

LT Boys & Girls Club in search of new home

By Kathryn Reed

Proposition 51 could turn out to be a mixed blessing for entities in South Lake Tahoe.

If it passes, Lake Tahoe Unified School District intends to reopen Al Tahoe Elementary School next fall. If that happens, the Lake Tahoe Boys & Girls Club will be on the street.

This is why the nonprofit is in the hunt for a permanent home.

The statewide proposition is a \$9 billion school facilities bond. LTUSD is expecting to receive \$1.4 million.

With enrollment increasing in LTUSD, the district needs more space. Al Tahoe closed after the 2003-04 school year because of declining enrollment and budget deficits.

“It will start as a K-2 school and build from there. It will be a STEM school. However, if Prop. 51 does not pass, we will likely not open the school,” Shannon Chandler, spokeswoman for LTUSD, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “The funds are necessary to do significant upgrades at the site, including a boiler system which could cost upward of \$400,000.”

The Boys & Girls Club, which has more than 500 members and averages 300 kids a day, had hoped to be able to be part of the new South Lake Tahoe recreation center if Measure P passes in November. But the building of that structure would be a few years off.

The organization this month received a check for \$50,000 from Rob Katz, CEO of Vail Resorts, to help with finding a permanent location.

“The club is backing Measure P on the city ballot to fund recreation as that is currently our best bet of a new home. But for the integrity of both the rec center and the club we would still like to have dedicated space of our own paid for by the club and in close proximity to the rec center – and utilize the rec center for daily sports, recreation, large group activities, etc.,” Jude Wood, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

The club keeps growing. In 2015, it grew by 125 percent. Last summer there was a waiting list. So, even if Al Tahoe were to continue to be an option, the reality is the club could use a bigger space.

The nonprofit is the only afterschool program on the South Shore for youth 5 and older. Two-thirds of the families fall below the California poverty line.

It costs \$100 a year per child to attend for a year, though many qualify for a discount based on their income.

Besides needing space for activities, the club wants room for school related activities such as being able to conduct science experiments as well as a kitchen because meals are part of the offerings. More than 27,000 free meals are served a year, plus an additional 54,000 free evening snacks.