



Campus-youth partnership to share artistic skills in recording studio

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A partnership between the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Madison-area youth will help young people explore and develop their creative talents in a cutting-edge sound recording studio.

The UW-Madison [Office of the Vice Provost and Chief Diversity Officer](#) is partnering with the [Boys and Girls Club of Dane County](#) to share the Creative and Performing Arts studio housed in the club's Taft Street location.

There, UW-Madison students will help the club's young participants create projects, while nurturing their own talents.

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"This strategic partnership will allow us to leverage some of the talent that we have in our diversity scholarship programs to work with local youth on developing their artistic, academic and leadership skills," says Damon Williams, the university's vice provost and chief diversity officer.

Among the various components of the strategic partnership is providing a recording studio location for workshops offered by the UW-Madison [PEOPLE](#) (Precollege Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence) program middle school summer session.

On site at the Boys and Girls Club, the partnership will bring in several scholars from the university's [First Wave Hip Hop Arts Learning Community](#) and other talented university students as community-based creativity partnership interns to work with the club's youth.

“Bridging creativity and community all together is an amazing combination — a true celebration of cross-learning for kids and certainly for students of the university.”

Michael Johnson

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The final component is dedicated access and recording time in the studio for First Wave.

"I'm excited about the collaboration between the University of Wisconsin and the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County. The opportunities and experiences it will provide and offer our young people are endless," says Michael Johnson, the club's chief executive officer. "Bridging creativity and community all together is an amazing combination — a true celebration of cross-learning for kids and certainly for students of the university."

The Boys and Girls Club already has been an informal destination for campus groups that embrace community arts outreach, Williams says, such as last year's stop by international artists who attended the "Breakin' the Law: Festival of Urban Movement" event.

A key aspect of the partnership is providing role models for local youth and hands-on experience in mentorship training for students from the programs within his Division of Diversity Equity and Educational Achievement, Williams adds.

"It's the [Wisconsin Idea](#) in action — the idea that the university

will benefit all corners of the state," he says.

Johnson notes that the university's First Wave program, the PEOPLE program and other initiatives under Williams' leadership are well respected and that "our kids get to be a part of a first-class experience."

The Boys and Girls Club rededicated the newly refreshed music, dance, and digital arts studio with a ribbon cutting on Thursday. With the help of the Madison Community Foundation, J.H. Findorff & Son, the Findorff Special Projects Group, Best Buy, Nova Retail Group and a division of Fitchburg-based Tri-North Builders, the facility now has a brighter environment in which club members will be excited to spend time, Johnson says.

"In the world we live in today, where creative leadership is so essential, we think it's important to have the partnership with the Boys and Girls Club to strengthen the possibility of developing the creative skills important to leadership," Williams says.

