



## *News Release*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MARYLAND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB EARNS RECOGNITION AND  
CLEARS EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES WITH SUPPORT FROM  
KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA**

*Westminster Club Members Benefit from COVID-19 Relief Funds, STEM Upgrades, and Contributions from Knorr Brake Company and Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America*

**WESTMINSTER, Md. – Feb. 16, 2021** – During a year when the COVID-19 pandemic pushed schooling online and hampered after-school programming, members of the Boys & Girls Club of Westminster, Maryland, benefited from more than \$55,000 in grant funding from Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America Inc. (KBGCNA) awarded over the last two years. Additional support came from employees of Westminster-based Knorr Brake Company, who – aside from the current COVID-related pause for in-person activities – volunteer their time at the club and contributed to its holiday giving program for the third year in a row.

As a part of Munich, Germany-based Knorr-Bremse, Knorr Brake Company manufactures braking systems, passenger doors, and climate-control equipment for mass transit. Meanwhile, KBGCNA is the North American arm of Knorr-Bremse's global nonprofit philanthropic giving foundation, Knorr-Bremse Global Care, which upholds education as one of its primary missions.

Positive effects from the foundation's support to the club were highlighted early in 2020 – prior to the pandemic-related shutdowns – when the Boys & Girls Club of Westminster won a regional award for having the highest member participation in the club's national MyFuture

## **MARYLAND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB EARNS RECOGNITION AND CLEARS EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES WITH SUPPORT FROM KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA**

Feb. 16, 2021/Page 2

digital literacy program. Their participation was made possible with the help of dozens of new Google Chromebook notebooks and laptops, plus an updated STEM lab – which the club calls its STEaM MakerSpace (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) – all funded by a grant from KBGCNA.

Erin Bishop, marketing director of the Boys & Girls Club of Westminster, said some 125 club members in grades one through five participated in the national contest.

“The kids were going onto the MyFuture site, registering themselves, sharing what they had done in the new STEaM MakerSpace, and then participating in more of the online MyFuture activities,” Bishop said. “What’s more, these were activities that many of them hadn’t wanted to participate in previously. We had so many kids registered and earning badges in the program that we actually had the highest participation, as well as the highest percent of increase in members participating in our region.”

### **Paving the Way for Virtual Learning**

Besides entering the national contest, Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America funds also made it possible for many more children to participate in virtual learning programs at the club during the 2020-21 school year, which was necessitated by the global pandemic.

Jessica Baker, human resources business partner at Knorr Brake Company and the Westminster project champion for KBGCNA, said the foundation’s initial \$46,500 grant covering the STEaM MakerSpace overhaul was its first KBGCNA project in the area. This is not the first time the region has benefited from the organization’s philanthropic support. In 2017, Knorr-Bremse Global Care – KBGCNA’s Germany-based parent – funded a project for the New Life for Girls organization.

Completed and unveiled in September 2019, the upgrade included more than 30 new laptops, Chromebook notebook computers, and Apple® iPads; headphones; STEM activity kits; robotics equipment; coding software; new shelving, tables, and stools; and high-efficiency lighting. Employees of Knorr Brake Company also volunteered their time for the overhaul, making renovations and painting the center in bright blue company colors.

“One of our goals in the project was really to expand the kids’ horizons,” Baker said. “Some of these children may not have thought about all of the various career options that are available to them. So to be able to open that up – and show all of these other possible career paths they haven’t yet considered or know about – is a huge part of why we wanted to support the STEaM MakerSpace.”

**MARYLAND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB EARNS RECOGNITION AND CLEARS EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES WITH SUPPORT FROM KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA**

Feb. 16, 2021/Page 3

In the spring of 2020, the club received additional KBGCNA funding in the form of a \$8,970 COVID-19 relief grant, used to purchase 30 more Chromebook computers and accommodating the club's need to support more online programming.

"We wanted to see what needs the club had based on COVID-19 that we could support," Baker said. "What it came down to was that if we could provide additional laptops or Chromebooks to supplement those the club already had, we could help make it possible for more children to use them for online learning at home, if necessary."

Bishop said the support from both grants has made a significant difference in the club's ability to assist members with online schooling, especially during the pandemic. This year, with the shift to online schooling, the club's programming switched from after-school to daytime hours, with a maximum of 78 members able to use the facility each day, down from more than 300 who attended daily prior to the pandemic.

