ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Bullies Beware: Benefits of the Boys and Girls Club
AUTHOR(S):	Smith, Matthew
PRESENTED AT:	2014 Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities Symposium, Fort Lewis College

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the history and positive impact of the Boys and Girls Club of America. By empowering youth with leadership skills, academic achievements, and development of respect, members at Club are involved in a nurturing environment. This gives members the opportunity to acquire pro social skills while being in a safe environment. Youth involved in community after school programs are able to better navigate social skills of society and be less likely to be isolated and or manipulated by bullies. Members of the LaPlata Boys and Girls Club incorporate positive communication and interactions between themselves and leaders. The leaders realize bullying incidences must be identified and diminished before they are able to escalate. Opening in 2006, LaPlata BGC began sponsorship with United Way, LaPlata Electric, and local individuals providing members with the resources to develop leadership and academic skills. The Club also encourages members to develop respect and empathy for others and respect for themselves. Partnering with Sears has allowed the BGC to be involved with the national Stop Bullying program. Membership in The Club, gives youth the feeling of ownership of their facility, sense of security, and skills to enlist help if and when they experience bullying. In 2012, 270 members were involved in programs to promote good character and citizenship. At the end of the year, surveys were conducted and revealed; 75% felt they had gained leadership, and 93% reported treating others with respect was important. These results reveal members ability to incorporate positive behavior, leadership skills, and positively impact lives with the end goal of reducing those being bullied and bullying occurrences.