



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF THE FOOTHILLS



**YOUR GIFT CAN BE THE TURNING POINT
IN A CHILD'S LIFE. INVEST IN A CLUB KID TODAY.**

Dear

My name is Peter Mejia and I am a Site Director at Boys & Girls Club of the Foothills. I manage both the Mary Wilcox Teen Center and our main site on Shamrock. **This holiday season, I want to sincerely thank you for your kind and generous support of our Club.** I know firsthand what an impact your generosity has on our kids. I know because I see it every day, and because **I was a Club kid too.**

I grew up in a tough neighborhood with a single mom and four siblings. My disabled younger sister needed round-the-clock care. My mother had renal disease and spent most of her days on dialysis or in the hospital. **We were on our own a lot.** Luckily, my apartment complex was right next to the Boys & Girls Club. When I was just five years old, I would run outside every afternoon to open the gate to let Beth, who drove the Boys & Girls Club van, enter the parking lot. "Be sure to come and see me when you're old enough to join the Club," she would say. And when I was old enough, I did.

That first day, Beth bought me an ice cream and showed me around the Club. **She made me feel like an honored guest. "This is your Club," she told me. "And here, we're family."**

It wasn't long before I joined the Junior Lifeguards program and got involved on the Club's swim team. I met staff members like Ray and Tony, who helped me discover a love for crafts and woodworking, mentored me, and set me up with tutors to help me with schoolwork. I never had any family attend my swim competitions, but I will always remember the day **Ray showed up on a Saturday** to cheer me on at my meet.

My older brother and sister were supposed to be at the Club too, but they would never come inside. Their lives took a different turn. **My brother dropped out of high school and got involved in drugs and my sister became a teen parent.** I was 15, and it was now up to me to take care of my mom, and my younger sister and brother. I cooked and cleaned for the family. I kept track of my mom's prescriptions and appointments. I made sure my sister's needs were attended to at all times. **We survived on food stamps and the free lunch we received every day at the Club.**

It was a heavy responsibility for a 15 year old and it started to make me angry. I carried around a lot of resentment and acted out by fighting and bullying other kids at the Club. **I made a string of bad choices, but the Club staff always welcomed me back with open arms and never judged me.**

My teachers, neighbors and even some of my own family members expected me to end up just like my older brother. **They would say things like "It won't be long before you'll drop out too." But it was different at the Club. They saw potential in me and believed that I could succeed.** They took a chance on me and gave me my first job as a lifeguard.

"You have a gift, Peter," Beth would say. "Don't ever forget that. You might not see it now, but someday you will." Her faith in me helped drive me to stay on track. I almost didn't graduate because I was struggling in math, but my tutor worked diligently with me every day. I passed my class, and **I became the first person in my family to graduate from high school.**

(continued on reverse)



Now Peter tutors our kids!



Peter shares his passion for woodworking with our members.



As Site Director, Peter oversees all programming and mentors some of our most troubled kids.

I kept working at the Club, and worked my way up through different positions. I fell off track a few times and learned a lot of hard lessons, but **I was surrounded by people who cared and believed in me, and that made all the difference.** I decided to continue my studies. Not only did I gain confidence in my own professional abilities, I developed socially and learned what it meant to be a person of integrity and strong character. I even met my wonderful wife at the Club, who took notice of the man I was becoming.

The real turning point for me was the year my mom died. We had no money to pay for her funeral. The Club raised the money for us to give her a proper burial. People I had never met were donating to help us. The kids I worked with at the Club were all checking up on me. Many even attended her memorial service out of respect for me. **I had never felt that kind of support in my life, and I was humbled by it.**

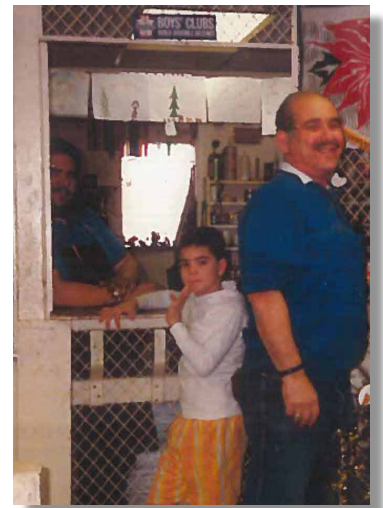
Looking back, I can see that the Boys & Girls Club has had an impact on **every part of my life.** The Club was my source of stability when everything else around me was caving in. **I honestly believe I would be in prison right now if it hadn't been for the Boys & Girls Club.**

Every day, I work with kids just like me. The same background. The same types of challenges. The same coping mechanisms. The same mistakes. But I know **they have the same potential.** What Beth saw in me as a youth, I see in the eyes of our kids daily. And with the love of our caring staff and the resources that the Club provides, **I know they will one day be writing a letter like this, sharing how they overcame their obstacles and went on to lead successful lives, due to the generosity of supporters like you.**

I'm living proof that investing in the Boys & Girls Club goes far beyond our four walls. It's an investment in a life. An investment in someone's future. The turning point that so many of our kids need to set them on a different path.

I invite you to make that investment by giving to Boys & Girls Club of the Foothills this holiday season. There is no greater return than a life changed.

The investment others made in me is now coming back to a new generation of youth at Boys & Girls Club of the Foothills. I am honored to be in a position to give back to the very organization that saved my life and I work hard to deserve such a privilege. I want to leave a positive impression on each and every one of our members. I want to find jobs for our teens. I want to help parents who are struggling with their kids. I want to motivate staff to dig deep and find a way to make each child who walks through our doors feel important, like an honored guest. Like family. Just like I felt on my first day at the Club, so many years ago.



Young Peter, with Ray and Tony

This is my dream. Join me! You can be that turning point for a child, as so many were for me.

Happy Holidays,

Peter Mejia
BGCF Site Director

PS. Fill out the form below and return your gift in the envelope provided, or donate online. I assure you your generosity will continue to make an impact for generations to come! Just start with one child.



PUT YOUR GIFT TO WORK FASTER BY DONATING ONLINE: www.foothillsbgc.org

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$3,600 – Sponsor a child for an entire year | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75 – Sponsor a child for one week |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,500 – Sponsor a child for 100 days | <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 – Sponsor a BFCF child for one day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$600 – Sponsor a child for eight weeks | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Amount: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 – Sponsor a child for one month | \$ _____ <i>Everything helps!</i> |

Make a monthly recurring gift: \$ _____ per month
Donate \$15/month to become a "180 Champion"

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Check payable to *Boys & Girls Club of the Foothills* enclosed Please charge my VISA MC AMEX
CARD# _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ SECURITY CODE _____

*Boys & Girls Club of the Foothills is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Tax ID#95-4453545
Does your company have a matching program? If so, please file the necessary forms to double your donation!*

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