



The City of Casa Grande Announces a New Partnership with the Boys and Girls Club of the Sun Corridor

PRESS RELEASE

Casa Grande, AZ (July 7, 2021) – The City of Casa Grande and the Boys and Girls Club of the Sun Corridor have presented a new agreement for youth services in Casa Grande. Upon final City Council approval, the Boys and Girls Club will operate the youth services at the Len Colla Recreation Center year-round. In corresponding move, the City's Recreation Division will operate the youth soccer program previously ran by the Boys and Girls Club.

The Boys and Girls Club has successfully provided youth services at the Len Colla Center on a temporary basis since the Covid pandemic began in spring of 2020. The soccer program was suspended in 2020 due to Covid restrictions.

Under normal conditions prior to the pandemic, the Boys and Girls Club served 650 members at six branches daily. Adding Len Colla, the Boys and Girls Club will be able to expand their youth service offerings to an additional 150 students; providing another safe place for youth to go when they are not in school.

The Boys and Girls Club model aligns with the City's vision to provide quality educational and recreational activities and programs for the Casa Grande community. This unique partnership with the Boys and Girls Club will allow for more specialized youth service programming from each organization. The City already operates a very active Youth Basketball League. Adding the Youth Soccer League will be a seamless transition.

"The City and the Boys and Girls Club have a longstanding relationship and share a common goal of providing safe and engaging activities for the youth of our community. It's a natural fit for this transition of youth services," said Steve Hardesty, Community Services Director.

"The last 16 months has shown our organization that we need to put all of our resources into providing safe places for kids to go when they are not in school," said Matthew Lemberg, Boys & Girls Club Executive Director. "This partnership expansion will allow us to focus all of our efforts on this goal while ensuring that Casa Grande youth will continue to have the opportunity to play in the youth soccer league."

"We look forward to continuing the legacy that the City has created with the Len Colla Recreation Center. We met with Michele Colla (Len Colla's daughter) earlier this summer to share our plans with her. She was excited to hear about our plans for expanded services and that the facility will continue to use her father's name. And in our discussions with the Community Services Department, both organizations talked about the importance of making sure that our new services are always available to families currently being served by the Len Colla Recreation Center. With this in mind, all Palo Verde and Villago Middle School students (plus any other current Len Colla member) will be given first priority status for program registration and these same students will also be able to attend our after-school and school-break programs in the facility for free", said Lemberg.

For more information about programming at the Len Colla Branch, please contact Boys and Girls Club Director of Operations, Steve Brehmer at 520-876-5437 or sbrehmer@cgtkids.org

Youth Soccer League Registration is now open for youth ages 5-13. To register, visit www.casagrandeaz.gov/soccer For additional information, call the City of Casa Grande Recreation Division at 520-421-8677

Founded in 1879, the mission of the City of Casa Grande is to provide a safe, pleasant community for all citizens. With a growing population of over 57,000, it is a city with amazing people and historic charm that can only be found in a small town. Still, it offers modern amenities and a broad range of recreation facilities and activities for residents of all ages that are available year-round.

