

BASE Play RBI 2017

A PROGRAM OF EL PASO BORDER YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Encouraging Education and Building Community Through Baseball and Softball Play

Serving Title 1 Schools in
in Partnership with Local
School Districts



Prepared for:
Richard G. Miller Memorial
Foundation 11/16/17



Every player who gets an education wins.

BASE Play RBI is an after school program in Title 1 schools connecting young students to their own potential, schools and communities through baseball and softball play.

Volunteers and staff work with students to improve grades and attendance. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 82% of struggling students were able to transition to passing grades by the end of the season.



Baseball and Softball = Education - BASE Play RBI After School Program

"Good ball players make good citizens." - Chester Arthur, 21st President of the United States

The mission of El Paso Border Youth Athletic Association is to create educational and developmental opportunities for area youth through baseball and softball. In 2014, EPBYAA partnered with the Clint Independent School District to create BASE Play RBI, an after school program designed to connect fourth, fifth and sixth grade students to their academic potential, health and communities through baseball and softball play.

Serving eight schools in Clint ISD in 2017, the program targets students who are struggling academically or behaviorally. These students comprise 62 percent of the BASE Play service population. Recruited students are placed on baseball and softball teams while grades are monitored and academic support strategies are implemented. The intent is to reward achievement and to assist those struggling with the greatest academic challenges. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 82 percent of students failing one or more classes transitioned to passing grades by the end of a season of play.

In 2017, BASE Play partnered with Major League Baseball under their RBI program. Through this affiliation BASE Play was able to amplify its program offerings. In the summer of 2017, MLB RBI worked with EPBYAA and BASE Play to select and send twelve 6th grade softball players from the colonia communities of Clint ISD to Miami University for a week of clinics with professional USA Softball players and events associated with the 2017 All-Star Classic in Miami Florida. In July, EPBYAA was also able to identify and send two high school softball players to a week of intensive instruction with USA Softball coaches in Vero Beach, Florida.

The Need for Resources

BASE Play RBI serves the Clint ISD communities of Montana Vista, Horizon City and the Town of Clint, all located in the peripheral reaches of El Paso County. These communities were selected for three reasons: the incidence of poverty in and around each is high, the resources necessary to combat the adverse effects of poverty are scarce, and educational attainment remains an illusive goal in these economically distressed areas.



The Clint school district is one of nine school districts serving El Paso County. It is the largest geographically. Clint ISD families are 92 percent Hispanic, well above the 82 percent figure of the county. All schools in the district are classified as Title 1 – with a poverty rate of 40 percent or above.

Approximately 99 percent of the BASE Play service community is Hispanic, and 52 percent of BASE Play families report a home address in a recognized colonia community. A colonia

is an unregulated settlement that lacks the most basic living necessities, such as potable water, sewage systems, electricity, paved roads, and safe, sanitary housing. The Texas Secretary of State reports that in 2016, of the estimated 400,000 people who live in Texas colonias, over 90,000, or almost one-quarter, reside in El Paso County.

Educational Attainment

The State of Texas is facing an educational crisis. The demand for an educated, skilled workforce is outpacing supply. Nowhere is this more evident than in the periphery of El Paso County where, according to data published by the U.S. Census Bureau, sixty-one percent of the population earns a high school diploma. This compares to 74 percent in the County as a whole and 86 percent nationwide.

According to data published by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, Texas has seen a decline in educational attainment among the population aged 25 to 34. Without bold action this trend is predicted to worsen. In order to prevent further decline and the associated revenue losses, Texas must increase the percentage of 25 to 35 year-olds with some type of post-secondary education from 35 percent in 2013 to 60 percent by 2030. Standing at 22 percent in El Paso County, the number of residents with a post-secondary degree in this cohort is markedly lower than that of the state.



A significant barrier to increasing post-secondary completion is the fact that almost half of all graduating high school students in El Paso County do not enroll in higher education immediately following high school. Of students who fail to move directly into post secondary environments, only 1 percent eventually complete a degree. When high school students do enroll, over half are not academically prepared and require developmental education - this compared to a state developmental education requirement of 22 percent.

