

Boxer Mikey Garcia encourages kids at Boys & Girls Club in Redlands



Undeclared super lightweight boxer Miguel Angel "Mikey" Garcia speaks to children of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside at the Hansberger Clubhouse in Redlands, Calif. on Friday, Aug. 26, 2016. Garcia spoke of his journey of success in boxing, and encouraged the young Boys & Girls Club members to follow their dreams. (Photo by Rachel Luna/Redlands Daily Facts)

By **Kristina Hernandez**, *Redlands Daily Facts*

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Undefeated super lightweight boxer Miguel Angel “Mikey” Garcia speaks to children of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside at the Hansberger Clubhouse in Redlands on Friday. Garcia spoke of his journey of success in boxing, and encouraged the young Boys & Girls Club members to follow their dreams. RACHEL LUNA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

REDLANDS -- If Miguel Angel “Mikey” Garcia can inspire one child to go for their dreams, he said, he knows he’s doing his job.

On Friday, the professional boxer spoke to members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside to encourage them to stay in school, stay off the streets and strive to make a difference in their own communities.

“If I can help them in any way, that’s a great feeling,” Garcia said Friday while visiting the Hansberger Clubhouse on Clay Street in Redlands.

Garcia, 28, attended a Boys & Girls Club growing up in the Oxnard area. He became familiar with the nonprofit while his father ran a boxing gym inside a local clubhouse.

Though he was uninterested in boxing at first, Garcia found himself immersed in the club’s culture and responded to its mission to create future leaders, he said. After finding much success in the ring, Garcia felt it necessary to give back. His promoters contacted Boys & Girls Club officials here to gauge interest in having him speak. They jumped at the chance, said Mark Davis, BGC’s vice president.

“It’s a blessing because of the fact you have a former club kid that participated in boxing who came from a low-income family and is now giving back,” Davis said. “That’s what it is all about.”

Garcia’s boxing resume is extensive — he is a two-time World Boxing Organization featherweight and super featherweight champion.

He trains in Riverside, but calls Moreno Valley home. That’s where he is raising three children under the age of 10 to become good stewards of their communities, Garcia said.

Along with two championship belts, Garcia brought along a box filled with promotional photos to sign and distribute to club members.

That delighted BGC officials, including Davis.

“We just thank God that he’s come to the Boys & Girls to be able to show the impact of what he’s doing and what he’s doing for his family,” Davis said. “We’re just thankful.”