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QUEENETTE "QUEENIE" SANTOS, VICE PRESIDENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Say the name "Queenette Santos" around Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester (BGCD) or in the community at one of the BGCD's clubs in Dorchester, and you'll be greeted with warm smiles of affection and appreciation. What began for Queenette as a one-year position has spanned nearly 30 years of dedication to the youth and families of Dorchester. She wears many hats at the Club, serving as a leader, mentor, advocate for those who can't, and a compassionate listener for all who cross her path—whether it's kids, their parents, employees, Club volunteers or partners. Queenette has held various roles at the Club over the years including Teen Director, Program Director, Unit Director and currently Vice President of Youth & Community Engagement. Her deep commitment at BGCD is evident not only in her day-to-day work but in the environment she creates – an inclusive, welcoming space that's safe, supportive and most of all nurturing.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Although quite humble when asked about her impact on the Club, Queenette has touched the lives of thousands of families who have walked through the Club's doors and is now working with the children and grandchildren of the kids who grew up with her along the way. Some of the accomplishments she's most proud of include:

- Establishing long-term relationships with local organizations including Geiger Gibson Health Center and BC High to expand access and resources for local families
- Facilitating program growth by exploring innovative ideas and programs while maintaining the Club's community-centric approach
- Supporting multi-generations of local families (including her own) and watching them grow into healthy and successful adults
- Initiating "Welcoming Wednesdays" that began as an effort to reconnect the community with the Club post-COVID and now serves as an opportunity to spark parental involvement through fun activities, workshops and discussions

LIFELONG LEARNING & DEDICATION

One of the reasons Queenette accepted the job at the Club was to have a place where she could both work and be able to raise her son in a safe, welcoming environment without having to worry about where he was or who he was with. In the years that followed, all five of her children became "Club kids" and when Queenette saw firsthand the Club's positive impact on her own children, she wanted to use her knowledge, skills and talents to support other members in their journey. When asked what advice she would give to parents or adults working with children, she said "Children don't always need to be 'saved'; they often just need someone to listen." Queenette is the Club's "Listener in Chief" and whether she's tying shoes, running programs, developing staff or meeting with prospective parents, she approaches every interaction with love, patience and a deeply rooted belief in the potential of every child.

Queenette does not rest on her success at the Club, the lifelong learner is currently applying to local colleges to pursue a degree in Clinical Mental Health to further expand her knowledge and support the families and youth she serves. When asked about her work, Queenette says "I've learned as much from the kids as they've learned from me." Her role as a mentor, disciplinarian, friend and "second mom" make her an invaluable asset to BGCD.

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ABOUT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF DORCHESTER:

BGCD is dedicated to making a positive impact on youth and families in the Dorchester community. Its three clubhouses allow Dorchester's young people to learn, explore talents, play and make friends. Today, members have access to 200+ activities for just \$5 a year. Boys & Girls Clubs of Dorchester annually serves over 4,000 children between the ages of two months and 18 years. During the school year, the Club serves approximately 250 meals every weekday.