

Celebrating Identity Through the Arts

BCGA Arts Impact Story

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Jeff M. Poulin: BCGA Arts Impact is an audio series telling the stories from members of the Boys and Girls Club of America community about the power of arts, cultural, and creative programs around the world.

Hey there, Jeff here. Deborah serves as Vice President of Programming and discusses the importance of **artistic instruction** to create impactful programs. Their Club is planning to bolster their arts programs with deeper investment in program offerings, space and, most importantly, staff. Deborah loves to see her youth showcase their talents, express themselves, and celebrate who they are while building relationships. Check it out.

Creative Generation: Can you tell me a bit about your role where your club is and what you do?

Deborah F: Yes, we are Boys and Girls Clubs of Elgin, Illinois. I'm the vice president of programs and impact for our clubs. So I oversee all of our programming activity, and the implementation of that in our after school sites. Awesome. Thank you.

CG: Can you describe your arts programs to me?

DF: Yeah, so our arts programs are really emerging right now. We have a strong desire to implement an arts director to help take what we already have, and really centralize it, make it more high quality and bring in experts. So right now, we run kind of some weekly arts programming. Every week, we feature a different Fine Arts medium, a different performing arts medium that our staff are implementing, but wanting to kind of take that to the next level with some, you know, experts who can, you know, lead activities and bring a higher quality?

CG: That's awesome. That's awesome. It sounds like it's on. It's growing. It's growing, expanding? Do you have a favorite memory from one of the arts based programming in your club?

DF: Yeah, my favorite has been a lot of our music performances that we've done. So having youth who kind of excel in the arts, or music on their own, really calling out that talent and allowing them to have a platform. So here at the National Conference, we actually had two youth performers who were selected out of 150 submissions. And just you know, getting to see them have that opportunity to showcase the talent that we see every day on a larger platform is a huge passion of mine.

CG: That's amazing. Lastly, my last question for you is what impact does art have on the youth in your club? Yeah,

DF: I think identity and expression is a huge value for our youth and giving them an opportunity to express themselves whether it's through, you know, fine arts, performing arts, I think it's it's just a huge place to celebrate who they are, and give them an outlet for that creativity that's already in them and letting other people enjoy that and celebrate that.

CG: That's amazing. That's all the questions I have for you today. Thank you so much for sharing your stories.

Jeff M. Poulin: Thanks for listening to BCGA Arts Impact. This episode was produced by the team at Creative Generation: Katie Rainey, Valerie Killebrew, and Emma Lamberti. The series executive producer is Jeff M. Poulin. The cover art is by Bridget Woodbury. Music from Scott Waltz. A special thanks to the series contributors and the staff at Boys and Girls Club of America for their support.