

Community Outreach & Service Since 1963:
The Legacy of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County

20 gentlemen attended a meeting on August 8th, 1963 to address the possibility of setting up a Boys' Club to serve the low-income and at-risk youth of Greeley. In that meeting, they adopted the slogan "Fun with a Purpose". Even in its inception, the clubs goal was not only to give boys a safe place to study and play, growing beyond the limits of their means, but to give back and serve the community that was supporting the boys. It was meant as a two way street and the clubs have upheld this value through the years.

However, this goal was not attained and encouraged easily. In 1967, the boys were inspired and motivated to reach out, clean up the community, and protect their neighbors. In February, The Greeley Junior Woman's Club recognized the efforts of member David Euresti for his efforts to clean-up the club and give the boys a better space. The Alpha Kappa Lambda (AKL) fraternity taught members how to collect green stamps and aiding in purchasing a station wagon for the clubs, members Rupert Guiterrez (age 9), Tony Tellez (age 13), and Tony Davile (age 11) enthusiastically neutralized areas of standing water to prevent mosquitoes from hatching in the neighborhood, and Eddie Benavidez wrote a grant to combat and repair damage done by vandals including goals to give educational programs at schools showing the cost of vandalism and the advantages of community pride.

It was said by Donald R. Fine, the Coca-Cola Bottling Company manager, "This project submitted by young Benavidez is a splendid instance of the initiative and ingenuity of our American youth who have dedicated themselves to preventing the destruction and waste of our natural beauty and resources." Very young as an organization, the Boys' Club looked promising and everyone was willing to pitch in.

These efforts stirred the community; volunteers helped members clean, paint, and replace traffic signs, bridges, underpasses, and other graffiti in Greeley.

The excitement and the efforts were shadowed, however, when one of the underpasses was littered with new graffiti less than a week after it had been painted. In the newspaper, the Boys' club was saluted:

Some of the good work the Boys' Club has done has already been undone by some smart alecks who were overjoyed, no doubt, to find such nice, spotless, silver walls to write some more bad words on. Seems reasonable that these vandals with nothing better to do, should be compelled to clean up their mess, when apprehended, and brought to trial. If the Boys' Club youths can do the job on their own volition, the scribblers of these obscenities and such should be forced to act by court order. Meanwhile, kudos to the boys' club youths and boos for that other element.

-The Greeley Tribune, July 26th, 1967

Unfortunately, only a few days later, the Boys' Club float for Cheyenne Frontier Days entitled "Do Our Part" depicting the efforts of the Boys' Club in keeping the country clean was ripped up when unguarded and it had to be redone. Members Albert, Eddie, and David Euresti stood amidst the ruined float and torn up work. Although the work did have to be redone, the boys did it with dignity and continued striving to do their part for the world.

Through many more anti-vandalism, recycling, and community project efforts, the club members and supporting persons in the community have worked to better Greeley and the rest of Weld county together—the negative experiences of a few people doing a horrible thing has never swayed the resolve for giving back to the community.

**Activities Through Time:
Opportunities for Youth at The Boys & Girls Club of Weld County**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County have offered many opportunities for youth to participate in activities including sports, scholastic endeavors, and trips over time. This is a small album of some of the fun times youth have been provided through membership.



In 1963, these three boys enjoyed fishing together from a bridge.

15 in Boys Club To Spend Weekend at Colo. Springs

Fifteen members of the Boys Club of Greeley have been invited to spend a two-day weekend with the Colorado Boys Club in Colorado Springs.

They will make the trip Jan. 23-24.

Recently Jim Van Leeuwen, director of the Greeley organization, took some of the local members to Denver to visit the Museum of Natural History and to go to Lookout Mountain. Over the Christmas holidays,

Van Leeuwen took three boys with him to his home in Michigan. Those three were Lawrence Archuleta and Paul and Tony Delgado.

Marriage Licenses

Louis Lee Suniga, Fort Collins, and Lucille Sandra Tellez, Greeley.

Donald Gordon Auld and Ruby LaVonne Hill, both of Greeley. Henry Brungard and Pauline Eekes, both of Greeley.

