



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF TOPEKA**



# Topeka Needs Club Kids who lead.

## January 2026

### Message from Leadership

Topeka needs young people who are ready to lead. Not someday, but now. Our community depends on youth who can think critically, work with others, speak up for what is right, and show care for the people around them. Leadership is not reserved for the future. It is built through everyday choices and experiences happening right now in our Clubs. At BGCT, leadership is intentionally developed in the small moments that add up over time.



#### Building Tomorrow's Leaders: 2025 Impact

- **1,126 kids and teens** found a safe, supportive place to learn, grow, and lead at the Club.
- **49,039** nutritious meals and snacks were served, helping fuel healthy bodies and focused minds.
- **96% of members** report strong youth–adult relationships.
- **90% of members** report opportunities to explore new interests.
- **82% of members** demonstrate academic success.
- **80% of members** report increased career awareness.

**January 1<sup>st</sup>** | School Day Out Enrollment Opens for February

**January 1<sup>st</sup>** | Club Closed for Holiday

**January 2<sup>nd</sup>** | School Day Out - All Districts

**January 5<sup>th</sup>** | School Day Out - USD 345/450/501

**January 14<sup>th</sup>** | Early Release - USD 437

**January 14<sup>th</sup>** | Topeka Youth of the Year Luncheon

**January 19<sup>th</sup>** | School Day Out - All Districts

**USD 345** - Seaman

**USD 437** - Auburn Washburn

**USD 450** - Shawnee Heights

**USD 501** - Topeka Public Schools

### Leadership Opportunities This Month

School Day Out Enrollment closes **5 business days** prior to service. You must enroll in each day of service. Requests for withdrawal are **required** to prevent account charges on services and can be done in the Parent Portal.

### Strong Leaders Grow within Strong Communities

BGCT is committed to connecting families with trusted local resources beyond the Club walls.

**TRIO Educational Opportunity Center** - Discuss FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), career exploration and school selection

**Every Other Tuesday: 12:00pm - 6:00pm - SCPL**

**Community Action, Inc.** - Walk-In Resource Assistance  
**Every Friday: 1:00pm - 5:00pm - SCPL**

**Clase de Ingles:** English Language Class  
**Every Wednesday: 6:30pm - 8:30pm - SCPL**



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### 2026 Topeka Youth of the Year Candidates



Youth of the Year is our highest honor and a powerful example of what leadership looks like in action at Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka. This program recognizes members who demonstrate leadership, service, academic commitment, and a dedication to healthy lifestyles. More importantly, it gives young people the opportunity to reflect on their growth, use their voice, and represent the values of the Club.

Through the Youth of the Year experience, candidates learn that leadership is not about perfection. It is about perseverance, self-awareness, and using their experiences to inspire others. Youth prepare by writing about their Club journey, delivering speeches, and stepping into spaces that challenge them to speak with confidence and purpose. Along the way, they gain skills that will serve them far beyond the program itself.

#### 2025 Youth of the Year Candidates

- Darryl H. – Member since Kindergarten, 9th Grade, Topeka West
- Tierra W.– Member since 3rd Grade, 8th Grade, Jardine Middle
- Jaynasha E. – Member since 9th Grade, Junior, Topeka High

These young leaders represent the future of Topeka. Their voices matter, their stories matter, and their leadership is already making an impact in our community.



### Topeka YOY 2026 Luncheon

January 14<sup>th</sup> | 11:30 am - 1:00 pm | Adams Club - 550 SE 27<sup>th</sup> St.  
RSVP at [bgctopeka.org](http://bgctopeka.org)

*Who will be named 2026 Boys & Girls Clubs of Topeka Youth of the Year?*



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## Club Kids in Action **Aminah**

Aminah models respect, responsibility, and leadership. She follows Club expectations, supports her peers, and serves as a role model for younger members.

What sets Aminah apart is her ability to make others feel seen. She takes time to listen, asks others about their day, and creates a space where everyone feels included. Her kindness and positive attitude reflect the very best of what it means to be a BGCT member.

This quarter, Aminah has set a personal goal to earn strong grades in her classes. We are proud of the example she sets and excited to see all that she will continue to accomplish.

## How the Club Builds Leaders **Emory**

Emory is a Club member and second-grade student at Scott Dual Language Elementary who recently received an award for achieving bilingual proficiency, an impressive accomplishment at such a young age.

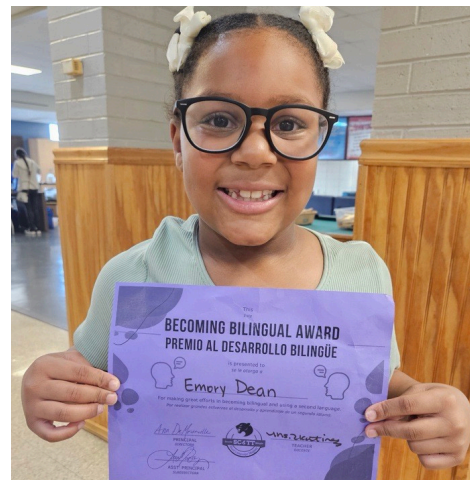
While Emory excels academically, what truly distinguishes her is the way she leads with kindness. At the Club, she supports her peers, offers encouragement, and helps create a welcoming and positive environment for everyone. Leadership is not defined by age or titles, but by how we treat others and show up each day.

