



MEDIA RELEASE

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Community Connection Series Features Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley

KNOXVILLE, Tenn.— Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs interviewed Dr. Polly Johnson, Director of Education and Workforce Development Programs for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley, the local operation of a national organization that provides after-school programs for young people.

“We try to focus on a wholistic approach to young people,” said Johnson. “Our goal is to expose our young people and to shape and mold them, so they are productive members of society.”

The interview is part of Community Connection—a spinoff from the Mayor’s small business series that provides owners the opportunity to talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their families and employees and helping them share any plans they hold for the future.

For the next couple of months, Mayor Jacobs will focus on local charities and non-profits. A new vignette will run week on the county and Mayor’s various social media platforms.

Mayor Jacobs brought up concerns about how the pandemic may impact at-risk students through potential for educational and opportunity gaps and asked Dr. Johnson to share her thoughts.

“In terms of Boys & Girls Club, our motto is to stand in the gap [and] be able to provide additional support where there are issues in terms of our kids falling behind,” said Dr. Johnson.

To combat this, the group has begun operating Virtual Learning Clubs, which take place at physical Boys & Girls Club sites and offer a safe place for virtual students to complete their school work with internet access, supervision from staff, and alternative activities during their scheduled daily breaks. They also have tutors available for virtual or in-person support.

Mayor Jacobs also asked Dr. Johnson to share a little detail about the Google Analytics Coding Program—a joint initiative between Knox County and Boys and Girls Club.

“We were very excited to offer that opportunity and, in terms of the experience, [our] young people were able to be paid,” said Dr. Johnson. “So not only training within Google Analytics, but also soft skills training and receive certification.”

To hear more of what was said, check out the [video](#).

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