

INCLUSION MATTERS

JANUARY

NEWSLETTER



January is a time for fresh starts, reflection, and renewed connection –and at BGC Durham, it’s also a chance to reaffirm our commitment to inclusion, belonging, and community. As we begin the new year, we celebrate the diversity that makes our clubs strong while continuing to create safe, welcoming spaces where every child and youth feels seen, valued, and supported. This month’s Inclusion Newsletter highlights meaningful moments, important observances, and ways we can all contribute to building a community rooted in respect, understanding, and opportunity for all.



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Upcoming Events

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S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



January 1
New years Day!

January 23
PA Day



January is
Tamil Heritage Month!

January Reminders

Weather Reminder:

If DDSB or DCDSB buses are cancelled, please note that our bus and van shuttles will not operate on these days. Unless notified otherwise BGC Durham programs will remain open, and families are welcome to drop off and pick up their children directly at the program.

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New Years Goals



The start of a new year often comes with a lot of pressure to “change” or “do better.”

While setting goals can be exciting, it’s important to remember that growth looks different for everyone—and that’s okay. Goals are not about being perfect; they are about learning, trying, and moving forward in ways that work for you.

Here are some quick tips to help get you started!

Setting Goals

- Pick goals that matter to you, not what you feel pressured to do
- Break goals into smaller, manageable steps
- Adjust goals as your needs change



Staying Accountable

- Share your goals with a trusted person
- Write goals down or track progress visually
- Celebrate effort and small successes



Understanding Setbacks

- Setbacks and regression are a normal part of growth
- Stress and change can make progress harder at times
- Taking a step back can help you reset and keep moving forward
- Growth is not a straight line—and every step counts



As we move through the year, remember that growth is personal and ongoing. There is no single “right” way to move forward, and progress doesn’t have to be fast or perfect to be meaningful. By setting goals that fit your needs, being kind to yourself during setbacks, and celebrating every effort along the way, you build confidence and resilience. Every small step matters, and each one brings you closer to becoming your best self—at your own pace.

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Tips on How to Stay Organized This Year!

Staying organized can help make school, activities, and free time feel less stressful—but it doesn't have to mean being perfect or neat all the time. Organization is about finding simple ways to keep track of your things, your time, and your responsibilities in a way that works for you. Everyone's brain works differently, and that means everyone's organization style can look different too.

Declutter & Purge

- Use the "Keep, Toss, Donate" Method: Go through items (clothes, papers, decor) and create three piles: Keep, Trash, and Donate.
- Tackle Specific Zones: Focus on one area at a time (e.g., a drawer, a shelf, your car, or a digital folder) to prevent overwhelm.
- Digital Declutter: Unsubscribe from junk emails, organize files into clear folders, and delete unnecessary photos.

Organize Your Schedule & Tasks

- One Central Planner: Use a single calendar (digital or paper) for all appointments, meetings, and events to avoid missing things.
- Brain Dump & Prioritize: Write down everything you need to do, then break large tasks into smaller, manageable tasks.
- Set Realistic Goals: Don't try to do everything at once; focus on a few key areas first.

Build Simple Habits

- Daily Tidying: Commit just 10-15 minutes daily to putting things back in their proper place.
- Establish Routines: Make your bed daily, clear your desk nightly, or do a quick sweep of "homeless" clutter.
- Use Reminders: Set alerts or sticky notes for new habits until they stick.

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NATIONAL HOBBY MONTH

National Hobby Month is a great time to explore new interests, discover hidden talents, and try something outside your comfort zone. Hobbies can help reduce stress, build confidence, and give you a fun way to express yourself. There's no right or wrong way to enjoy a hobby—what matters is finding something that feels exciting or calming to you.

Here are some uncommon hobbies to try:

Rock painting – a creative and relaxing way to express art



Nature journaling – drawing or writing about outdoor discoveries



Stop-motion animation – making short videos using objects or figures



Origami or paper crafts – creating art with simple materials



Sound mixing or beat making – experimenting with music and rhythm



Urban photography – capturing everyday moments in creative ways



Foraging (with adult guidance) – learning about local plants and nature



Upcycling projects – turning everyday items into something new



Trying a new hobby can be a great way to learn more about yourself, meet others with similar interests, and build new skills at your own pace. This month, challenge yourself to explore something new—you might find a new favorite activity!

