

Boys & Girls Clubs of Volusia/Flagler Showcases Future-Ready Innovation Through Boeing-Supported Launchpad Program

The BGCVFC Rossmeyer Campus in Holly Hill proudly hosted its Future U Launchpad on April 29th; made possible through the 2025 Boeing Future U Launchpad grant.

HOLLY HILL, FL, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Boys & Girls Clubs of Volusia and Flagler Counties (BGCVFC) proudly hosted its Future U Launchpad: Engineering Pathways to Flight and Space experience on Wednesday, April 29 at the Rossmeyer Campus in Holly Hill, highlighting the organization's commitment to preparing youth for high-demand careers through immersive, future-ready programming.

Made possible through the Boeing Future U Launchpad grant awarded to BGCVFC in 2025, the initiative provides Club members with hands-on learning opportunities that bridge the gap between classroom concepts and real-world careers in aviation, engineering, and space exploration.

At the center of the experience is BGCVFC's Future U Launchpad Lab, where youth engage with virtual reality technology, interactive simulations, and career-connected learning designed to build confidence,



BGCVFC Club Kid talks to ERAU student Bella Lanese about meteorology



Dynamic panel discussion connecting Club members directly with industry leaders and academic professionals from Boeing and Embry-Riddle

curiosity, and technical awareness at an early age.

“This was not just an event. It was a demonstration of what is possible when young people are given access to the right tools, exposure, and support,” said Dr. Camesha Whittaker-Samuel, Chief Executive Officer of BGCVFC. “Our youth are not waiting for the future. They are actively preparing for it.”

The April 29 event featured a dynamic panel discussion connecting Club members directly with industry leaders and academic professionals.

Representatives from The Boeing Company included:

- Katie Sharon, Director and Program Manager, EA-18G Growler Development
- Danielle Getty, Senior Community Investor, Florida State Advocacy and Global Engagement
- Emma O’Rourke, Boeing Daytona Beach Site Integration Lead
- Gustavo “Gus” Rivera, Software Manager, Air Dominance Division, Boeing Defense, Space and Security, U.S. Air Force Veteran

Panelists from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University included:

- Christopher Lee, Associate Professor and U.S. Air Force Veteran
- Carrie Merlin, Assistant Professor, Applied Aviation Science
- Alyssandra (Bella) Lanese, Meteorology Student, Teaching Assistant and Resident Advisor
- David Bailey, Assistant Professor, Aviation Maintenance Science

The discussion was moderated by Dr. Carl Moore, Chief Transformation and Programs Officer, providing youth with direct access to professionals working in cutting-edge industries.

Throughout the event, Club members demonstrated what they are learning through the Launchpad Lab by engaging in meaningful dialogue, asking insightful questions, and exploring pathways into careers that are shaping the future.

BGCVFC currently serves nearly 2,000 youth annually across Volusia and Flagler Counties and has served more than 60,000 youth over its 34-year history, delivering programs focused on academic success, leadership development, healthy lifestyles, and workforce readiness.

“This initiative reflects the power of partnership and the importance of investing in innovative learning environments for young people,” Dr. Whittaker-Samuel added. “We are deeply grateful to Boeing and our academic partners for helping us expand access to opportunity and inspire



Exploring BGCVFC’s Future U Launchpad Lab, where youth engage with virtual reality technology

the next generation of leaders.”

The Future U Launchpad Lab is part of BGCVFC’s broader strategy to scale future-ready programming across all Club sites, ensuring that youth throughout the region have access to transformative learning experiences.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Volusia and Flagler Counties

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Volusia and Flagler Counties (BGCVFC) enables all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, and responsible citizens. For more than 34 years, BGCVFC has served over 60,000 youth across Volusia and Flagler Counties and currently reaches nearly 2,000 youth annually across eight locations, providing safe, supportive environments and nationally recognized programs focused on education, leadership, and innovation.

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