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## Clifton club campaigns for future

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COURTESY OF CLIFTON BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

The Clifton Boys & Girls Club took part in the July 21 national Great Futures Campaign kickoff with events and a mayoral presentation.

CLIFTON – As a part of the nonprofit's national campaign the local Boys & Girls Club chapter closed last week with a special event highlighted by a live broadcast from a New York City landmark, student performances and a presentation from the Mayor.

The Great Futures Campaign, the club's July 31 national kickoff event, commenced on "Good Morning America" with the objective of providing every child or teen with access to a safe place to visit after school and during summer recess.

At its Colfax Avenue headquarters, Clifton youth members performed a medley of dances they had been practicing during the summer program and Mayor James Anzaldi presented a proclamation on behalf of the City.

The day culminated with the Clifton chapter joining a live podcast broadcast from Times Square, the Big Apple's most famous intersection.

Executive director Robert Foster said the City's Boys & Girls Club hopes the campaign inspires prospective members to join its chapter and acquire "the knowledge, skills and positive behavior" which can put them on a path toward success.

Every day, 15 million kids across America leave school with no place to go putting them at risk of being unsupervised, unguided and unsafe, according to Club information.

During the summer, about 43 million, or about 75 percent of American children, lack access to summer learning programs. The nonprofit contends that this increases the children's risk of learning loss, thereby putting them at a disadvantage before the school year starts.

The kickoff campaign aims to mobilize the nation to reverse what it believes to be a negative trend facing America's youth and raise awareness of the nonprofit organization.

"When the nation prepares to go back to school this fall, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Clifton wants to ensure out-of-school is part of the conversation," Foster said. "We're taking a leadership role with the Great Futures Campaign to elevate the impact of...a critical, yet often overlooked, part of their day."

The club has been serving the community for 67 years and, during that time, the Colfax facility's director believes it has created a positive impact. According to representatives of the City's Boys & Girls Club, its 2013 outcomes report demonstrates success regarding the academic and behavioral progress.

About 95 percent of the chapter's teenage members expect to complete high school and 91 percent plan on pursuing a bachelor's or associate's degree.

Sixty-five percent of the Clifton club's teens volunteer in the community at least once per year and 53 percent volunteer at least once per month.

On addition to exercising their mental muscles, 61 percent of the chapter's membership engages in physical activity five or more days each week.

"We want today's generation to be successful in school as well as in adulthood," said Foster, "and to be healthy, active and develop strong character skills they need to become future leaders for our country."

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