

## Spotlight on Fitness



### An interview with John Strommen and Jay Redmond of the Athletic Program

This month, we talk with John Strommen, Athletic Director, and Jay Redmond, Main Gym Supervisor, about athletic and fitness programs available at The Club.

*How long have you been with The Club for Boys?*

**John:** 20 years

**Jay:** 12 years total in between active duty with the National Guard.

*What activities are currently happening in the gym programs at The Club?*

**John:** Right now we have basketball leagues for boys ages 6-9 in the Younger Boy's Gym. This is an instructional league with about 40 boys participating. This league will end in March and will be followed by kid's wrestling instruction and spring football mini-leagues in April.

**Jay:** In our main gym we have basketball leagues for boys 10-12 and another league for young men ages 12-17. The 10-12 year old league is both instructional and competitive. The 12-17 year old league is competitive. Tournaments for both leagues will be held in March.

*What makes The Club for Boys Athletic Program unique?*

**John:** We offer fun, safe activities. Our leagues are open to all boys, regardless of experience or capabilities. For the \$7 per year annual membership fee, boys can participate in any of our activities.

**Jay:** For our organized leagues,



**John Strommen**



**Jay Redmond**

participants "earn" their jerseys by participating in at least 75% of practices and games, they don't just buy them as in most traditional leagues.

*Overall The Club seems to be putting more emphasis on health and fitness this past year. Have your activities in the gym changed because of this?*

**John:** We have added more cardio activities, running, jumping, handstands, leap frog and jump rope. Wall climb is popular. To create our "wall" we stack mats up to 7ft high. We have tried to motivate the boys to come into the gym and become more fit.

*What are some of your needs and wants in the Athletic Department?*

**John:** We can always utilize volunteers to help with our leagues. We can use coaches, scorekeepers, and referees. We need weight lifting coaches and we could utilize 10 adults who just know how to dribble a ball. What most of these kids need is just more individual instruction.

**Jay:** My wish is that we could motivate more older boys to spend time here other than on just on Friday night during Midnight Madness. I normally have 30-40 older members

here on Friday nights after the local high school games end. We can use donations of equipment such as new basketballs and the Vick 7 mini footballs.

*John, you have been here 20 years.*

*What is one of your favorite memories of being Athletic Director here at The Club for Boys?*

**John:** I remember taking a group of boys to Omaha to play their Boys Club team in a softball tournament. The year was probably 1992 and the month was July. It was hot and humid and our boys weren't used to the humidity. Omaha had a "big shot" team and somehow we ended up in the finals playing against that team. Right before the game the Omaha team went and had lunch at a local Smorgasbord. Meanwhile, our team found a shady place and sat down to eat the sack lunches we had brought along for the trip. The Omaha team couldn't move from over eating and we ended up winning the tournament. Something that made that game very special was a telegram we received right before the game from a senior citizen's team we regularly played against in Rapid City. They always beat us but they sent us a telegram wishing us good luck. I think everyone who went along for that trip will always remember it.

*For more information about The Club for Boys Athletic Program contact John or Jay at 343-3500.*



## Bob Sabin's Legacy Lives on!

For 29 years, Bob Sabin was on the Club for Boys Board of Directors. He held various leadership positions on the board and, just a few months before his death in November 2006, he was elected Director Emeritus. Over the years, his service to the Club and the boys of Rapid City was invaluable. Bob's memorial fund ensures that his legacy to the Club will live on forever.

A Hoosier, Bob was born and raised in Indiana and had a bachelor's degree from Indiana University. He and his wife, Betty, moved to Rapid City in 1949 when he became a partner in Brown Swiss Milk Company. He served as Vice President of Brown Swiss until he retired in 1979.

Bob was a warm-hearted man who earned the respect of all who knew him. He is survived by his wife, Betty, their four daughters and 1,400 members of the Club for Boys whose lives he touched with his kindness.

*For information about The Club for Boys Foundation, contact Sara Gentry at 343-3500.*

## A Swimming Lesson

Excitement was in the air as a group of older members were preparing to leave for a swimming trip to Evans Plunge. Although it seemed like it took forever, to the boys, in an hour's time they were there, trunks on and already going up and down the slide.

Jay, Main Gym Director, noticed one of the boys standing in the wading pool, watching all of the excitement of the other boys. Jay swam over to the boy and asked him "why not join in the fun?" The boy answered, "I don't know how to swim."

With some coaxing from Jay, he finally convinced the boy to go down the slide and that he would catch him at the bottom.

The boy climbed the ladder and then just stood there. Jay kept telling the boy he would not let anything bad happen to him and he needed to trust him.

Finally, the boy went down the slide, Jay caught him, and as Jay was pulling him over to the side of the pool, the boy thanked him.

Jay asked him if he wanted to go down the slide again. The boy said, "you would catch me again?" And Jay said, "of course."