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How BGC Durham Supports Youth with Diverse Needs

At BGC Durham, we are committed to creating inclusive, welcoming spaces where all youth feel supported, safe, and able to participate in ways that work best for them. We recognize that every young person has unique strengths, needs, and comfort levels, and we adapt our programs to support meaningful participation for all.



Our inclusive supports include:

MODIFIED GAMES AND ACTIVITIES TO MEET DIFFERENT ABILITIES AND COMFORT LEVELS

FLEXIBLE PARTICIPATION OPTIONS, ALLOWING YOUTH TO JOIN IN, OBSERVE, OR TAKE BREAKS AS NEEDED

SENSORY-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENTS TO REDUCE NOISE, LIGHTING, AND OVERSTIMULATION

ACCESS TO HEADPHONES FOR NOISE REDUCTION, FOCUS, AND SELF-REGULATION

A CALM, QUIET SPACE FOR YOUTH TO RESET, RELAX, OR TAKE A BREAK

CLEAR ROUTINES AND EXPECTATIONS TO HELP YOUTH FEEL PREPARED AND SECURE

VISUAL SUPPORTS SUCH AS SCHEDULES OR CUES TO SUPPORT UNDERSTANDING

ONE-ON-ONE OR SMALL-GROUP SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

CHOICE-BASED ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE INDEPENDENCE AND CONFIDENCE

STAFF TRAINED IN INCLUSION AND SUPPORT STRATEGIES

Through flexibility, understanding, and individualized supports, BGC Durham creates an environment where all youth feel valued, included, and empowered to thrive.



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Mattel releases its first Autistic Barbie!

Autistic Barbie joins Mattel diversity and inclusion line

B



Mattel has introduced its first-ever autistic Barbie to help make play more inclusive and welcoming for everyone. Created with guidance from the autistic community and the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), the doll is designed to reflect some of the ways autistic people may experience, understand, and communicate with the world around them.

The Barbie includes thoughtful features that many children can relate to.

- Movable arms and wrists that allow for stimming movements, helping with self-regulation and expressing excitement
- A fidget spinner to support focus and calm
- Noise-cancelling headphones to reduce loud or overwhelming sounds
- A tablet with picture-based communication tools to support everyday communication

With details like a slightly averted gaze, this Barbie encourages children to learn about differences, celebrate uniqueness, and practice empathy and inclusion through play.

From Global News

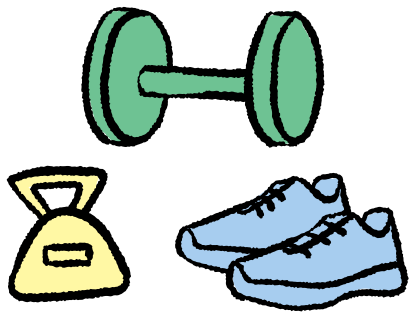
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Physical Activity

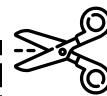
Resilience is the ability to keep going, even when things feel challenging or don't go as planned. Building resilience helps youth manage stress, try new things, and manage obstacles with confidence.



Physical activity plays an important role in developing resilience—it helps release stress, build strength and confidence, and teaches perseverance through movement, teamwork, and practice. Whether it's sports, walking, dancing, or active play, moving our bodies can help strengthen both our minds and our ability to overcome challenges.

 **Exercise**

B	I	N	G	O
 5 Situps	 Play Soccer	 1 min Plank	 15 Burpees	1 Min Jump Rope
1 Min Wall Sit	 10 Lunges	 Dancing!	30 Jumping Jacks	Stretch for 20 mins
30 min Nature Walk	 Ride Bike	FREE SPACE	 1 Min Jog	 5 Pushups
 Yoga	 Leg Raises	 30 squats	 Wall Push Ups	 Play Outside
Take 1000 Steps	 Go Running	Planned Workout	 Skipping	Play a sport



Check out our Exercise Bingo activity! You can cut out this bingo template to use at home and turn movement into a fun, interactive game. Instead of calling numbers, players complete simple physical activities—like jumping, stretching, walking, or playing a sport—to mark off their spaces. Physical Bingo encourages kids to stay active, build confidence, and have fun together, making exercise enjoyable and inclusive for all abilities.

