well-being.

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*“I’ve been looking for something for my granddaughter to do because she’s getting bored with staying at home with me all day. And it’s kind of tough finding things for her to do. We live in apartments and there’s lots of kids around, but I’ve noticed that most of the kids around are without parents. And there’s a lot of things going on within the apartments that I don’t want her involved in.”*  
— Community Member

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Community conversation participants noted that middle school-aged children are the age group with the greatest existing gap in safe places to go after school and during the summer. While many elementary schools offer extended care after school on site and high school students are more likely to be engaged in work or other extracurricular activities, participants expressed beliefs that middle-school students deem afterschool programs at their schools as “uncool” and risk engaging in dangerous behaviors as they enter and move through a unique phase of adolescence during which they are trying to learn more about who they are. Service providers connected to school districts pointed out that between 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade is when students have the greatest risk of disengaging from school.



Source: The Annie E. Casey Foundation, KIDS COUNT Data Center, “Children in Single-Parent Families in Texas, 2015-2019” accessed July 1, 2022, <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/3059-children-in-single-parent-families?loc=45&loc=5#detailed/5/6515-6768/false/1983,1692,1691,1607,1572,1485,1376,1201,1074,1000/any/8192,8193>. “This indicator includes only children of the head of household.”

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*“Our middle schoolers are a little bit forgotten.... It’s an odd age and I think we are missing that age.... Help them find their voice. Because they’re living in the world where they’re voiceless.”*  
— Service Provider

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To support families and youth, Denton County community members and service providers seek an increase in the number of low or no-cost, indoor, well-supervised places for children to go to participate in developmentally and age-appropriate activities while their parents and guardians are away. Parents participating in the community conversations noted a desire for places where their children will have opportunities to both play and learn; pursue individual interests and socialize with peers; avoid weather extremes in air conditioned or heated spaces, or go outside to run, swim, or play sports. Overcoming transportation barriers must be a consideration for the location or method of program delivery. Overall, the most important aspect of these requested services would be the presence of trustworthy, well-trained staff and vetted volunteers in sufficient adult-to-child ratios to guide and monitor children’s interactions and activities and provide academic and/or recreational structure.

### *Mental Health Support*

Strains on mental health have increased across the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic, and children are not immune to the increased levels of stress and trauma experienced in communities today. Community conversation participants call for more mental health support and services for children of all ages to help strengthen both their immediate and long-term social-emotional health. Service provider participants noted that schools provide guidance and counseling but typically do not have the capacity to provide individualized or intensive mental health services due to the large student population and workload counselors are responsible for in most school settings. Acute mental health issues are addressed when identified through collaborative community resources and referrals. The shared concern across service providers are that more generalized mental health needs may go unnoticed and unmet until they reach a crisis point.

Of School Age Children (5-14 Years) in Denton County, parents reported

- 15% had *Academic Problems*
- 14% had *Behavioral Problems at School*
- 1 in 6 have *Problems with Self-Esteem*

Source: Cook Children’s Center for Children’s Health, “2018 Community Health Needs Assessment” accessible at [https://www.cookchildrens.org/siteassets/documents/about/2018\\_chna\\_report.pdf](https://www.cookchildrens.org/siteassets/documents/about/2018_chna_report.pdf).



*“It’s important to understand that when we’re talking about mental health, a lot of the individuals that we service are not dealing with just like isolating exposure to trauma. This is complex trauma. This is layers and layers of barriers that need to be navigated through. So even in having the right resources, [the key is] having long term resources... because it can’t be a 90-day program. It can’t be a 12-month program. But maybe a three- to five- year plan to really help put the pieces together.... Those long-term complex solutions is really how we get to the path of healing mental health challenges.”*

— Service Provider

Service providers noted a current shortage in licensed professional counselors (LPCs) and therapists, and long waiting lists to receive services from private mental health programs. Furthermore, private mental health care services are cost prohibitive for uninsured families, adding an additional barrier for many youths and their families in economically disadvantaged households. School districts and healthcare partners, such as PediPlace, “a non-profit pediatric healthcare practice for children from birth through eighteen years of age who are uninsured or who receive Medicaid or CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) benefits” are piloting ways to increase mental health service availability and accessibility for youth.<sup>4</sup> Existing service providers invite youth development programs to collaborate to increase the reach of research-based mental health support and positive behavior interventions. Community members and stakeholders ask that these supports be implemented with responsiveness to multicultural and multilingual needs and differences and take on a multi-generational approach when possible.

### *Mentorships*

Community conversation participants desire more mentorships to encourage Denton County youths’ overall well-being through relationship-building, positive role modeling, and practical life skills guidance. Some mentorship programs exist on small scales but examples of widespread, organized mentorship opportunities for youth of all ages, genders, and backgrounds were not identified by community conversation participants. Service providers noted that they have the most difficulty finding mentors for middle school and high school-aged boys. Mentorship programs exist through the schools but are limited by the number of volunteers and scheduling during school-time hours. Community conversation participants expressed interest in seeing more mentorship opportunities

1 in 3 Denton County Students are  
*At Risk of Dropping Out of School*

Source: United Way of Denton County, Inc., “Community Needs Assessment at a Glance, 2019” accessible at <https://www.unitedwaydenton.org/sites/unitedwaydenton/files/2019%20Needs%20Assessment%20Updated.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> See information on PediPlace at <https://www.pediplace.org/>, the Center for Play Therapy’s Play for the Future project with Denton County schools at <https://hogg.utexas.edu/what-we-do/success-stories/grantee-playing-for-the-future> , and Sanger ISD’s Social Emotional Learning & Behavior Interventions Program at <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/investigations/in-crisis/article/texas-school-district-kids-facing-mental-health-17011652.php>.

connected to job training/shadowing, internships, and paid or volunteer work to help youth explore vocational and creative interests. Denton County community members seek mentors for their children who are able to connect with the families' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including bilingual mentors for children who are English Language Learners.