Camping trips were common as long as the clubs could raise funds and take boys. This first in 1964 was fortunate, the Colorado Springs Boys Club invited the Greeley boys on their camping trip—truly an example of how the clubs are separate but work together to do the most for the youth.



This large number of games and equipment for the clubs was donated by the community in 1967 starting a long tradition of all kinds of games being integral and available at the clubs.



Sometimes food was an activity. This picture of a 1967 watermelon eating party and spitting contest was enjoyed by all.



This game of floor hockey in 1968 was a fun sport the youth could easily pick up with a few sticks and a puck. During this time, there also wasn't a basketball hoop, so the boys would use the chin-up bar on the side of the wall as the basket.



Many of the activities in 1970 were indoors because the armory location didn't allow for as much outdoor space, many of the favorite activities were shop, ping pong, and shuffleboard.



1971 was a very good year for boxing and wrestling, the field outdoors was also a fun place to play baseball.



Boy's Club Serving Greeley Boys

By STEVE BAUER
Tribune Sports Writer

With activities this summer on a bigger scale than ever before the Boy's Club of Greeley is looking even further to the future, with plans for a new building and greater community participation.

The local Boy's Club chartered by the Boy's Clubs of America eight years ago. Plans originally began in 1962 to build a boy's club, but there were several setbacks.

But with expanded programs in swimming, camping and baseball this summer, the Boy's Club is getting away from just crafts and archery.

With the new north side municipal pool, the Boy's club has instructional swimming five days a week.

And in addition to several "day camps" for one-day outings of fishing, hiking or fossil hunting, there are four three-day outings and possibly one seven-day outing are in this summer's plans.

Most of the activities for the boys are a combination of instruction and recreation. "We try to teach a child a skill and have fun at the same time," Boys' Club director Ken Grafft says.

This summer's schedule, drawn up with the help of the boys, includes baseball, swimming, camping, BB-gun shooting, basketball, biking, archery and camping.

There are also tours of Fort Vasquez, the Museum of Natural History, the Colorado State Capitol

department, the Air Force Academy and some local business firms.

But the Boys' Club still has its struggles. For one thing, there is a constant need to scrounge equipment and materials whenever and wherever possible.

The boys have planned and wanted to have canoe instruction, but the Boys' Club has had trouble obtaining canoes for the past two summers.

Grafft also listed sleeping bags, camp cook sets, tents, packs, shovels, axes, and "anything to do with camping" as equipment they would like people to donate.

Then there was the problem, now solved, of allowing the Museum of Boys' Club to have a team of its own in the Babe Ruth base-sheriff's ball program.

The Babe Ruth teams are all filled by a draft system. The City Recreation department felt that the Boys' Club shouldn't be an exception and have a team of its own.

But as Grafft explained, "The feeling here is that there are a certain number of kids who wouldn't participate in the baseball program without the Boys' Club being there."

The boy who comes to the Boys' Club "is a special kind of kid. He has different kinds of problems," Grafft said.

"But somewhere along the line, he has learned to respect our staff. For some reason, these are the only people the kids get along with."

Grafft added, "this comes back to us from other places, the schools and families." Some

kids who others consider unmanageable cooperate and work hard for the Boys' Club.

"The Boys' Club serves as a post for them to lean on," he said.

Grafft related, with emotion, a gratifying experience of a time this year when one of the boys came to him with a drug problem and wanted to get off the drugs.

The boy was afraid of his parents' reaction, but decided on his own that he wanted the Boys' Club staff to talk to his parents.

So Grafft did meet with the parents and talked to them about helping the boy.

"The kid came back to the Boys' Club the day after the talk and said he was closer with his parents as a result," Grafft said.

Another problem that is being overcome is ethnocentricity, or the tendency of an ethnic group to stick together in a tight circle.

"The club used to be 100 per cent low income when Grafft first came. We've struggled to bring in other classes and we have accomplished this to a point. But we are not satisfied," he said.

Leroy Mandez, a 16-year-old member who has been in the Greeley club since it started in 1964, says there are three reasons why he likes the Boys' Club: he likes to help the younger boys, he likes the staff and he likes the activities.

