

## **Chaffee's Got Heart Community Spotlight: Boys & Girls Club of Chaffee County**

The Chaffee's Got Heart Committee is extremely proud of local businesses and individuals that have gone above and beyond by doing extraordinary things during these uncertain times.

From innovating ways to thrive despite trying circumstances to showering struggling members of our community with generosity to prioritizing the health and safety of our most vulnerable, these businesses and individuals, who have been nominated for this honor by fellow community members, have shown what it really means when we say: **Chaffee's Got HEART.**

Today, we sat down with **Executive Director, Brian Beaulieu of the Boys & Girls Club of Chaffee County** to find out how the pandemic changed operations at this non-profit created "to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as caring, productive, responsible citizens."

### **How did COVID cause you to innovate?**

We had to be flexible and respond to daily changes to meet the needs of our working families. We've always been a facility-based, face-to-face organization, so we had to change how we connect. Plus, we had to step up to a big challenge since we say: "whenever school is out, Boys and Girls Club is in." We did a lot of work to offer a safe place for kids to come when schools went remote. We reconfigured programming at both facilities (Avery-Parsons in BV and BGC in Salida) to create 3 safety zones where kids could spread out and work on their own, with staff roaming to help kids learn. We stand ready to open for safer learning if needed again, and when schools are open, we continue to offer our regular after-school program.



### **How did partnerships play into your success?**

This may not have been the challenge we were looking for, but because we live in a place where so many people have a high dose of common sense and know how to get things done, we were able to pivot and do what needed to be done. We used parks, spent more time outside, took advantage of environmental education programs, but it was all due to a team effort. We have the best program staff in our history and we are very fortunate to have such great partners. We worked closely with Public Health, both school districts and rec departments, superintendents, Chaffee County Community Foundation, Alpine Achievers Initiative/Americorps, and GARNA to make it all happen.

### **Why did you decide to go above & beyond to contribute to our community?**

We—my board, leadership team and program staff—are all very prototypical kid nuts. Our motivation really was missing kids. We love working with them, we get energy from them and we take particular pride in changing the trajectory of their lives so it was all about: how can we reach out? How can we stay connected? We would do whatever it takes to make sure kids are still safe, happy and learning.

### **Where do you see examples of the idea that 'Chaffee's Got Heart'?**

I see it every day in small gestures, and feel like it's not just heart, it's also common sense and people wanting to help others. Our phones have been ringing off the hook since Spring. People have always wanted to help our kids, but there have been so many more inquiries about how the kids are doing, and how people can help to make sure kids are safe, happy and their basic needs are being met.



### **What's your biggest takeaway from 2020?**

I gained a great sense of pride in our mission to serve kids who need us most. Working families have always had challenges and needs, but this year, it felt like we were built for times like this. This year proved we have the right staff, right mission and right partners. In some crazy way, we are spoiled in Chaffee County to have a fighting chance to do things well in the most challenging times. There's no other place I'd want to be during something like this because our community is so vibrantly helpful and up to the challenge.

### **Cool Tidbits:**

Chaffee Boys & Girls Club has been open since May 26 . It may look a little different, but they want everyone to know they are here for those who need them. If school is closed, they'll work with kids and families to stay on track. **If you need anything, or want to contribute, call: 719-539-9500.**

Our small club has produced award-winning members like the Southwest Region Youth of the Year, Athena Kintgen, and First Place National Fine Arts winner, Devyn Grundy.

To stay up-to-date visit: [bgcchaffee.org](http://bgcchaffee.org) or follow on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bgcbgchaffee).

\*\*\*

Stories of Chaffee County individuals and businesses rising to the challenge abound.

We will be shining a light on those doing extraordinary things for the community throughout the upcoming months. Visit our websites ([Chaffee's Got Heart](#) or [CCPH](#)) or follow us on [Facebook \(@COVID19ChaffeeCounty\)](#) to see more.

Know a potential candidate, or are you one yourself? Send nomination ideas to: [health@chaffeecounty.org](mailto:health@chaffeecounty.org).