

Press Release

Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Rhode Island and RiverzEdge Arts Announce Merger to Strengthen Support for Youth and Expand Creative Opportunities in Woonsocket

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Riverzedge Arts Joins Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Rhode Island

Cumberland, RI — June 1, 2025— Riverzedge Arts, a nationally recognized creative youth development organization in northern Rhode Island, is officially becoming a program of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Rhode Island (BGCNRI). This transition ensures the continuation of Riverzedge’s mission to empower teens through art, design, and real-world skills—now backed by the resources and reach of one of the state’s most trusted youth-serving organizations.

BGCNRI plans to relaunch Riverzedge programming in early Fall, with a focus on maintaining the creative spirit and youth-driven innovation that have defined Riverzedge for over 20 years. More details on program offerings and enrollment will be shared in the coming weeks.

“The goal is to build on the strengths of both organizations,” said Gary Rebelo, President & CEO of BGCNRI. “We’re committed to maintaining the core missions and values that have made each organization successful.”

Founded in 2002, Riverzedge Arts has helped thousands of teens gain critical job and life skills through paid, art-based studio experiences in graphic design, woodworking, printmaking, digital media, and more. As part of BGCNRI, Riverzedge will continue to provide these hands-on learning opportunities—enhanced by the support, structure, and long-term stability offered by BGCNRI’s regional network.

Dr. Kristen Williams will remain as Executive Director of Riverzedge Arts, continuing to lead the program’s creative and educational vision. Gary Rebelo will serve as President & CEO of both BGCNRI and Riverzedge Arts, ensuring aligned leadership and a unified strategy across all programs.

“With the combined resources of both organizations, youth will benefit from an even more robust support system,” said Williams. “We’re focused on ensuring they have the mentorship, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive.”

This partnership aligns Riverzedge's award-winning creative workforce development model with BGCNRI's broad spectrum of programs in academic support, health and wellness, character development, and leadership. Together, they aim to offer a more comprehensive, impactful experience for young people at every stage of growth.

Rebelo added, "At Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Rhode Island, we're always looking for ways to expand opportunity. This transition ensures that more teens can access the kind of high-impact programs that help them succeed in life."

The Riverzedge Arts program will continue to operate in Woonsocket under the leadership of BGCNRI's Board of Directors and Executive Team. With the stability and support of this new structure, Riverzedge will be well-positioned not only to reopen its studios but to grow. Once programming is up and running, the goal is to explore opportunities to expand both Riverzedge and BGCNRI offerings throughout Northern Rhode Island—especially focused on teen engagement and workforce development initiatives.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Northern Rhode Island

With clubhouses in Cumberland and Woonsocket, BGCNRI serves youth from all areas of northern Rhode Island. For nearly 70 years, the organization has provided safe, supportive environments where young people can learn, lead, and thrive. Its programs focus on education, leadership, arts, sports, and wellness—empowering youth to reach their full potential.

About Riverzedge Arts

Riverzedge Arts is a nationally recognized nonprofit youth arts and enterprise studio based in Woonsocket, RI. Since 2002, it has empowered teens through paid creative work, skill-building, and mentorship—helping them build confidence, earn income, and prepare for the future.

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