"If I weren't here, I'd just be out in the streets getting in trouble," he said.

Both Grafft and Mandez said that there are clashes among the members. Mandez explained that some people have to learn to share.

But both are looking forward to the building of a new facility in the hopes that it will solve some problems. A new building is planned somewhere north and west of the present site at 614 8th Avenue. "This will be in the future center of community interest," Grafft said.

"The kids now do have respect for property. They have worked hard to paint and fix up this old building. But a new building will be fantastic for the morale."

TRIBUNE Thurs., July 20, 1972

Girls Club activities begin Monday

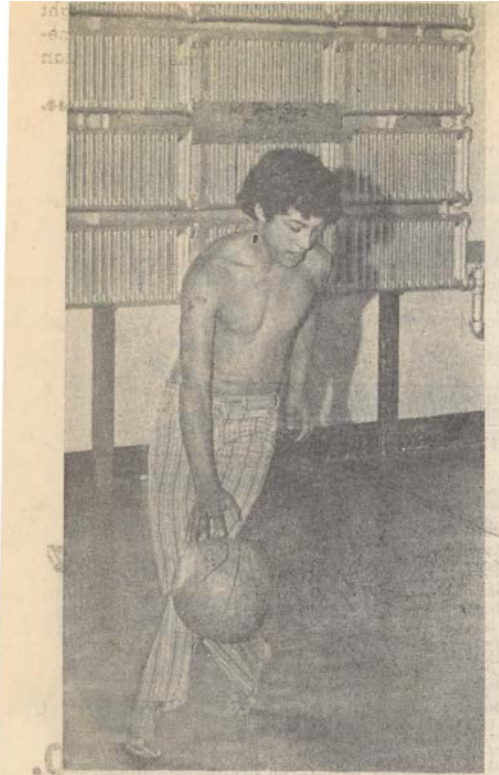
Girls Club activities will begin Monday for girls aged 10 through 16 at the Boys Club, 614 8th Ave.

Activities will run from 9 to 11 a.m. Monday through Friday. Included are swimming, field trips, sewing, cooking and fund raising projects.

Volunteer supervisors are welcomed.

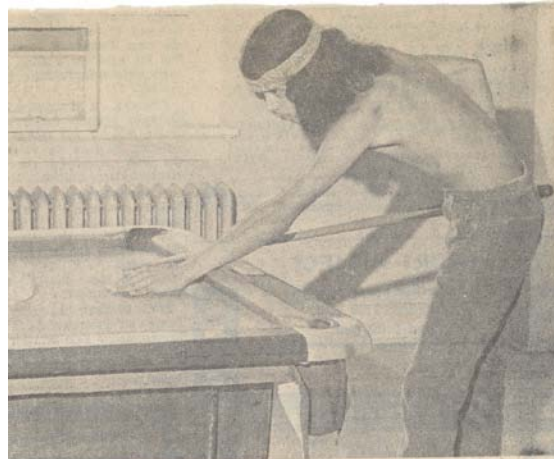
For further information telephone Ruby Duran, 352-8054.

Saturday, July 7, 1973
Greeley Tribune Page 6



Basketball Practice

Art Alva dribbles a basketball in the old gym.



Playing Pool

Billy Roybal lines up a shot on the Boy's Club pool table.

Tribune Photos by Steve Bauer

Thursday, March 1st, 1973
Greeley Tribune
Page 38



CHICKEN — Boys dine in at the newly opened dining room in Greeley. Don Schell, 123-Director, said such an environment provides boys with a sense of security.



BOY'S BAKING — Robert Anderson will make the first cup of right mixture for the next working class. The shop provides the boys with all the required tools and the area is located and storage space is a problem in the other areas.



CHICKEN — Robert Anderson is one of the many boys working in the new dining room.

Boys' club, a fun place for boys

Boys' club is a fun place for boys. The Greeley Boys' Club is an exception. It is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the town. It is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the world. It is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the universe.

The club is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the town. It is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the world. It is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the universe.

