

Maryland

Williamsport getting Boys & Girls Club

By ANDREW SCHOTZ
OCTOBER 13, 2010
andrews@herald-mail.com

WILLIAMSPORT — The Boys & Girls Club of Washington County is coming to Williamsport.

Through a \$125,000 grant, the nonprofit organization also will expand its current programs in Cascade and Hancock, said Buck Browning, the [director](#) of development.

The goal is to serve 150 youths in the three communities.

The grant came from the Washington County Community Partnership for Children and Families.

Williamsport Mayor James G. McCleaf II said the Boys & Girls Club will fill a long-standing need in his town — providing productive after-school activities.

McCleaf said he gets frustrated when young people complain that they have nothing to do in town. He named several possibilities: programs at the public library, church groups, Scouting, sports.

The problem, Browning said, is that some children aren't [comfortable](#) with those pursuits, whether because of a lack of confidence or another reason.

The Boys & Girls Club of Washington County runs its largest program, for about 125 children a day, on Pennsylvania Avenue in Hagerstown.

It also operates in five other places.

Browning said the Cascade group started at the [elementary](#) school there in 2002.

The club added a Hancock program at the middle-senior high school in 2006.

Each has about 30 children. Hancock has a waiting list, Browning said.

With the grant, the club expects to serve more children in both of those areas and start a new Monday-through-Friday program in Williamsport.

The program is called a Rural Out-of-School Time Initiative and provides "safe, nurturing school-based and community-based environments that offer supervision and alternative activities for at-risk elementary, middle and high school-age children and youth attending schools in Cascade, Hancock and Williamsport," according to the Washington County Community Partnership for Children & Families.

The plan is to serve 45 children in Cascade, 60 in Hancock and 45 in Williamsport.

McCleaf said the club will be at the Community Building in Byron Memorial Park in Williamsport. The town is fixing up the building, which includes getting a new boiler.

The club plans to hire employees to work with children in Williamsport, Browning said.

A grand opening celebration for the Williamsport program will be held Oct. 21, which is National Lights On Afterschool Day.

Children from other Boys & Girls programs throughout the county will gather in Williamsport to help with the kickoff.

The Williamsport program will begin on Nov. 3, Browning said.

McCleaf said he'd like to see a summer Boys & Girls program in town, too.

Browning said the club is sometimes contacted by communities asking for programs, but when Williamsport called, "They had a vision and a plan and a place."

With a smaller grant from the Washington County Community Partnership for Children and Families, the Boys & Girls Club helped run a pregnancy-prevention program in Williamsport earlier this year.

Browning said about 20 children participated.

That program ran from 6 to 8 p.m. twice a week.

The new program will be right after school. Browning said the time period when children are at the most risk of getting into trouble is 3 to 6 p.m.

How to apply

The Boys & Girls Club of Washington County plans to post an application at its website www.bgcwc.com for families who want to apply for new and expanded programs in Hancock, Cascade and Williamsport.



By Joe Crocetta | Staff Photographer

Buck Browning, right, director of development for the Boys & Girls Club of Washington County, talks about the club's program that is coming to Williamsport's Community Building in Byron Memorial Park. From left are Williamsport Mayor James G. McCleaf II, Town Clerk Donnie Stotelmyer, Director of Economic & Community Development Mike Sparks and Williamsport Town Councilman Larry Jessop.