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*"Mentorships are so powerful. Even for those students who live in homes where, you know, that socioeconomic factor isn't a factor. I have a 16-year-old son who has some struggles and life is hard. Just having a mentor that's not my husband and I would have made a huge difference for him."*  
— Community Member

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Question 3: Who do you rely on most and trust to get things done for you? Who can you count on? For service providers, what do families rely on most and trust you for the most?

Community conversation members listed established categorical groups that they rely on and trust to effectively contribute to and accomplish agreed upon individual and community goals: schools/school districts; churches; city and county services, especially libraries, parks, and recreation centers; and United Way of Denton County and its partner agencies. These responses aligned with responses to Question 1 on best resources available. BCGTC could use these categorical groupings while determining potential service partners for one or more phases of the Denton County Expansion Outreach Project. Existing Denton County service providers welcome potential collaboration and partnership with BCGTC to address youth development needs and pursue outreach expansion across the county.

Question 4: What matters most to you when you are entrusting your children to others?

Safety is the number one priority of community members when determining who to entrust with the care of their children. In defining safety, community conversation participants noted the following criteria:

- Care providers are thoroughly evaluated prior to working with children, including background checks and determination of skills and training for the work at hand.
- Care providers are trustworthy and reliable to do what they commit to doing.
- Care providers ensure the children's basic needs are met (i.e., food, shelter, water, physical safety).
- There are enough adult care providers to focus on supervision of the children, their actions, interactions, and locations.
- Children are engaged in supervised, age-appropriate activities at all times.
- All care providers and children have clear rules and standards to follow and are held accountable to them.

In addition, community members emphasized that care providers should value the children and try to get to know them, establish connections, and build relationships. Care providers should respect the children's and their families' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, values, and beliefs. Community members also stated that families, especially in smaller cities and towns, would look to see who in their community already stands by and vouches for the care providers as a rubric on whether to trust them. Community members and service providers at each of the community conversations highlighted the overall importance of relationship building and follow-thru at and between all stakeholder levels.

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*"Most of the parents rely totally on the school system and the programs that exist within the school system, because a lot of them are working and they don't know about the nonprofits that's out there. They don't know, but the school system is working with them to find out." — Community Member*

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Question 5: How do you like to be communicated with?

Conversation participants recommend various methods of communicating to keep the Denton County community informed and engaged in the development and implementation of Boys & Girls Clubs' programs and services. The most frequently mentioned methods were email, social media (including Facebook groups for parents, specific communities, and chambers of commerce), and messaging through school/school district channels directly to children and families. Service providers recommended scheduling occasional update meetings for partners and potential partners when programming has started. Likewise, community members recommended text messages and phone calls to keep service participants informed and engaged when programming has started.

Question 6: Where do you spend time as a family? Where and how do families spend time?

New youth development programming in Denton County will enter a community with established traditions, activities, and locations that families enjoy participating in or visiting together. Boys & Girls Clubs could play a vital role through collaboration and partnership in expanding access to some of these activities for children and families who may not know about them or have not attended before due to cost or transportation hurdles. A list of community conversation participants' responses to the question, "Where do you spend time as a family?" or "Where and how do families spend time?" is provided in **Attachment 6**.

Question 7: Where do your children spend time?

Community members also shared where their children currently spend time, either with their families, with friends, or alone. In their responses, conversation participants often reiterated the lack of safe and affordable places for children to go when not in the care and supervision of

their families, especially elementary and middle school-aged youth. Yet there are exceptions, such as school-, community-, or church-sponsored events. For example, Friday night football games, Bea’s Kids, Parents’ Night Out, and organized sports were mentioned as safe places for parents to drop off their children.

Community members state that children who are unsupervised tend to spend their time roaming outdoors in their neighborhoods or in parks, or at hangout spots in shopping centers, trampoline parks, movie theaters, skating rinks, beaches, or pools. Some of these places have reduced access to unsupervised youth through such measures as increased costs to enter and age restrictions.

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*“[Children] need their basic needs to be met once they walk out of our school. They need some place where they can go where they can feel safe, they can get fed, and they can be with positive adult relationships instead of hanging out in parks and finding other things to do.*

*We’re noticing that a lot of kids are going home but they are not staying home. They are finding other places to go. They just need safe places to do that.” – Service Provider*

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## Concluding Remarks

In Denton County, where neighbors still know each other and people are always willing to lend a helping hand if they can, community members and existing local service providers invite Boys & Girls Clubs to join in collaborative efforts to fill gaps in essential youth development programming to increase the academic, social-emotional, and physical well-being of the county’s youth and provide support to working families. Through this project’s series of community conversations, we have identified three priority youth development programming needs: 1) safe places for children to go during out of school time; 2) mental health supports; and 3) mentorships. Boys & Girls Clubs is committed to helping to build relationships and infrastructure to expand youth services in Denton County to meet these needs.

### Further Assistance Available

As of the date of this report, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Tarrant County has spent \$25,207.67 on expansion efforts to Denton County. As BGCCTC’s “partner for good,” Project Partners could add capacity to your organization to assist you in implementing the remaining phases of the Denton County Expansion Outreach project, if needed. We offer a hands-on project management approach, community engagement, and breadth of program development expertise. We welcome an opportunity to discuss these services with you.