

Youth Foundation pushes for a Cheektowaga Boys and Girls Club

By **Jim Herr** - September 13, 2018



CHEEKTOWAGA – The Cheektowaga Youth Foundation pitched a proposal Tuesday night to bring a Boys and Girls Club of America to the Town of Cheektowaga.

Brian Gould, a lieutenant with the Cheektowaga Police and a citizen member of the foundation, led the presentation before the town council.

“The youth of Cheektowaga really have no safe, supervised location just to meet, hang out, and develop,” said Mr. Gould.

He introduced, Daniella Diati, a criminal justice student at Hilbert College and former intern of the police department. She completed a research project showing how a Boys and Girls Club could help the town.

“The highest volume of larceny arrests for juveniles under the age of 18 was at the Galleria mall,” said Ms. Diati. “These juveniles will be connected to staff who will overall become role models. They’ll be surrounded by peers with the same goals and these programs will motivate these juveniles to increase their social skills and overall mental health.”

Brian Pilarski resides in the Maryvale School District and is the Executive Director of the Seneca-Babcock Community Association.

"I attended the Boys and Girls Club since I was about six-years-old," said Mr. Pilarski. "I came from an at-risk family, broken home; my mom was working two jobs. I had three brothers. I attended the Boys and Girls Club; the other two did not. I ended up making it through college on a full scholarship, joined the military, and now I'm doing pretty well for myself. My other brothers dropped out of high school."

The foundation tells the town council that Cheektowaga's Boys and Girls Club would operate as a satellite club of the Depew/Lancaster Club because of a moratorium imposed by the national organization due to an over saturation of clubs.

They hope the town would consider allowing the club to use a portion of the Alexander Community Center at 275 Alexander Avenue through an in-kind lease agreement.

"The Alexander Community Center is located in an area of high need. The poverty level in that neighborhood is very high. We know that our response as far as police-related issues is high in that neighborhood," said Mr. Gould. "The schools are behind us, and they're willing to provide bus transportation for kids after school, so we won't have a problem with kids getting to participate."

Improvements would need to be done at the center to meet the specifications of the national organization and security concerns.

"Any improvements the Boys and Girls Club would fund to the building would then be the property of the Town of Cheektowaga," Mr. Gould added.

The executive director of the Cheektowaga Chamber of Commerce says the business community is behind the foundation's initiative.

"Investing in our youth would have long-term positive effects on our workforce," said Kristina Groff. "For this reason, among many others, [the board of directors] request that you would consider supporting the initiative of the Youth Foundation."

The presentation was informational and the town council did not take any action on the matter Tuesday night.

Copyright 2018 Crabapple Media, LLC. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed without prior permission.

Send a News Tip to Cheektowaga Chronicle

Subscribe to our mailing list below and read the latest news from Cheektowaga Chronicle in your email every morning at 9 am.

* indicates required
Email Address *

First Name

Last Name

Subscribe

CHEEKTOWAGA CHRONICLE