El Paso's student population is expected to grow by 18 percent over the next 20 years, fueled mainly by growth in the Hispanic population. Clint ISD's enrollment is indicative of this trend. Of the universe of children enrolled in K-12 in the Clint district, 47 percent are enrolled at the elementary level. To complicate the demand for education services, the Clint District's funding has decreased since 2009, resulting in program cuts due to budget shortfalls.

Health and Wellness

Education levels and socioeconomic status appear to impact the risk for obesity. The Paso del Norte Health Foundation found that "while nearly 18 percent of El Paso residents with a college education are obese, the frequency of obesity increases to 37.7 percent for those with less than a high school education and lower economic status."

In 2013, a Community Needs Index (CNI) was compiled as part of a countywide study conducted by the City of El Paso Department of Public Health. The resulting report identified areas of the county with the greatest barriers related to income, education,

culture/language, insurance and housing. Of the seven areas forming the study geography, the Mission Valley area demonstrated the greatest concentration of barriers to health and wellness in El Paso County.

Over the summer of 2014, Columbia School of Public Health conducted an assessment of the BASE Play service population. Four questions about health and nutrition were used to determine if participating students had a basic grasp of the subject. The Newest Vital Sign tool from Pfizer was used as a template to measure their health literacy. The assessment found that 90% of children enrolled in the BASE Play Summer 2016 initiative (incoming 4th, 5th and 6th graders) were unable to answer one or more questions correctly, clearly demonstrating what little knowledge the children, and the service communities in general, had around nutrition.

BASE Play RBI Initiative

The lack of available extra-curricular resources in peripheral El Paso County coupled with BASE Play service area demographics evidence the need for programs and activities designed to support young students.

A 2012 ACT research report notes that 4th and 8th grade students who have fallen far behind academically have less than a 30 percent chance of being ready for college or a career by the end of high school.

In addition, they found that only about 1 in 10 students who were "far off track" in reading or math in 4th grade were able to meet on-track benchmarks in 8th grade, suggesting these children's academic gaps begin early and never close. At schools in which more than half of students lived in poverty, such as those of El Paso County, the chances for remediation drop drastically, with only 6 percent of students far behind in reading and 3 percent of those far behind in math and science deemed ready for college and careers by the end of high school.



The BASE Play RBI program objectives are to provide educational, mental and physical wellness benefits to young players living in underserved areas of El Paso County. BASE Play RBI seeks to encourage and support children academically, which leads to healthier outcomes overall, mentally and physically. This is done by monitoring participants' grades at three-week intervals, assisting students in obtaining tutoring or other support strategies as necessary, and teaching academic accountability and communication skills. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 82 percent of students failing one or more classes at the start of a season transitioned to passing grades by season's end.

The program also strives to create a stronger sense of community in the isolated areas it serves. Schools are the hub of program activity, bringing families onto school grounds in a positive environment and interactive fashion. Student advocates and school

administrators attend games and practices, relationships between family and educators are built and deepened. For many BASE Play RBI parents, this is a new experience. In the 2016-2017 academic year, 485 registrations were processed for participation in at least one season of play. Of those registrations, 200 students were served for the entire academic year over two registration periods, fall and spring.

Volunteers and Organizational Relationships

The communities served by BASE Play RBI are economically distressed, with the majority of program families living well below the poverty level (64 percent). These dynamics and the many barriers found – high unemployment, low socio-economic status, lack of formal networks, lack of discretionary time and trust issues surrounding the provision of resources - contribute to the limited social capital found in the service areas.

Despite these obstacles, there is a growing number of volunteers from the service communities beginning to form around the project. This has taken time and perseverance. BASE Play RBI has also successfully recruited a group of volunteers from El Paso proper who drive to the service communities each week to help make the program possible.

In addition, alliances have been formed with the Kiwanis of El Paso and their high school level civic organization, the Key Clubs of El Paso, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and the Paul Foster Medical School. Student volunteers participate as umpires, assistant coaches, handle concession sales and help with special projects such as a Thanksgiving food drive during the Fall 2016 season and Field Day activities being planned for Fall 2017.

Future Development

In fall of 2017 BASE Play RBI added one of the three remaining elementary schools in Clint ISD not yet served by the program. With sufficient funding, the remaining two elementary schools will be added in 2018. This will bring the service population to approximately 300 in ten Clint District schools.

EPBYAA is also currently in discussion with Gadsden ISD to introduce the program in five GISD schools.

