

Enriching future generations in a safe environment.

Boys & Girls Club of Westminster provides kids with a fun and secure haven with Axis network cameras and 2N Fingerprint Reader.



Organization:

Boys & Girls Club of Westminster

Location:

Westminster, Maryland, USA

Industry segment:

Education

Application:

Health and safety

Axis partners:

Stanley Security, 2N USA

Mission

Moving to a much larger building in the heart of downtown Westminster, Maryland meant the Boys & Girls Club needed to step up security for more than 100 youngsters under its roof on a daily basis. With 16,000 square feet of space, administrators felt that the best way to monitor activity and keep any issues from escalating would be to install a comprehensive system of network cameras in every room and hallway as well as the entrances to the building.

Solution

Stanley Security, a systems integrator and Axis partner, fitted the Boys & Girls Club with 21 HDTV-quality AXIS Companion Eye network cameras and three eight-channel AXIS Companion Recorders controlled by AXIS Companion video management software.

Strategic placement of the cameras provides administrators visibility into every nook and cranny. Stanley Security also installed Axis cameras at the building entrance fronting the busy public street as well as the back door that exits to the parking lot for parent pickup. The club's operations manager monitors all the cameras from his office desktop.

Result

Administrators have found the Axis camera system a great tool for curtailing roughhousing in the popular Book Nook. The cameras help support efforts by administrators and staff to discourage youngsters from acting out, mishandling expensive microphones, computers and robotics, as well as staying out of trouble. The club is also piloting a 2N Optical Fingerprint Reader identification system to track participation in programs and activities. The goal is to then share those statistics with the national organization.



Creating a safe space for after-school activities

The Boys & Girls Club of America was founded to provide children and teens a fun and safe alternative to hang out after school and during the summer. The Boys & Girls Club of Westminster, Maryland location was so successful at this mission that membership quickly filled to capacity, leaving over 75 youngsters on a waiting list.

To accommodate dramatically increasing enrollment, the club moved from its 2,500 square-foot community center to a two-story, 16,000 square-foot property that faces the city's busy Main Street. Relocating to the downtown area and into a building six times larger than their previous home raised significant security concerns: With potential for so many more children and activities happening under one roof, how could administrators and staff keep a close watch to ensure everyone's safety and security? And given its new location, how could administrators ensure that anyone roaming the streets couldn't gain access to the building.

To achieve the visibility they needed, the Boys & Girls Club had Stanley Security install a comprehensive HDTV-quality video security system from Axis Communications. Each of the 19 indoor AXIS Companion Eye L cameras and two outdoor AXIS Companion LVE cameras provides a 115° field of view and wide dynamic range to capture scenes with complex lighting. The club's operations manager can view all the cameras live from his office desktop using intuitive AXIS Companion video management software.

"Given their placement, there's really nowhere that kids can go in our building, except for the bathrooms, where we can't see them," says Erin Bishop, Marketing Director for the Boys & Girls Club of Westminster. This kind of scrutiny has helped administrators curtail bullying and reinforce appropriate behavior.

Save the beanbags

Though the club maintains a 1:15 staff-to-child ratio for every activity, things can happen behind a staffer's back when their attention gets diverted to another corner of the room. A case in point is the Book Nook, hands down the most popular place in the building.

"This seems to be the area where the kids want to be the most rambunctious," says Bishop. "Instead of grabbing a book off the shelf and sitting quietly, they're jumping on the beanbag chairs, tossing them around and poking one another." Bishop used to walk into the nook and admonish them. Now the kids smile at the area's cameras and usually stifle their impulses.

"I'm always scrolling through the camera views to see what's happening," says Sean Davis. "The images are so sharp that if, for instance, I see a kid not keeping their hands to themselves – a problem that could eventually lead to bigger issues, I can go on our PA system and call out to the kid by name to knock it off." That tends to stop bad behavior in its tracks.

Davis was impressed with how quickly he learned the system, both for live viewing and retrieving stored video by date and time. "I've worked with at least four other systems over the years and this, by far, has been the easiest," says Davis.

Given the amount of money the club invested in renovating the space and outfitting it with furniture, materials and expensive equipment, the administrators find having the cameras in place helps reinforce the importance of good character and doing the right thing – lessons they teach the kids on a daily basis.





"A majority of the children we serve are coming from at-risk environments," says Bishop. "In addition to giving them enrichment programs, we're also mentoring them to become good leaders."

Creating a one-touch approach

The Westminster club recently installed 2N Fingerprint Readers at its registration desk and the rear door that exits to the parent pickup area. The initial pilot program involves 12 to 15 middle and early high school age kids participating in the summer Leaders in Training program. After registering their thumbprints in the system, the kids check in every day at the program director's desk using the fingerprint reader. The scan logs their arrival time and a second fingerprint scan by the rear door logs their departure time.

"It's great technology from a quality and risk standpoint," say Sean Davis. "If we have a dispute with a family, for instance, we can show them exactly when their child signed in and when they left the building."

Erin Bishop sees the technology as helping the Boys & Girls Club stay ahead of the curve. "Right now, we're just going to track how many hours a youngster is in the building," says Bishop. "But eventually we'd also like to track how many hours each child spends in a particular program such as a robotics club meeting or a mentoring session. It would make our reporting much easier and much more accurate."

Whether a dancer, a deejay or a design engineer

With all the extra space at its disposal, the Westminster club has been able to provide kids ages 6 to 18 with an amazing and engaging array of enrichment opportunities. There's a dance studio for performance artists, a radio station for aspiring deejays, a recording studio for musicians, a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) center for those interested in computers and robotics, and an art studio for other creative expression. There are spaces for doing homework and group mentoring sessions, there's a teen center for just hanging out and eventually there will be a gymnasium for the athletically inclined.

By augmenting supervision with well-placed AXIS Companion network cameras and 2N Fingerprint Readers, administrators and staff are able to ensure that everyone who walks through its doors finds the Boys & Girls Club of Westminster a safe and fun place to be.

"From a quality and risk standpoint, the Axis cameras have been a blessing. We really have no blind spots in or outside the building. We can see and head off misbehavior before it escalates and monitor staff to make sure they stay fully engaged with the kids."

Sean Davis, Operations Manager, Boys & Girls Club of Westminster, MD.



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Axis has more than 2,700 dedicated employees in more than 50 countries around the world, supported by a global network of over 90,000 partners. Founded in 1984, Axis is a Sweden-based company listed on NASDAQ Stockholm under the ticker AXIS.

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