The club is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the town. It is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the world. It is a place where boys can learn to be responsible citizens of the universe.



BASKETBALL — One of the favorite activities of all the boys is basketball. Each year they play an organized league in the gymnasium. Practice games are held on several days.



POOL — Gary Garland looks on as the new pool table is set up at the club. The table is a gift from the local business community.



BOYS' CLUB — Boys are working on a project in the club. The project is a model of a city and is a gift from the local business community.

Story and photos
by Jim Craig



Pots and pans

Frankie Ramirez, 13, shows D. J. Lovato, 7, how it's done with the new pots and pans donated to the Greeley Boys' Club by the Greeley Junior Woman's Club. The Junior Woman's Club donated the equipment for the kitchen in the new Boys' Club building. They also participate in other Boys' Club activities donating a plaque and savings bond for the Boy of the Year. (Tribune photo by Jim Craig)

In 1974, one of the programs was a basic cooking class for the boys. It was one of many activities geared to make boys successful in independent life after the clubs along with the shop classes and other occupational training and tutoring.





'I want to be happy'

Greeley Boys' Club members assume comfortable positions while scanning books from the club library. They are Johnny Rodriguez, 7, upper left; Kevin McKenzie, 8,

right, and David Cameron, 7, all stretched out. These youngsters are among the 900 members of the Greeley Boys' Club, a United Way agency. (Tribune photo by Paul Moloney)

Friday, October 4th, 1974

Greeley Tribune Page 6





In 1977, a bonfire and participation in a Pow Wow were available to the boys providing for fun and cultural exposure, an experience many would not have had otherwise.



This 1978 picture is arts and crafts shows boys and girls enjoying the project together.

12 GREELEY (Colo.) TRIBUNE Tues., June 12, 1979

Greeley boxers eye national meet

Two Greeley boxers left early this morning for Greensboro, N.C., to compete in the AAU Junior Olympic National Boxing Championships.

Geoff Torres and Lee Galindo, both 15 years old, will represent the Boys' Club of Greeley in the national tourney, which starts today and lasts through Saturday. The top junior boxers from around the nation will compete.

The two boxers advanced to nationals by winning the state competition last month, and the regional competition two weeks ago at Salt Lake City, Utah. Torres will compete in the heavyweight division, while Galindo will compete as a lightweight.

Boys' Club coach Richard Martinez will accompany the pair to Greensboro.

The two had to pay half of their own expenses to the meet, with the other half being paid by the Westside Liquor and the Luncheon Optimist Club of Greeley.

Geoff Torres, left, and Lee Galindo...headed for nationals

In 1979, two boxers from the Greeley Boys' Club, 15-year-olds Geoff Torres and Lee Galindo were able to compete at nationals after winning in their weight classes at the regional meet. The Boys Club found sponsors that paid half of their expenses as the boys raised the other half. Many times the youth were encouraged to raise funds and work hard which was rewarded by support from the Clubs and community.

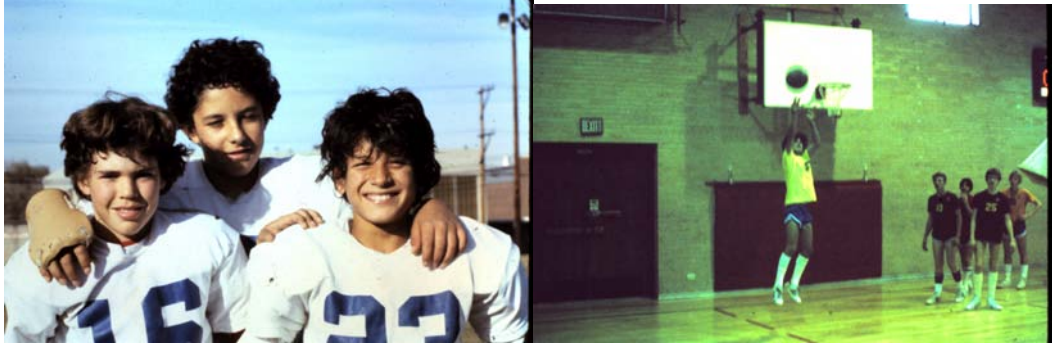


The 1980 river trip was along a route that had been used before for a kayaking, hiking, and camping trip, the weather was so nice the pictures came back beautiful.



