

Art Allowing for Meaningful Connections

BCGA Arts Impact Story

Deborah S.W.
Director of Support Services
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Northern Neck

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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 works to oversee the behind-the-scenes efforts, such as transportation and planning in her role as Director of Support Services. Deborah discusses the impact of building **positive relationships** through **artistic instruction** at her Club. Currently, they offer several art programs, including individual music lessons and a daily Visual Art program.

Deborah loves to communicate and work with youth as often as she can. She finds joy in the meaningful connections she is able to make with youth. Deborah looks forward to building new programs and onboarding more staff to the Club post COVID, while continuing to offer a safe place for youth. Check it out.

Creative Generation: Can you introduce yourself where you're from and what you do in your club?

Deborah SW: Hi, I'm Deborah Smith Wyler, and Pugin from Virginia Camonica, Jr. and I am the director of support services. What a poison we are us. But that title means that I am in charge of everything behind the scenes for the kids from transportation to the Administrative Office.

CG: Awesome. Hey, we need all of that. What kinds of arts programs do you lead or work within your club?

DSW: We have several art programs at our club. We have piano lessons, guitar lessons. We had it prowling. And we also have just a generic arts program with kids to participate every day. But the specific ones, scheduled kids that come into that program, meaning we have a

sign up list for those kids sign up. And then they happen upon Tuesday and Thursday, they go to those specific programs for violin or piano lessons. Yes. Okay. Awesome.

CG: So please tell me a story about your favorite memory in this work.

DSW: In this work. My favorite memory in this work is when a child came to my office, which we do sometimes, in my title, communicate or work with kids? Very rarely, but when I get over there, hopefully on the program side, and not to bring me joy to see those little faces. So I remember when my child was knocking on the admin door. And you know, it's a very safe and secure part of the building. Yeah. So I saw him like that. So I just want to open that door. And I came in, he came in and I asked him what was wrong? Why is he crying? He wouldn't speak to me. So I just sat there and just looked at him for a moment, just sat down and chilled, because I knew he was upset. So once I let him sit for 510 minutes, he opened up and started talking to me to tell me that he had an issue with another child. And he was sad because the child kept picking at my role as a bully. But the end results were handled. He was happy. He ran back to his classroom, but then he turned around and came to me and gave me a big hug. Telling me Thank you. That was a very wonderful moment for me that I still remember. Yeah.

CG: I mean, I was just talking to the other woman who works here. Lita, about how just taking that pause. And it's really important. Yes. So what impact do you think your program has had on the youth involved?

DSW: Think of the programs that we come in very successful because we have many, many, many that many kids do to COVID. And we try to implement different programs and different programs, not only to implement different programs. You get up before the call after the Cobra comes. And it struck me very hard. We had a lot of staff that didn't return. So we had new staff to come in. And they implemented different programs. And we just started kids to stop coming to the door, I guess, because word of mouth was a powerful tool. Yeah. I mean, they heard from one of their friends. Were doing something different at the club, and then their parents registered them. And they were just word of mouth. And that spread rapidly. And we have a lot of students right now. I mean, normally, we didn't ever have a physical shift to kids at that particular site that has grown to like I say, we have 200 kids who are coming to that site and it is still growing. Kids are still coming through the door, and they're still signing up. I'm getting exhausted. But you know what? I don't mind it because they need to be in a safe place. Yeah.

CG: Perfect. That's all we got. Thank you so much.

DSW: You're welcome. You're welcome.

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

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