MEET OUR 2020 YOUTH OF THE YEAR!
From the Desk of Executive Director

Tim McChristian

“IT IS ONLY IN OUR DARKEST HOURS THAT WE MAY DISCOVER THE TRUE STRENGTH OF THE BRILLIANT LIGHT WITHIN OURSELVES THAT CAN NEVER, EVER, BE DIMMED.”

— Doe Zantamata

COVID-19 is impacting low-income neighborhoods in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, where cases and mortality rates are disproportionately higher. Our community members are more likely to be out of work, unable to work remotely, or faced with a difficult choice to attend work and endanger their families. Some parents are struggling to meet basic needs for their kids. Education gaps and lack of access to technology mean that when schools reopen, the achievement gap is likely to widen. Madison’s mission to serve communities in the most under-resourced areas of NYC has never been more critical.

We know that as a community, city, nation, and world, we will continue to face challenges and new obstacles every day as we work to combat the effects of this devastating pandemic. As a result of COVID-19, we’ve had to postpone special events, temporarily empty our Clubhouses, and support our staff from afar. But we know that these challenges are nothing compared to the uncertainties our Madison kids and their families are facing.

Because of the support of Madison’s friends and partners, we have been able to:

• Provide virtual afterschool programming which focuses on social & academic support and recently expanded to include arts & crafts and healthy lifestyles
• Assist families with challenges such as limited home internet access and lack of devices
• Serve as an information hub for our Madison community by directing members and their families to food and other resources as needed

Our doors may be temporarily closed, but the spirit of Madison is stronger than ever. While the Clubhouse experience has temporarily changed for kids, the resiliency and determination that defines our community is at its peak. We are more than our Clubhouses. We are a Madison family. And when times get tough, families take care of each other.

Warmest regards,

Tim McChristian

Executive Director

Madison Square Boys & Girls Club
Since 1884, Madison has been saving and enhancing the lives of youth by providing after-school and summer programs for children in New York City’s most under-resourced communities. Programs are engineered to empower each member to achieve three priority outcomes: Academic Success, Good Character & Citizenship, and the adoption of a Healthy Lifestyle. Every day, Madison provides thousands of children with a safe and positive environment, one where fun is encouraged and positive role models are plentiful. A founding member of Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Madison currently serves more than 5,000 youth, ages 6 to 18, at six Clubhouses in Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Harlem.

www.madisonsquare.org

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Finding a Home at Madison

Madison was founded on the idea that every child, regardless of circumstance, should have a safe place to go after school. All young people are welcome inside our Clubhouses and we are continuously amazed at the diversity, understanding, and bond we see amongst our members. Our Clubhouses are often a meeting place for youth who have not yet found their niche. While the obstacles and challenges our members face vary, within our Clubhouse walls, members find their home, a safe space to learn, and thrive.

We meet kids wherever they are and unify our members in a healthy, harmonious way. While our Pinkerton Clubhouse is a recent addition to the Madison family, we already see the impact it is having on the surrounding community, our members and their families, including member Marc and his mom, Shan.

When Marc was diagnosed with autism, Shan had trouble finding the right afterschool environment for him for years, especially an affordable safe place near their home in Harlem. Since the age of 2, Marc has been receiving the best services that his mom could afford to provide, including a prestigious preschool in a school district that provides more creative outlets and serves children with differing and special needs. With all of that in mind, Shan shared with Madison that she has never experienced a place like the Pinkerton Clubhouse. When she discovered the Clubhouse through one of our community outreach events, Shan learned that children on the autism spectrum are not only welcome at Madison but also celebrated and cherished. Marc is seven years old and she plans on having him attend Pinkerton until he turns eighteen.

Our goal is to offer programs that are both enriching and effective while still being fun. Our hope for every Club kid is that their experiences at the Club enhance their daily lives and prepare them for the future. In Shan’s words, “Marc is doing better than ever outside of the Clubhouse. He is more socially appropriate, takes initiative in learning how to conquer new tasks, and he loves being there!” Shan also shared that not only is he improving socially and mentally, but also, he is improving physically and eating healthier. She credits this improvement to what he learns at Madison. Shan reflected on a unique experience that really stood out for her. One day Marc asked his mom for a carrot after seeing other kids eat them at the Clubhouse. He ate the whole thing and has since added them to his diet. He also tells her about the variety of physical activities he gets to participate in. He usually says, “I love gym–we get to go jogging!”

Knowing that Marc is safe and in good hands is something Shan considers priceless. While Marc’s story is unique, his story is one of thousands. After years of searching for a safe place where he is supported and challenged to grow, he has finally found a second home at Madison.
The Youth of the Year Program Fosters Good Character & Citizenship

The Youth of the Year program celebrates the remarkable lives of Madison Square Boys & Girls Club members who have distinguished themselves by rising above challenging circumstances. Finalists are chosen from each Clubhouse based on moral character, community involvement, academic achievements, and obstacles they have overcome.

Kemoy Hutchinson, 17
Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse
Member: 9 Years
Future Plans: Marine Biologist

“Never minimize your worth because your worth is bigger than it seems.”

Joshua Pierre, 17
Navy Yard Clubhouse
Member: 2 Years
Future Plans: Cardiologist

“You can’t achieve anything entirely by yourself. You need a support system behind you.”

Samara Acevedo, 17
John E. Grimm III Clubhouse
Member: 6 Years
Future Plans: Nurse Anesthesiologist

“Success is not something easily earned, so start your success journey at the Madison Square Boys & Girls Club.”