This picture is from a zoo trip in 1981, where the youth are trying to decide where they want to go.

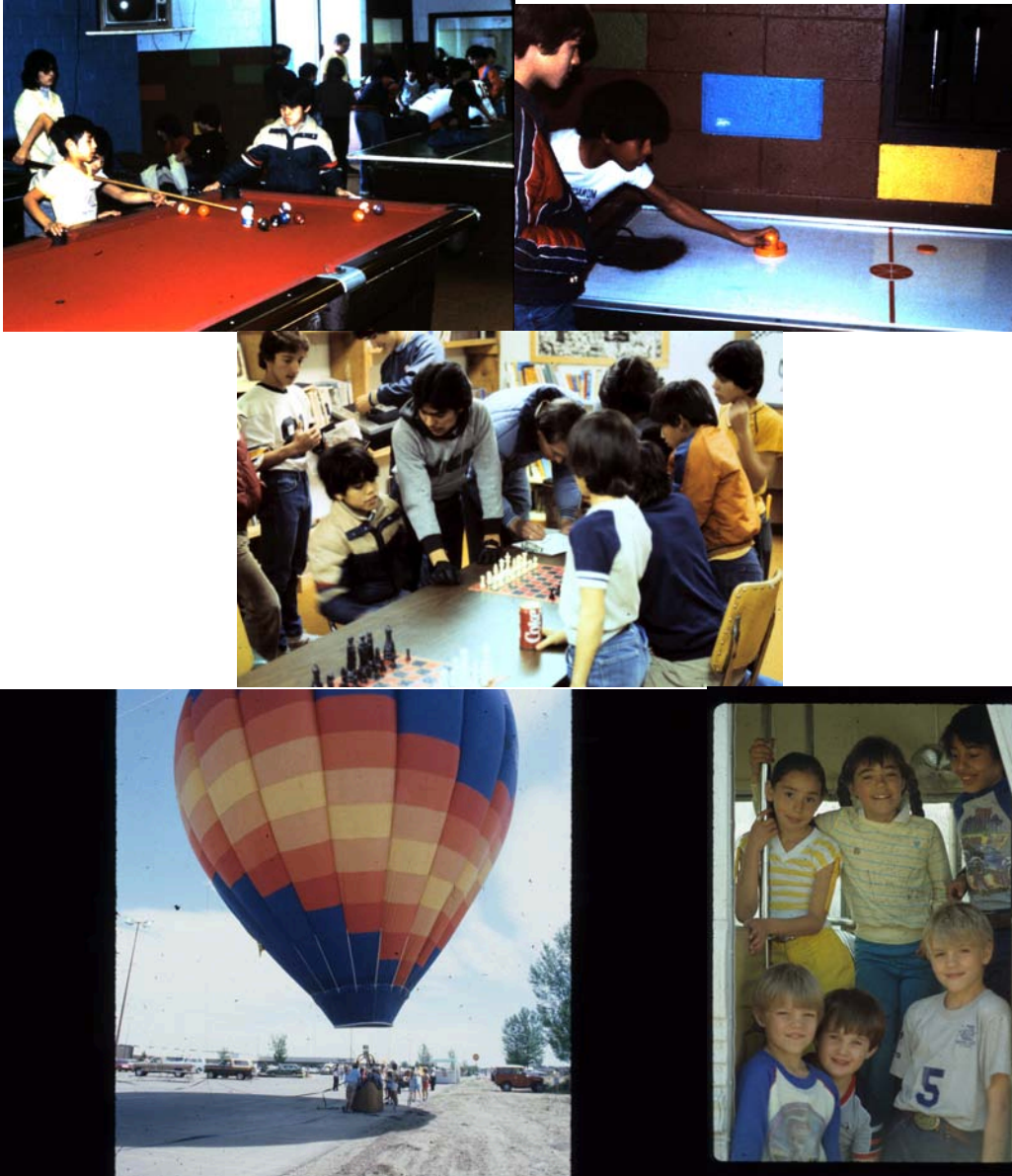




1982 had a lot of avid photographers documenting the activities from sports like basketball, football, and soccer, to the more time dynamic outings like scuba diving, the river trip, and holiday centerpiece creation and cards. Camera and film were more accessible and there are a lot more photos from the 1980's in the clubs' records than previous time periods.