"Before receiving the grant, the club had a computer lab with 17 desktop computers that had to be shared among all of the children we were serving, so there was a constant rotation of kids wanting to use those computers," Bishop said. "Because of Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America's generosity, including the Chromebooks purchased through the initial grant and the COVID-19 relief funds, every single student who's at the club for online schooling has a computer to learn on."

Additionally, she said, the technology has helped club members to bridge achievement gaps that were exacerbated by the shift to online schooling.

"It's been imperative for our members to have a way to stay connected," Bishop said. "Early on, many of them were trying to do their schoolwork on a mobile phone or with an older tablet, and some of them didn't do it at all. With the help we received, we were able to get many of the kids Chromebooks to take home. We also worked closely with the local school system to ensure that the most at-risk, in-need kids were included in the program."

### **Valuable Lessons About Giving Back**

In addition to grant support from Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America, Knorr Brake Company and its employees have also supported the Boys & Girls Club over the years by volunteering their time and sponsoring a variety of activities. For example, some 50 Knorr Brake employees and family members helped with the STEM center upgrades, and many more contributed to a holiday gift drive for the club, for the third year in a row.

**MARYLAND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB EARNS RECOGNITION AND CLEARS EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES WITH SUPPORT FROM KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA**

Feb. 16, 2021/Page 4

“Every child at the club gets something they want, something they need, something to eat, and something to read, thanks to Knorr Brake employees who have sponsored a child for the holiday. It is the most amazing thing that I have seen,” Bishop explained.

Knorr Brake also hosted a giving campaign to involve club members in the company’s corporate social responsibility efforts and to teach club members about the value of supporting the community. Through that effort, employees worked with club members to make homemade dog treats and cat toys for the local humane society and biodegradable bird feeders.

With support from KBGCNA, Knorr Brake Company, and its employees, Boys & Girls Club members are learning valuable lessons about the meaning of philanthropy, responsibility, and respect, according to Bishop.

“The partnership that we have with Knorr Brake has been instrumental in the success of our kids’ development in multiple ways,” Bishop said. “In addition to supporting the STEaM MakerSpace project, Knorr Brake employees have been mentors to our children, and our kids have learned that they can depend on them. That, to me, has been just as significant as the grant funds. Our children have been able to envision the success that a lot of the Knorr Brake employees have had, and they can see that they might have an opportunity to do something similar in their own life.”

Making these contributions has been equally important for Knorr Brake and Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America, Baker said.

“We believe that in this day and age, companies have an additional responsibility besides simply doing business, to give back to the community, and this is a great way for us to do that,” she said. “It also gives Knorr Brake employees a way to pursue a passion they didn’t necessarily have as part of their career path.”

**About Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America**

Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America Inc. (KBGCNA) is an independent organization operating as the North American arm of a global nonprofit organization – Knorr-Bremse Global Care. With an aim to address local social challenges more effectively, KBGCNA investments are centered in the surrounding communities of KB’s three largest North American companies: Elyria, Ohio-based Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems; Westminster, Maryland-based Knorr Brake Company; and Watertown, New York-based New York Air Brake. Funding activities are championed and supported by the employees of each of the three local companies. Follow us on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc).

**About Knorr Brake Company**

Since 1973, Knorr Brake Company has been the innovative leader in supplying North American rail market customers, including light rail vehicles, METRO, and high-speed trains. With its headquarters in Westminster,

**MARYLAND BOYS & GIRLS CLUB EARNS RECOGNITION AND CLEARS EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES WITH SUPPORT FROM KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA**

Feb. 16, 2021/Page 5

Maryland, the company operates sales and service facilities in Carmel, New York; and Union City, California. KBC's subsidiaries – IFE North America LLC (passenger door systems) and Merak North America LLC (climate-control systems) – are co-located in Westminster. Knorr Brake Company is a member of the Munich, Germany-based Knorr-Bremse, the global market leader in braking systems and a leading supplier of other safety-critical rail and commercial vehicle systems. Contact Knorr Brake Company at [knorrbrakecorp.com](http://knorrbrakecorp.com) and follow us on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/knorr-brake-company](https://www.linkedin.com/company/knorr-brake-company). To learn more about career opportunities at KBC, please visit [www.kbnajobs.com](http://www.kbnajobs.com).

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