

Boys & Girls Clubs Celebrate 50th Anniversary

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside celebrated 50 years with dinner, toasts and fireworks Saturday, May 6.

By [Jamie Wilkins \(Patch Staff\)](#) - May 9, 2017 6:48 am ET



From the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside: Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside celebrated its 50th anniversary with dinner, toasts and fireworks Saturday, May 6 at the University of Redlands.

The evening highlighted the organization's history and its impact on youth in the past and present. Videos included interviews by past staff and board members and current Youth of the Year Ambassadors. The four Ambassadors – Isabel Cruz, Tyryn Cleveland, Chris Monterroza and Adrian Chavez – spoke about the Club's effect on their lives and their hopes for the future.

Attendees included past and present board members and staff, supporters, and the Ambassadors' families. Notable attendees included supporter and former board member Bill Buster, longtime program director Jim Bice and founding executive director Gerald Smith.

“Smitty, because of you, thousands of kids have been helped,” said CEO P.T. McEwen.

The evening ended with a toast and fireworks over the UR quad.

“It was overwhelming to see how many people kept the Club's mission going over 50 years, from humble beginnings to where we are now,” McEwen said. “We're grateful for those whose shoulders we stand on.”

The organization began as the Boys' Club of Redlands in 1967, and its first location was an old packinghouse on Sixth Street. It moved several times over the decades and was in danger of closing a few times. The community rallied and raised money each time, and found ways for Club programs to continue.

Club members even got involved in fundraising, at one time operating a newspaper recycling enterprise and screenprinting business.

The organization's first permanent clubhouse opened on Clay Street about 10 year ago after a multimillion-dollar capital campaign. Today, the Club has service locations in 11 communities and serves more than 3,600 youth a day.

The celebration will continue throughout the year with highlights from past decades on the Club's social media channels. The Club is on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, all under the name/handle BeGreatIE.

Photos courtesy of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside:

(Image 1) P.T. McEwen, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside, speaks at the organization's 50th anniversary celebration Saturday, May 6 at the University of Redlands.