1983 was littered with fishing trips, camping, carnivals, games room competitions, and enjoying balloon rides. The last picture here was of the new Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County bus, allowing more kids to be taken more places more easily.





1984 was an adventurous year. As more kids came to the clubs, more programs were needed. The cheerleading program took place during football and students were encouraged in their studies as well as enjoyed trips camping, kayaking, and standing in front of a large bull statue.



1985 was the first year a team photo for baseball could be found in the archives. Where most baseball photos before this time were on the sandlot, by this time, the youth had uniforms thanks to community support.



A 1986 trip to the ocean and Disneyland was a real treat for the youth.



Pictures from 1988 show us an expansion of both the availability of music programs and library at the clubs.



These pictures of collecting carving pumpkins and receiving gifts at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County in 1989 show some more of the community support so that youth could do things they might not get to at home.



In 1990, girls softball really took off in the clubs. Also during this time, CPR was taught during field day where everyone participated in activities about fitness.



Along with all of these, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Weld County continue to provide opportunities from weight lifting (in older times) to basketball and sledding in snow depending on what the youth are interested in.



Boys Club

Activities abound for both boys and girls

By BRUCE ROBB
Tribune Staff Writer

The Boys Club of Greeley is a busy place. Members come to play pool or video games in the game room or participate in sports, educational activities, vocational projects and social functions.

It doesn't cost much — only \$2 per year — because many don't have much, according to Boys Club director Carey Bryan.

Many are from low-income families who can't afford to join a health club. Others might not have a father or come from families where both parents work.

"We're a choice always open for kids no matter how much or how little they have," Bryan explains. "They use this place a lot. Many come every day."

The members, boys and girls from 7-18, clearly enjoy the club, housed in a building named after the late John E. Painter, a local rancher who was a dedicated supporter.

Some of the pool tables have rips in them and most of the equipment in the club shows a lot of use. But the walls are freshly painted and the club is kept clean.

Carey explains most of the funding to pay for the Boys Club upkeep and programs comes from United Way of Weld County and private donations. It takes about \$100,000 per year to run the place.

When the building was constructed in 1974, membership doubled and much of the money that was supposed to pay for finishing it was quickly put into programs to serve the children. Consequently, the outside of the building still isn't finished and it's a day-to-day battle to keep it in good repair, Bryan says.

However, members probably don't notice it that much. They seem to be too busy to care.

Currently, there are 538 boys and between 60-70 girls in the club. Bryan explains girls

are not asked to pay the membership fee because, technically, they should have a club of their own.

Budget restraints, however, prevent that and the Boys Club hasn't ever turned any female away.

Many of the children come specifically for the sports activities. The club has three football teams which play in the Denver Boys Club and Greeley Parks and Recreation leagues.

In the winter, members form a 25-team basketball league that plays in the club's junior high school-sized gym. There also are wrestling and baseball programs.

For the less athletically inclined members, there's a photography lab which is open in the spring when sports slack off, and a shop area where vocational and woodworking skills are taught.

Education isn't forgotten, either. There's a "Never Fail Program" that rewards children who have only two absences in school each quarter with a trip to the Denver Museum of Natural History to see the Laserium show in the planetarium.

An ongoing spelling program gives members lists of words to memorize (older members have to memorize definitions, too). When the lists are memorized, the children get a small reward of candy.

"One of our major goals is to give them a situation where they can be a success," Bryan says. "We also want to build character."

At the club's annual banquet, outstanding members get trophies. They're judged on citizenship and participation and, perhaps more importantly, on progress made in these areas.

"For some kids, we look at things like improvement in school or improvement in their behavior at the club," the director explains.