Yashante James, 17
Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse
Member: 7 Years
Future Plans: Social Work

“Never minimize your worth because your worth is bigger than it seems.”
Preparing for the Future

Madison’s Clubhouse staff is a unique blend of fresh faces and individuals who found their way to a Clubhouse to impact the lives of youth whom they were once like. The diversity of our staff is a testament to the values of the Club. Staff work hard to ensure our members understand that they are safe and secure, accepted as they are, and simply celebrated. All of our staff members help to prepare our youth for the future and focus on making them more well-rounded individuals. Madison’s vision is that every member leaves the Club academically ready, a leader, fit and healthy, and a high-school graduate with short and long term goals for future success. Our programs are our strategy to achieve our vision, and each program is developed and delivered with intention.

Tying together the member experience with those critical post-Clubhouse days, our Directors of the Future at each Clubhouse are responsible for our Project Graduate Program (PGP). The program is designed to ensure members demonstrate academic success and that seniors graduate high school on time with a plan for the future. They provide individual guidance and referrals to all members of PGP to ensure they are being promoted to the next grade levels throughout their time at the Clubhouse. They also help to advise members on career and college options and lead them on college tours. For example, most recently, members from our Elbaum Family Clubhouse, Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse, and Navy Yard Clubhouse visited Washington D.C. to tour Howard University. Beyond higher education, our Directors of the Future are critical to helping our members focus on gaining employment and internships. They facilitate workshops and training on resume creation, interview, presentation, and public speaking skills for our members to aid them in their preparation for college and a future career.

In that same spirit of accountability, education, and growth, our Empowerment Directors at each Club are responsible for delivering programs that support mental health, emotional maturity, and substance and alcohol abuse prevention. Programs are designed to empower youth to make proper decisions and teach them the importance of life-long healthy decision-making and behaviors. They prepare our members to be leaders, upstanding citizens and community role models. Our Empowerment Directors teach our members the affirmative values of self-care, good nutrition, exercise, positive self-esteem, and prepare them to ward against negative influences. The goal is that our members leave with the strength, knowledge, and desire to make good decisions about their health and their relationships.

The positive peer pressure and reinforcement that occurs at the Clubs impact participants’ choices and decisions, and members are less likely to become involved in costly, destructive behavior. Rather, they become role models and ambassadors for promoting tolerance, diversity and inclusion. Members develop a strong moral compass and realize that they can take responsibility for their own actions as well as make a meaningful difference in the world at any age.
Opportunities Abound!

Madison is able to offer our youth a host of opportunities thanks to our wonderful partners, including our friends at The Garden of Dreams Foundation, Disney, and the PitCCh In Foundation.

The Garden of Dreams Foundation continues to provide both educational and recreational activities for our members. Recently, they hosted a Black History Month panel with the New York Rangers and invited one of our staff members to engage in an exciting conversation around ways to make hockey more accessible in under-resourced communities. In conjunction with Good Sports, Garden of Dreams has also been instrumental in providing hockey equipment for our Clubhouses, providing them with the tools to play street hockey and stay active. They frequently offer tickets to our members and families to various sporting events and concerts at Madison Square Garden. Finally, the Garden of Dreams Foundation also hosts an annual Talent Show at Radio City Music Hall - one or more of our members is usually invited to perform!

Disney is another partner that continuously provides opportunities for our members. They frequently host TV show premieres at our Clubhouses to give members a sneak peek into a new Disney show or movie. Most recently, they invited Madison to attend a Rodgers and Hammerstein music performance at The Kaye Playhouse. Members were able to learn about the work and collaboration that goes into writing the music for musicals in a pre-performance workshop with an associate conductor from the orchestra.

Another partner whose generosity knows no limits is the PitCCh In Foundation. Spearheaded by C.C. and Amber Sabathia, the PitCCh In Foundation continues to provide support for our members. To celebrate C.C.’s last season with the Yankees, 52 members from Madison were invited to go to a Yankees game and meet him last summer. The Sabathias especially delight in making the holiday season special for our members.

Over this past holiday season, C.C. and his wife Amber visited Madison and distributed Xbox gaming systems to our members. Annually, the PitCCh In Foundation also hosts a holiday party for members of Madison. This past year marked the 10th one! They hosted 70 of our members and the evening’s activities included arcade games, bowling, go-kart racing, shopping and much more.

Opportunities such as the ones provided by our partners go a long way in enriching the lives of the young people that we serve. They motivate and encourage our members to prepare for a future in which they can give back to their community in a similar way. Thank you to all of our partners who strive to provide the best experiences for our members!
On Friday, December 6, 2019, more than 500 friends of Madison gathered at Cipriani 42nd Street to celebrate the holidays and wrap-up another year of empowering 5,000 children from New York City’s most under-resourced neighborhoods. The evening raised more than $1.3 million to support our mission to save and enhance the lives of New York City youth. Guests were treated to a special performance by the Columbus Clubhouse and Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse dance teams and singers. We were proud to have alumna of the Thomas S. Murphy Clubhouse, Sarahfina Cunningham, serve as the Mistress of Ceremonies and Clubhouse alumnus Robert Brown, now the VP and CFO for the New York Yankees, was our special guest speaker. A special thank you to all who supported and attended!

Mark Your Calendars!

2020 Youth of the Year Week: May 18 through May 22, visit www.madisonsquare.org/yoy to learn more

Style of Life: September 2020

54th Annual Christmas Tree Ball: December 4, 2020

For more information on any of our upcoming events, please e-mail our Director of Communications & Special Events, Gabby Schiraldi at gschiraldi@madisonsquare.org
The mission of Madison Square Boys & Girls Club is to save and enhance the lives of New York City boys and girls who by means of economic and/or social factors are most in need of its services.

Thank you to our 2020 Youth of the Year Sponsors!

Heroes

Mentors

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