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**“We are incredibly proud of her achievements both in and beyond the classroom.”**

Ms. Cici - Senior Director of Club Leadership, Adams Club Director

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### Mentoring Leadership

Each week, our youth light up when Ms. Shuhan walks through the doors, eager for the encouragement, fun, and positive energy she brings. She builds strong, trusting relationships by showing up fully, engaging with intention, and creating a safe and joyful environment where every Member feels seen, valued, and supported.

Whether she is sharing laughter, offering guidance, or simply being a steady and trusted adult, Shuhan's influence is profound and unmistakable. Thank you, Shuhan, for investing your time, energy, and heart into our Club. Our Members are stronger and more confident because of you.

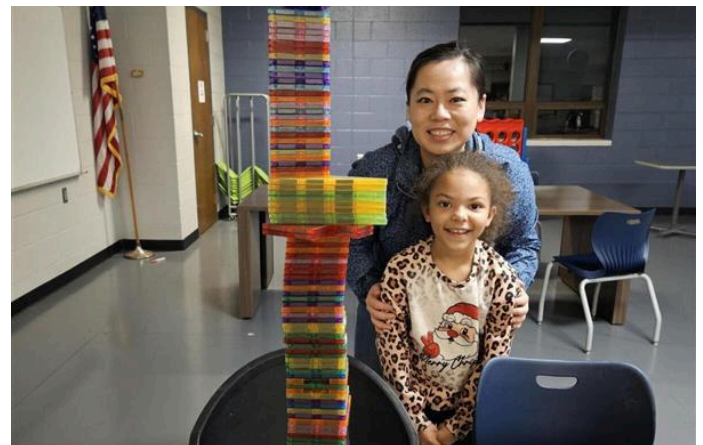
### What Leadership Looks Like at the Club

#### Members Teaching Members

Leadership is about guiding others with empathy and purpose. Recently, older members led a restorative circle for younger members focused on how to give a meaningful apology.

Using skills from their leadership programs, these youth modeled respectful communication and created a safe space for discussion. Younger members learned that a sincere apology includes taking responsibility, acknowledging impact, and making things right.

This experience highlighted the growth of our older members as leaders and showed how leadership thrives when youth are given opportunities to lead with compassion.





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### Community Supports Leadership Growth

#### Club Blue

This holiday season, Club Blue demonstrated what leadership looks like when a community comes together. Through their Holiday Bag Giveaways, Club Blue helped ensure our teens felt supported, valued, and seen during a critical time of year.

By providing thoughtfully prepared holiday bags for teens, Club Blue reinforced more than just seasonal generosity. Their support created opportunities for our teens to experience care, stability, and encouragement, allowing them to focus on growth, goal setting, and leadership development. When young people know their community believes in them, they are more confident in stepping into leadership roles and supporting others in return.



#### Club Leadership

**Reshon Moore | Membership**

785-234-5601 | [membership@bgctopeka.org](mailto:membership@bgctopeka.org)

**Ciarra Kendrick | Senior Director of Club Leadership, Adams Club**

785-600-8960 | [ciarakendrick@bgctopeka.org](mailto:ciarakendrick@bgctopeka.org)

**Amy Erickson | North Area Director**

785-380-1269 | [amy Erickson@bgctopeka.org](mailto:amy Erickson@bgctopeka.org)

**Amber Gierstorf | Tecumseh Area Director**

785-559-1433 | [TAD@bgctopeka.org](mailto:TAD@bgctopeka.org)

**Catherine Turner | West Area Director**

785-580-7769 | [westareadirector@bgctopeka.org](mailto:westareadirector@bgctopeka.org)

**Isaiah DeClerck | Teen Services Director**

785-559-1952 | [teendirector@bgctopeka.org](mailto:teendirector@bgctopeka.org)

#### Family Role in Growing Leaders

Simple actions make a meaningful difference. Asking your child about their day, encouraging them to help others, and recognizing positive choices all reinforce leadership skills. Creating space for youth to share their thoughts and feelings helps build confidence, accountability, and problem-solving skills.

Conversation starters can be as simple as:

- What was a moment today when you helped someone else?
- What was something challenging, and how did you handle it?
- What is one thing you are proud of today?

By encouraging youth to reflect on their choices, challenges, and growth, families help strengthen the leadership skills they are developing at the Club. Together, we are building the next generation of leaders Topeka needs.