"If I hadn't joined 10 years ago, I'd

Club spotlight

probably be one of those crazy guys out on the streets," says Joe Rojas, who is now working there part-time as a staff member and assistant coach.

The 17-year-old Greeley Central High School student also is involved in the Keystone Club for teen-age members. The Keystone Club raised the money to buy the video games at the club and works on a variety of community service projects.

Bryan and a secretary are the only full-time staff members at the Boys Club. Volunteers, many from the University of Northern Colorado, make up the rest of the adults who supervise the programs.

"It's a broadening experience for any volunteer," Bryan says as three members try to get his undivided attention. "A few of them have come for a couple of hours and stayed for a few years."

Members are getting ready for one of the biggest events of the year — the annual Halloween Party.

"Last year, we stopped counting at 900," Bryan explains, "and at least 100 more kids showed up. It's free and open to anyone. It's also a madhouse."

There's a haunted house, pumpkin decoration, a band, clown makeup activities and other events at the party, which is scheduled from 1-3 p.m. Saturday.

Like many Boys Club activities, the party offers a little something for everyone.

But all of the fun has a deeper meaning, Bryan says.

"Our objectives are to promote character building, social, educational and physical growth and the responsibilities needed to live in a democratic society," he explains.

"If there's something here to do, they'll come," he adds, "and, if they come, they'll learn."



From

From snow trip to foosball, whether going to Washington D.C. to visit the Iwo Jima memorial or to the river to take another round in the kayaks, the fun continues as long as the clubs exist.



And with kids this fun, the future looks bright for the clubs and for the members that go there.



Article compiled and written by Laura Kay Hart, Americorps VISTA at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County using old clubs slides, pictures, and Greeley Tribune newspaper articles.

Expanding the Vision: The Boys & Girls Club of Weld County Buildings

The organization that eventually became the Boys & Girls Clubs of America has been around since 1860, but the Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County history started in 1962

when retired U.S. Ambassador to Brazil George Coleman founded the Boys Club of Greeley acting as chair in a group of Greeley's affluent men.

In 1964, the Boys Club of Greeley received its charter from the national organization and opened its first clubhouse in an old tire shop at 536 North 11th Avenue. Picture in tire shop location:

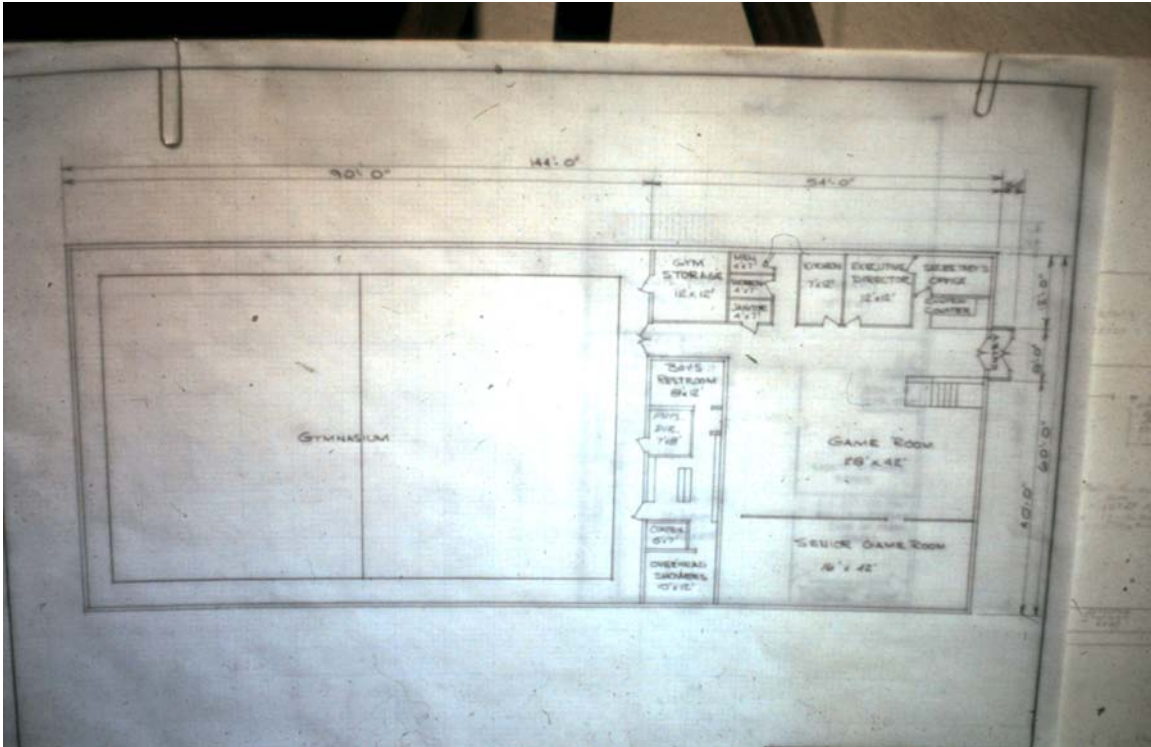


The tire shop burned down and a new location needed to be found. As the demands for more space grew, the Club was moved into the old State Armory building at 614 8th Avenue in 1967 to help serve more youth. Pictures from the armory:



As the national organization passed its 1000 Clubs milestone serving over 1,000,000 youth in 1972, the local club was also increasing in size and demand. Just previous to the milestone nationally in 1971, the first plans were made to build a larger unit in Greeley.

In order to build the clubhouse, a seven acre land site was left through the George Houston estate and the name in honor of John E. Painter was chosen through a trust set up by Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Littler to provide for the longevity of the clubs. The flagpole at the club is in memoriam of Jerry H. Cooper.



A lot of work was done by club members to complete the Painter Unit. These are pictures of boys welding and planting trees outside the unit:





In 1974, the Boys Club of Greeley completed the Painter Unit at 2400 W. 4th Street, serving over 150 young men each day.



In 1985, after an influx of sisters were being allowed in clubs so that their brothers could

attend, the national clubs changed the name to the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. Following suit, the local club became the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greeley and demand continued to increase.



In 1998, the demand increase allowed for the opening of the Pawl Unit at 2400 1st Avenue able to serve another 150 youth per day. In 2000, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greeley became the Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County to better represent the youth population being served. The plaque in front of the Pawl Unit commemorates the baseball field at the back of the unit.



After concerned residents and community officials petitioned the Clubs to offer after school programming to the youth of Milliken in 2001, the Two Rivers Unit opened. In 2005, community members banded to build and sell a house as a fundraiser to support the Two Rivers unit.



It was renamed to be the Art Barker Unit in 2011 after a hardworking and generous board member from the Milliken/Johnstown area, Art Barker, passed away.

The fourth location, the Galeton Unit, opened in 2004 running out of Galeton Elementary through a grant provided to the clubs. Youth and staff working to take their space and create a clubhouse in Galeton:



Today, the Clubs numbers continue to grow, serving the underserved populations in Weld County by providing snacks & meals along with programs that help to support the needs of the community. Perceived as merely a recreational center, the Clubs are a place where community is created for those that may otherwise be alone.

Aspiring, designing, and implementing programs, only a fraction of what's available at the clubs includes homework help, prevention programs, scientific exploration, introductions in the arts and music, leadership and social skills development, and unique sports programs not offered elsewhere in the community.

Currently, the John E. Painter building is being renovated and remodeled to reflect the clubs' growing needs and plans for the future. Plans for the recompleted Painter unit:

The Boys & Girls Club Monfort Family Youth Development Center



 Hensel Phelps
Construction Co.

Campus
The Anschutz Foundation
Youth Development Center
Monfort Family Foundation
Baseball Field
Colorado Rockies



There are hopes for serving more populations in Weld County in the future and the clubs are hopeful that with community support, we can build a brighter future by keeping the at-risk youth focused on a brighter tomorrow.

Article compiled and written by Laura Kay Hart, Americorps VISTA at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County using old clubs slides, pictures, and Greeley Tribune newspaper articles.