

“Boys & Girls Clubs have truly given both of us a second chance in life.”



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE MIDLANDS

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Hi, my name is Tom. Growing up, I thought my life was normal, just like the families I watched on TV. I had a mom, a dad and two brothers. As I grew older, I started to realize that things weren't as normal as I once thought. My parents divorced, I had a younger brother who was both physically and mentally handicapped and an older brother who was rarely home. Each of these events added more and more strain to my already stressful childhood.

Soon after my dad left, my younger brother Nate became seriously ill and was hospitalized for a few weeks. He made many visits to the hospital

over the next 12 months for a variety of illnesses and bad reactions to medications. Today, Nate still suffers from health problems and takes numerous medications. He has not been to the hospital in about a year, but we know that could all change on any given day.

Even though it seemed as if one struggle after another came our way, **I knew I had to remain strong.** I had to be supportive of my mother and brother, because they needed me as much as I needed them. While Mom was away at work, I took on the responsibility of caring for Nate. I had to make sure he took his medications, had something to eat and stayed safe. We spent the majority of our afternoons sitting on the couch, watching TV or playing video games.

I often felt anger because of the situation we were in. I wanted to be hanging out with friends and doing things other kids my age were doing, but that just wasn't possible. My mom couldn't afford daycare for Nate, let alone after school programs for the both of us. With only one household income, money was very tight. We were all doing the best we could, but our future looked bleak.

A door was finally opened for me, Nate and hundreds of other kids in our neighborhood. It was the Boys & Girls Clubs' Westside Unit. Nate and I both joined immediately and have been regular members ever since.

The Clubs have given me the opportunity to be myself, meet new friends and enjoy life once again. **I credit the programs and staff for pointing me in the right direction and teaching me of the hidden potential within.** When I graduate from Westside High School this year, I will use all that I have learned at the Boys & Girls Clubs as I pursue a degree in Education from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, with the help of a Club scholarship.

As much as I love the Boys & Girls Clubs for myself, I have to think about the incredible impact it has had on my Mom and Nate. Mom has been given a sense of security, knowing that her sons are in a safe and positive place, and for the first time Nate has been able to enjoy being a kid just like everyone else. The Boys & Girls Clubs Westside Unit has truly given both of us a second chance in life.



Tom and Nate in the Westside Unit's learning center.

While fear dominates headlines all across our country, stories like Tom's stand as a reminder of the need for places like Boys & Girls Clubs. We understand that you, like many others, are hurting from this economic crisis. Unfortunately, those that are often hurt the most in difficult economic times are kids. The youth of your community needs your help. HELP THEM BY SUPPORTING THE WORK WE DO AT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE MIDLANDS.

Allow us to provide a safe and positive program filled place for those who need us most.

YOUR GENEROUS DONATION CAN MAKE THIS HAPPEN. PLEASE GIVE WHAT YOU CAN.

KIDS NEED YOUR SUPPORT
Anything helps...
Tom & Nate

I would like to make the following gift to the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Midlands:

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