

We value the opportunity to share with you the great amount of thought and research that went into our decision to remain open.

Please know that we do not take COVID-19 lightly. In fact, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Conejo Valley is providing a much-needed service to our community during this crisis and has been identified as an essential service provider that should stay open by national, state and local officials in their guidance on how to respond to the pandemic.

We are remaining open as a critical service for the care of children put at high risk because of school closures. These include economically and physically vulnerable children, children of families for whom telework and paid sick leave is not available, and the children of healthcare workers and other essential workers.

Our aim is to provide continuity of education, enrichment and academic support, and social emotional assistance to youth and their families during these unprecedented times, while contributing to social cohesion and the long-term ability of our communities to provide the essential services necessary for all members.

It has been well documented in the guidance that “in current times, schools play roles supporting their community needs beyond education ... the lack of supervision of students during unexpected and prolonged school closures can have a major economic and productivity impact on families and communities. In addition, school closures can create an even greater negative impact on the healthcare field whose critical workers during a pandemic depend on school time for their children's supervision.” (State of California Health and Human Services Agency, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, and the Department of Education, entitled “COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care and Student Supervision in the Event of a School Closure”, published on March 17, 2020 (available at: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/guidance.asp>).

While long-term school closures may support flattening of the COVID-19 curve, the provision of services that BGCVCV provides (childcare paired with educational, enrichment, and social emotional support from a trained and trusted adult mentor) during those closures is essential to ameliorate the exponential increase in negative social, economic and educational impacts to children, their families, and the community as a whole. The CDC provides an extensive outline of those impacts, according to the length of school closure in their document entitled “Considerations for School Closure” (available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/considerations-for-school-closure.pdf>).

Furthermore, guidance surrounding Governor Newsom’s most recent executive order N-33-20 issued 3/19/2020, as well as Ventura County and Los Angeles County public health guidance have all identified childcare providers as **essential services that should stay open**. The above referenced documents, as well as the order and county guidance documents are all available at our website here: <https://www.bgcconejo.org/covid-19/>.

When they come to our clubs, children are not only being supervised, they are receiving educational support and access to technology so that they can engage in school work. We will continue to run enrichment programming covering a wide array of topics. Our staff will be

providing youth with social emotional support through these tumultuous times. BGCVCV has a dedicated Social Emotional Learning expert that has been supporting our staff emotionally through these times and is leading ongoing trainings to guide our work with youth to cope with the negative impacts of the pandemic. Finally, youth will be provided with healthy snacks. We keep abreast on the latest guidance from our public health officials and adhere strictly to all health and safety guidelines including group size, disinfecting, handwashing and temperature taking, as they are provided. Further, staff are trained in how to talk to young people about the spread of COVID-19.

There is overwhelming evidence that the services that BGCVCV can provide in our clubs right now will help our community overcome the COVID-19 pandemic. Our clubs will continue to operate as long as they are able to provide a safe environment for young people, always placing the safety of youth and staff first. We hope that you will take the time to review the literature that supports this decision.