



The Unity Basketball League is back at the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester!



For the 4th Spring, tweens and teens will assemble at the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester for some time under the hoops, on the hardwood and at the top of the key. Launched in Worcester in 2022, the Unity Basketball League (UBL) is an effort by the Massachusetts State Police to bring the city's youth together to learn and play basketball, while being supported by law enforcement a non-threatening environment. The program is dependent on community partners such as PAL of Massachusetts,

the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester (where the league games are played) and the office of Worcester District Attorney Joseph Early. In Worcester, the coaches are from the participating organizations' teams. Law Enforcement serves as referees and volunteers in other capacities.

Liz Hamilton, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, is a big fan. "Here is a great example," she says, "of components uniting to make this league work. Without the Massachusetts State Police and our community partners working together and pooling resources, the league would not happen." Each community partner pays for staffing during practices and games. Liz Hamilton notes, "Because we host the games at the Boys & Girls Club, our staff does a lot to make the league a success, such as concessions, crowd control, covering the front desk, in addition to coaching." At the end of the season an Annual Banquet is held at the Club.

The Boys & Girls Club is three weeks into Worcester's UBL 2026 season. Tryouts, held in late February, resulted in six co-ed teams from the Club (which has two teams), Friendly House, the Greendale YMCA, the Central YMCA and 508 Forever Young Inc. The age range of the players is limited to 6th through 8th grade. Practices are held on Tuesday evening with games on Wednesday.



Quincy Ikeachumba, Director of Athletics at the Club, is the multi-tasking facilitator of Worcester's UBL. Austin Varney, Assistant Program Director of Athletics coaches one of the Club's teams. After two years of involvement with the UBL season, Quincy recognizes that he is the coach, scheduler, driver, uniform-finder and anything else to make sure that the season is a success for the players. But success does not necessarily mean winning. Quincy structures the pre-game like a high school match. While the players are warming up, their favorite psych-up songs are playing. The music and fan chatter make the gym

reverberatingly loud. "A lot of people show up," Quincy says. Each player can have an in-action moment to visualize that they are Jaylen Brown making a lay-up or Aliyah Boston grabbing a rebound.

Quincy notes that his goal is "to make sure that the kids get a real game experience." In other words, to make sure that they feel special. If the aim of the sponsors of the UBL is to "build and strengthen relationships with local police departments and the communities we serve, by connecting more kids and police officer in a safe and open environment" then what better way is there than helping a kid become a responsible participant, an accountable teammate and a more confident basketball player? Because when you're having fun, isn't everyone more open to new people and experiences? Or, as Quincy noted on the Club Instagram page...."Ready to represent?....this is your chance to compete, build unity and be part of something bigger than the game."

Help us to continue the good news and to keep the Club kids active!

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