After several trips down the slide, Jay told the boy, "this time, I want you to come down the slide with one of those floatation devices over there. I will be close to you,



but I will not catch you. You will bob right back up when you hit the water."

The boy came down the slide, hit the water, bobbed back up, and then Jay told him, "now kick your feet while holding on to the floatation device."

The boy did and he was able to kick himself over to the side of the pool. You should have seen the smile on the boy's face.

A couple more times down and Jay had him kicking his feet and moving his arms and soon, this boy was "swimming" to the side of the pool on his own.

Good things like this happen at our club because staff are tuned in to the boy, not just the activity.

Thank you, Jay.

# Sponsors Needed For Night Fishing Program

The Night Fishing Program is one of our more popular summer programs here at The Club. Each week, seven boys are taken on an outing that, for most, will become a life long memory. We take the boys from the Club and go to Sheridan Lake. From there, we go out on a pontoon boat, put lanterns over the side and patiently wait for the fish to bite. The stars are beautiful, we have the lake to ourselves, and the only sound we hear is the fish alarm going off and the excited voices of boys when there is a “fish on.” About midnight, we go to the Club for Boys cabin for a midnight fish fry, ghost stories and hopefully a little sleep. It costs \$100 to sponsor a night of fishing, which covers food, snacks, and the gas for vehicles and the boat. We need 12 sponsors for the summer and we appreciate your consideration of this request.

*For more information contact Dave Oyler at 343-3500.*

## I Know You Can Do it

Those of us that work here at the Club for Boys have a unique relationship with our members. They have regular contact with the boys, but they usually don't think of us as authority figures in the same way that they see their teachers or parents—for instance, in most cases the boys call us by our first names. They feel comfortable with us and see us as their friends.

I always knew that was important, but I didn't realize how important until Jocie Oyler told me about Sammy.

Jocie is the director of our Older Boys Room and it's her job to plan and supervise activities in the Den, a room set aside for boys age 12 and over. The Den was set up because at this age boys start to become more involved with extracurricular activities, jobs and girls. They start identifying themselves more as young men rather than children and tend to test values and rules. They want to dissociate themselves from younger boys and seek adventures and new experiences. They are therefore ripe for increased juvenile delinquency, gang involvement, and drug use.

It's Jocie's job to try and counteract that by providing a program that appeals to boys in middle and high school. She encourages them to think for themselves and take personal

responsibility for their actions.

She also encourages them to plan for the future by learning job skills and general life skills.

That is a tough list to accomplish, but I think Jocie's doing it. A few months ago she was playing cards with a 16-year-old that we'll call Sammy. Sammy was telling her that he wants to go into the Army when he gets out of school and maybe go on college. He told her his goals for the future and just wanted to know what she thought his chances were of succeeding. Jocie told him he had a great chance of success. He's smart, athletic, and makes friends easily. Why wouldn't he succeed?

Just a week later, Sammy was back in the Den telling Jocie he was quitting school. She couldn't believe it. Here was this kid that had a plan for the future and the talent to accomplish it, but he was throwing it away because, “school's harrrrrrd.”

Jocie quickly pointed out that Sammy could do whatever he wanted, but quitting school was a big, big mistake. She reminded him that he had dreams, and he wouldn't come close to accomplishing any of the things he talked about if he quit high school.

“I want you to graduate from college,” she said. “I know you can do it.”

Sammy took what she said to heart. The two had a long discussion about what it means to get an education,



**Scott Bader, The Club for Boys'  
Executive Director**

what it's like in ‘the real world’, and what it would take to stay in school.

Jocie let him know that she didn't think it would always be easy, but the pain and trouble of getting an education was worth the reward.

That was possible because Jocie had laid the groundwork. She had established a trusting relationship with Sammy, so he felt that he could really talk with her and that he could trust her advice. In the end, he decided to stay in school and is still there, slugging away at getting through 10th grade.

It is important not to paint too rosy a picture here. Sammy still has two and a half years before he graduates. That is plenty of time to change his mind and quit, but thanks to Jocie's influence that is a little less likely today than it was yesterday.



Rapid City Club for Boys, Inc.  
P.O. Box 907  
Rapid City, SD 57709-0907

Presorted  
Non-Profit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Rapid City, SD  
Permit #618

Postmaster: Send returns to P.O. Box 907, Rapid City, SD, 57709-0907

# Our Schedule

## **April:**

April 6 Program hours 7:30a.m.–1:00p.m. Easter Egg Hunt at 1:00  
April 9 Program hours 7:30a.m.–5:30 p.m.  
April 16 Club membership renewals begin for 2007-2008 membership year.  
April 23 Closed for Staff in-service

## **May:**

May 4 Mother's Day Dinner  
May 28 Closed for staff in-service until June 1

## **June:**

June 4 Summer Program begins. Club hours 7:30-5:30, Monday through Friday. New member meetings, 8a.m. Mondays.

