



# **How the Boys & Girls Clubs of East Alabama Creates a Safe, Welcoming Environment Through Visitor Verification**

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## **Boys & Girls Clubs of East Alabama**

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With three clubhouses across Auburn, Opelika, and Troy, the Boys & Girls Clubs of East Alabama seeks to provide a safe, positive, and inclusive environment for every youth they serve.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of East Alabama take a layered approach to safety, trying to make each clubhouse as secure as possible without making the children feel like they're walking into a locked-down facility. Because of the community trust and recognition behind the Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) name, the East Alabama Clubs field a high volume of visitor and volunteer requests, making visitor management a crucial aspect of their safety operations.



Any parent or caregiver will tell you that a kid is their most precious possession. So, for us, safety is always going to be at the top of that list.



A.J. Harris  
Director of Operations  
Boys & Girls Clubs of East Alabama

## CHALLENGES

When A.J. Harris joined as the Director of Operations in 2022, he saw an opportunity to standardize visitor management across all locations to meet the recently changed Boys & Girls Clubs of America membership requirements and prove compliance with Presidium accreditation standards.

With so many volunteers, vendors, and parents regularly entering the clubs for programs and events, each visit needed to be tracked and verified without slowing down operations or compromising the Clubs' commitment to openness and inclusivity.

## HOW RAPTOR HELPED

Raptor VisitorSafe provides an efficient, transparent way to screen and badge every visitor. Before they can move beyond the check-in desk, each visitor must scan their government ID to verify their identity, screening them against sex offender registries and custom databases. Once approved, visitors are issued a Raptor Verified badge so they can be easily identified, wherever they are in the building.

Harris also emphasized the importance of education and communication when standardizing VisitorSafe use across clubhouses. Notifying all visitors and groups in advance to bring their IDs and arrive early helped avoid frustration and pushback from community members and staff. Clear communication about the safety measures in place also helped build community trust in the clubs as safe, protected environments.

## RESULTS

Since implementing consistent check-in procedures with VisitorSafe, the Boys & Girls Clubs of East Alabama has

- obtained Praesidium accreditation
- maintained BGCA Membership requirements
- verified 100% of all visitors, across all clubhouses
- provided staff confidence and community peace of mind

“Part of our mission is creating a safe place for kids,” Harris says. Raptor VisitorSafe not only serves that mission but also helps remind the team of it in their everyday work. Harris recalls the first time the system flagged a potential sex offender match:

“For me, it was kind of an understanding of why we do what we do. This is why we have this system, this is why we use it... That was my ‘Aha’ moment, that first time you see that flag and that red screen pops up.”

## Looking Ahead: Layered Safety in Action

Harris's team continues to take a layered approach to safety. With their visitor screening needs covered by Raptor, the Clubs plan to fortify physical security in some of the older clubhouses.

"You want to be safe," Harris says, "But you also don't want to make it feel like it's so shut down [that] the kids feel like they're locked in... We don't want to put bars on the doors or windows." Instead, the Clubs will focus on strategically adding upgrades like bullet-resistant glass and reinforced frames without sacrificing the warm, open feel of their clubhouses.

## IMPACT

With Raptor VisitorSafe, the Boys & Girls Clubs of East Alabama can prove compliance for their Praesidium accreditation and BGCA membership requirements, protect the youth and communities they serve, and maintain the open, welcoming environment they're known for.

"We can't say that we want to be a safe place but let anybody in the building without a check," says Harris. "Having the Raptor systems provides that."



## LEARN MORE ABOUT RAPTOR®

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