

Boys & Girls Club Target Learning

Canan Tasci, Staff Writer

Article Launched: 09/01/2006 12:38:00 AM PDT

The Boys & Girls Club of Fontana has created a match made in heaven with Target to receive \$2,000 toward their "Project Learn: Making Minutes Count."

"The funding from Target will enable us to provide more learning activities to the children," said Terrie Schneider, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club in Fontana. "Project Learn reinforces and enhances the skills and knowledge young people learn at school during the hours they spend at the Boys & Girls Club."

According to Target spokesperson, Kristi Arndt, since opening their first stores in 1962, Target has partnered with nonprofit organizations, guests and team members to help meet community needs.

"Target provides grants to initiatives and programs that inspire learning and improve access to education," Arndt said. "Target gives back more than \$2 million a week to its local communities through grants and special programs."

donating to Project Learn: Making Minutes Count the Boys & Girls Club of Fontana will be able to enhance and expand their program to provide the children with new opportunities at their facility. "The purpose of the Boys & Girls

Club is to inspire and enable all young people especially those from disadvantaged circumstances to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens," said Schneider.

Dedicated to making a difference in programs, Target has supported the Boys & Girls Club of Fontana for the past several years.

"We hope that through our support of Project Learning: Making Minutes Count, we help improve access to education and inspire children to learn," Arndt said.

To Schneider, donations are essential to aid in growth with in the club and the children.

"The Boys & Girls Club keeps kids as busy as possible and it allows them to have fun and gives a sense of belonging," Schneider said. "They know it's a safe place and they stay out of trouble."

With as many as 300 children between the ages of 6 and 18 participating in daily activities, Schneider stresses the importance of the facility.

"This is a safe a stable environment for the children to interact with other kids and the staff and have a great time," Schneider said. "We've opened the door with this program to help the kids with homework assistance, tutoring, high yield learning activities such as memory games and scrabble and anything else that can and will stimulate a child's brain."

"I think when people walk in and see that the kids are utilizing their time in a constructive manner it's impressive -- I'm impressed all the time," Schneider said.

providing updated facilities with computer software, internal radio stations, and a library with books, dictionaries and encyclopedias and school supplies the children are able to be resourceful in their time. "It's important that people know about the Boys & Girls Club because I think they think it's just a place where kids can go but it's not, it's a great place for kids to go and feel accepted and motivated," said Amy Grimm, director of education at the Boys & Girls Club of Fontana.

As the tutor in the Library Learning Center, Grimm also said she believes the center provides the kids with the help they need on their homework and motivates them to want to continue learning.

"Sometimes at their schools the classes are so over-packed with other students they might not get the help they need and so that's why they come and see me," Grimm said. "It's nice to know that the kids want to do their homework and that they want to read."

Motivating the children to want to learn is what Grimm said is the purpose of the learning center and Project Learn.

"This program motivates the kids to want to learn and have fun while they are doing it," Grimm said.

Grimm hopes that the money also will go toward buying extra books for the children.

"Many of the kids do not have books or their parents can't afford it or afford a tutor or simple things like pencils or paper, but we can and we can provide all those tools to encourage them to want to learn and do their homework and succeed," Grimm said.

Making a difference in the children's lives is what Shantee McKinney, 16, said is the most important reason why she joined the Boys & Girls Club.

"This is something I like doing and I like the kids, they look up to me," Shantee said. "That's important because I'm older and they can see how I act around them and the staff, I have to be that role model because they look up to me."

To many children, if not for the Boys & Girls Club's Learning Center they would be in their room away from their friends and play with their stuffed animals.

"If I didn't come here I would go to my room and listen to my radio or watch television," said Ayssa Samano, 11. "I feel like I get a lot of help from the learning center."

playing an important role in stimulating and motivating the learning process Grimm said she believes Project Learn is creating a long term effect in their future. "It is important for the kids to get involved with their education now because it is instrumental in their future, career and as they get older," Grimm said. "Once they can see they can do their homework they feel confident to go to college and not be discouraged. This is a great place for kids to go and feel accepted and motivated."