Madison Square Boys & Girls Club believes that all youth deserve a chance for a better future. We establish roots in the communities that need us most and bring an unwavering commitment to helping youth thrive from the time they enter elementary school through college graduation. Project Graduate is a comprehensive college-readiness program offering teens guidance, specific skill-building opportunities to help them meet high school graduation requirements, and successfully navigate the college application process.

Partner and friend of Madison, Ernst & Young has committed to this same college-readiness mentality through their EY Volunteer mentoring program. Recently, EY Connect Day was held across all of Madison’s Clubhouses, which included a panel led by EY volunteers. The 60 minute panel encompassed a discussion about their college and career paths. The panelists began each answer with a question for our members in order to engage them in a conversation and hone in on the topics that the students found most relevant.
The members completed a college goal setting worksheet with measurable actions they can use with Club staff who are helping them on a path to college. In addition, Ernst & Young also hosted a college prep workshop where volunteers facilitated a session focusing on personal branding, goal setting, and college success. This opportunity provided a unique perspective for our members on real-life scenarios they may face leading up to and during college.

Similarly, the United Negro College Fund also visited our Navy Yard Clubhouse recently to further enhance our Project Graduate Program. The United Negro College Fund is an organization that funds scholarships for black students and general scholarship funds for 37 private historically black colleges and universities. During the session, the Vice President of UNCF, Diego Aviles, and UNCF Alumni Sydni Falconer spoke to a group of members and parents about the benefits of United Negro College Fund, the different types of scholarships available to students, the college application process, internships, community service and on-campus life experiences at HBCUs. We know that many of our members come from communities and backgrounds that are more likely to drop out of college prematurely due to challenges in obtaining financial aid and gaining academic support. Based on our recent Impact Report, 100% of graduating seniors applied to college and 100% were accepted to attend. These workshops provide a wonderful opportunity for our members to gain college advice from firsthand experienced volunteers. Thank you to both Ernst & Young and the United Negro College Fund for working with our members and families and sharing great advice for a hopeful future.
Thanks to partners like the Garden of Dreams Foundation and the work of our Clubhouses in implementing Good Character & Leadership programs, our youth are often presented with community service and educational opportunities to inspire strong character development, instill a sense of personal and communal responsibility, foster tolerance and respect for others, and help members build effective strategies for responding to conflict. The positive peer pressure and reinforcement that occurs within the Clubs impact members’ choices and decisions. Our hope is that they become role models and ambassadors for promoting tolerance, diversity and inclusion among peers.

New York Knicks All Abilities Night perfectly exemplifies the importance of the pillars that make up our strive toward Good Character & Leadership at our Clubs.
Two members (and sisters!) from the Joel E. Smilow Clubhouse, Emily and Gabby, were invited to the New York Knicks game for All Abilities Night, which celebrates all abilities and is dedicated to empowering and unifying all New Yorkers. We were so honored to have Emily and Gabby represent Madison as they signed along with the singing of the National Anthem. The Garden of Dreams Foundation, which continually offers life-changing experiences for our members, provided this opportunity. Extra tickets were provided for other members to attend, as well. They even got to enjoy the game in a lounge with food and refreshments! These events — where youth have a safe space in which they can learn, grow, and have fun, help to further our Clubhouse programs outside of our facilities.

Thanks again to the Garden of Dreams Foundation and the New York Knicks for this amazing opportunity!
Juniors Academy Activity: The Human Skeleton

The Juniors Academy (ages 10-12) combines additional academic support, one-on-one mentoring and engaging STEM activities to ease the transition to middle school and demystify STEM principles to inspire interest.

Recently, the Juniors Academy at our Navy Yard Clubhouse constructed, labeled and discussed the components for a model of the human skeleton using construction paper, Q-Tips, chalk and yarn. After the skeleton is assembled with the help of staff members, it now stands over ten feet tall! Skeletor, as he’s been named, now resides in the Education Resource Room and has been the center of a myriad of questions regarding the anatomy of the human skeleton. Staff members use creative activities such as this one to get members interested in STEM. In 2019, 98% of Juniors were promoted to the next grade-level on time.

Thank you to both CapitalOne and ConEd for supporting our STEM programs!