

**SALT LAKE CITY CDBG**  
**DIGITAL DIVIDE PHASES I AND II SUCCESS STORIES**

From 2016 to 2018, Salt Lake City generously provided CDBG funding to Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Salt Lake to help erase the “digital divide” in the Poplar Grove neighborhood, located in Salt Lake’s impoverished west-side River District. Many families there have little or no access to the internet and communications technologies, making it difficult for kids to succeed academically and acquire the skills needed for participation in today’s workforce. With these funds, our Lied Club was able to upgrade all of their computers in both the teen and elementary computer labs and install high-speed WiFi throughout the Club.



With the new computers and all of this new bandwidth, the Lied Club has been able to offer more technology programs. Poplar Grove kids are learning how to program, making their own apps, and creating digital art. They’re learning skills that will help them for the rest of their lives, and they’re having a great time doing it! Our state-of-the-art computer labs have also helped us find new partners for our programs, like Samsung, Comcast, and Verizon. None of this would have been possible without the support of the Salt Lake City CDBG.

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**DIEGO HELPS HIS FRIENDS LEARN TO PROGRAM**

New computers and faster internet have allowed the Lied Club to teach kids programming with online lessons. When participating in their new Hour of Coding activity, our elementary-aged members were asked

to pick a game in which to practice their coding skills. They overwhelmingly chose Minecraft, which is a popular favorite at the Club. Diego (10 years old), Cesar (9 years old), and Valeria (9 years old) were all working on the same project. Diego finished first, but saw that Cesar and Valeria were struggling with theirs. He worked with both of them to help them get some of the trickier concepts. With the fun activities and teamwork they get in My.Future, the juniors want to keep coming back every day. Diego is often heard saying “Wait! I have one more activity to do, I want to finish!” These activities have introduced Poplar Grove kids to new ways of thinking about computers—they never realized that games could help them learn to program! These activities are building their confidence with respect to science and technology subjects, and they’ve been great at working as a team to solve problems.



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#### A POPLAR GROVE PARENT SHARES HER STORY

One Club member’s mother came to the Club to share her appreciation of the educational opportunities for her son and daughter at the Club. “I’m Hispanic, I never went to school,” she said. “It’s sometimes hard for me to help them with their homework, and the Boys & Girls Club has been great for them. I see a lot of difference in my kids, the Club staff do a lot and they’re learning a lot of things. They’ve been learning a lot on the computers there, it’s been helping them do better in school. They like to come home and tell me about what they’ve done, and they’re always excited to go to the Club.” Access to computers is essential for helping the kids in the Poplar Grove excel academically, and with help from the Salt Lake City CDBG youth at the Lied Club are thriving.



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## KHALIL'S BEATS

Khalil (age 10) has always loved music, but he had never thought about making his own until the Lied Club started running the My.Future computer education curriculum in their new lab. His favorite kinds of music are R&B and hip hop, and he has always been interested in how these genres use beats and samples. When he found that My.Future includes lessons on digital music production, he was overjoyed and had finished all the available lessons in just a couple of weeks. He has even started to do his own research online, discovering several websites and tutorials for making beats. He is always eager to show staff his latest creations and has begun teaching other kids how to use the tools he's found. Khalil has learned new ways to express himself and explore his interests thanks to the new resources available to him.