

# Boys & Girls Club of Buffalo:

## Better Data Management for Better Results



Source: Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo Facebook Page - 4/29/15

## CASE STUDY: Improving Operations & Providing More Impact

Since 1926, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo has been at the forefront of youth development, working with young people from disadvantaged economic, social, and family circumstances. The club seeks to provide disadvantaged youngsters with greater access to quality programs and services that will enhance their lives and shape their futures.

*"Our club leadership wanted to be able to tell the vibrant stories of children's club experiences using current data. To do this it was important to understand what was being done hour by hour."*

Shari McDonough  
Chief Executive Officer  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Buffalo



### Executive Summary

Through a Gift of Support from the Cullen Foundation, BGC Buffalo (BGCB) implemented COMET in conjunction with improved data management practices. Leveraging the operational features to survey program outcomes, take attendance, manage membership and report required information to funders and Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), they use COMET to run their operations and improve them. The organization's transformed data management practices leverage COMET to achieve better results for the youth served, and all their stakeholders.

Measured outcomes include:

- Quick and accurate reporting for 21st century grant
- Improved payment processes, collecting \$60,000
- Unquestionable return on investment (ROI)
- Ability to tell children's success stories quickly & accurately

## Challenges

The organization was being challenged financially. Data management was not a priority and processes were primarily manual and verbal. They struggled with process documentation & implementation. While they did have an existing member tracking system, it provided limited access to their records, and they couldn't generate good reports, as it was contaminated by years of inconsistent data practices. There was a lack of appreciation of the importance of good data and data management practices to drive an optimum club experience. This contrasted sharply with that fact that funders were requiring more, accurate data as program evidence to secure and maintain funding.

*"It was very easy to get started with COMET. It was a good decision for our club to have a fresh start and not transfer old, inaccurate data."*

## How COMET Helped

COMET was selected primarily based on functionality and features demonstrated during the sales process. One major requirement was that the tool be web-based. COMET's team was able to provide in-person, hands-on customer service, including specialized training for the specific needs of BGC Buffalo. The BGCB team found that it was very easy to get started with COMET and they decided to start with new, fresh data and did not transfer any old data. They worked well with COMET support; when there were questions the experience was pleasant and the response turnaround was very quick. Through this process, the BGCB team recognized clearly that success of the use of any tool is dependent on club leadership and operations aligned with good data management practices.

BGC Buffalo now uses data from COMET to not only run their operations, but to improve them. They rely on their organization's accurate data and management practices to achieve better results for the youth served and all their stakeholders. Reliable data makes all the difference. Now they can count on their food report to funders being quick and accurate. The old system was not proficient at determining if data was duplicated, so they had to question the reliability of reports. COMET's market-leading functionality to identify and remove duplicate records supports good data management practices in an efficient, tangible way.

## Results and Future Plans

BGC Buffalo takes full advantages of the built-in surveys and flexible reporting of COMET. They use evaluators as part of their 21st Century grant, with three BGCA surveys included in COMET. In the past, the manual evaluation wasn't accurate and was quite time consuming. Now that they use COMET, save time and have more accurate results. Easy reporting means they can now tell their children's success stories – quickly and accurately!

An unplanned benefit from using COMET is the capability of billing parents for Club fees. Since switching to COMET, BGCB has collected over \$60,000 in fees – in the past this was a monumental task with many inaccuracies. BGCB improved their payable process and is now collecting data as part of their daily lives and is a built-in component in the processes used to conduct business. Every Friday, they generate and review reports, communicate lessons learned and stories from these reports, thus making the organization stronger and resulting in better outcomes for their kids.

The goal for BGCB is to continue to improve their use of metrics, in conjunction with national efforts. They currently provide required metrics to BGCA [COMET provides automated reporting as part of required National Youth Outcomes Initiative (NYOI) and annual report information] and also understand that total membership and average daily attendance doesn't tell the entire story. BGCB looks forward to leveraging COMET for more qualitative and quantitative information on what works and how they can improve, in order to impact children's lives in the best possible way.

*"We understand the data in COMET and can count on it."*

**Questions? Call 585-673-3200**

Contact Us

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