

The Kroc Center Runs Recess with Local Schools

The Salvation Army Kroc Center's Mobile Kroc Team will organize group games during lunch recess at Borah Elementary this Thursday

Christy Markham/Kroc Center

COEUR D'ALENE, ID, May 24, 2016 — "What we wanted to do was fill a void to support our local schools and give students every chance to succeed," says Kroc Youth Coordinator Caleb Lynch of the effort The Kroc Center is calling Mobile Kroc.

Lynch has coordinated with administrators at Ramsey, Borah, Bryan and Winton elementary schools because at least 40% of their students receive free or reduced lunches. Studies have repeatedly shown that family income is one of the strongest predictors for measuring success in the classroom.

"What we worked out with each school was to loan to them our most valuable resource—our staff—on the day of the week with the highest number of discipline issues. We didn't add another program but took that existing opportunity of recess to connect with the kids," says Lynch.

Since February, The Kroc Center has provided Lynch and three other staff to these schools to facilitate group games that are getting kids active, teaching sportsmanship and providing positive male role models for the kids who need them most.

"We make sure that at least two of the staff we send to run recess are male after hearing from school counselors the great need for men to show boys how to play fair and how to treat girls," says Kroc Assistant Director of Programming Kip Sharbono.

"It's really made a difference at these schools. Bryan used to have at least two or three disciplinary issues each Thursday—mostly stemming from playing tackle football—and since The Kroc started running recess they have had zero," says Sharbono.

For the first time this spring, The Kroc Center has also held open nights at The Kroc Center where students, faculty and parents from the four schools could enjoy the pools, rock wall, game room and bounce houses, free of charge. Parents were given information about life skills classes and scholarships for Kroc membership and summer camps, making the connection that they too can access Kroc programs on a regular basis.

"We were surprised how many of the youth who live in the low-income housing near The Kroc Center had never before entered the facility," says Kroc Executive Director Major Ben Markham, "this place was also built for them and we are committed to making sure they can swim and play, be mentored by positive role models, and seek safe haven when needed.

The Mobile Kroc Team was honored to receive the A+ Award from the Coeur d'Alene Chamber Education Committee for the free school nights and running recess outreach.

The next venture for the Mobile Kroc Team is to help run Field Day in June for Ramsey and Harrison elementary schools and scheduling with schools for their free night at The Kroc next year.