



TBFT/Graduate To Go Q&A

What is the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens?

Established in 1992, the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens (TBFT) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation. The TBFT's mission is to inspire teenagers to graduate from high school and become caring, educated and productive adults. Our goal is to reach 100,000 teen annually through real-world experiences and help cut the high school dropout rate in half by 2018.

How Do We Fulfill Our Mission?

Led by our "*Graduate To Go*" national initiative, we fund organizations that provide at-risk youth with mentors and real-world experiences that are proven to help teens earn their diploma and achieve more in life. This is made possible through Taco Bell's passion, creativity and relentlessness to the graduation cause as well as support from customers, partners, franchisees and employees.

What is "*Graduate To Go*?"

"*Graduate To Go*" is a multi-year initiative led by the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens that will shine a spotlight on the high school dropout crisis and seek solutions through real-world experiences with like-minded partners. Our "*Graduate To Go*" ambassador is Actor/Producer, Mark Wahlberg. Together, the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens and the Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation will work to address the national teen graduation crisis.

How exactly is the foundation teaming up with Mark Wahlberg and his Youth Foundation?

The Taco Bell Foundation for Teens and Actor/Producer Mark Wahlberg recently announced the "*Graduate To Go*" initiative through a national public service campaign. Wahlberg, whose Mark Wahlberg Youth Foundation helps improve the quality of life for inner city youth through partnerships with other youth organizations, joins the Foundation's efforts as a "*Graduate To Go*" Ambassador. Together, the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens and Wahlberg will work to address the national teen graduation crisis where one in three students drops out of high school without receiving a diploma.

Why Does the Taco Bell Foundation For Teens Focus on This Issue?

The teen dropout rate has developed into a national crisis that can no longer be ignored. With one in three U.S. teens not graduating from high school, the socio and economic effects have far-reaching implications for the future of our country. Education is something that everyone needs and deserves. With a diploma being the #1 factor for a teen's future success, Taco Bell wants to raise awareness with teens about what graduation means toward a better life and provide real-world solutions that help them achieve their goal.

Does the Taco Bell Foundation For Teens Work with Other Organizations?

TBFT will collaborate with like-minded organizations to drive impact and tackle the teen drop-out problem. As the Foundations grows in endowment and impact, it will look towards national groups and companies with similar missions to join together to form an even stronger presence tackling teen drop-outs in our communities.

Who Do We Support?

Historically, the Foundation funds grants to schools and youth organizations. We are the largest teen program donor to Boys & Girls Clubs of America, giving more than \$28 million to support teen programming since 1995. In addition, TBFT provides grants to other worthy programs that are designed to help teens stay in school and on the path to graduation. This year, the TBFT will distribute \$1.8M in local grants to nearly 300 organizations.

Why Did We Choose Boys & Girls Clubs of America As Our Primary Partner?

Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) is the top youth development organization in America according to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, serving girls and boys from disadvantaged economic and social circumstances. BGCA reaches more than one million teens each year through its vast network of some 4,000 Clubs – each providing daily access, youth development programs and a trained professional staff. In a recent third-party survey of Club alumni, nearly two-thirds (61 percent) said the Club helped them become more committed to their education and forty-five percent said the Club helped them graduate from high school.

What Do We Fund at the BCGA?

The Taco Bell Foundation for Teens supports Boys & Girls Clubs of America through its long-standing sponsorship of the national Keystone program. This is the largest and most dynamic teen program within the organization, with more than 1,500 Keystone Clubs nationwide. With the guidance of Club staff, members ages 14-18 gain hands-on experiences planning and participating in projects that encourage career growth, academic success and volunteerism. Keystone teens have initiated projects like college field trips, job shadowing tours, health fairs and community clean-up events, all to benefit their Clubs and communities. Each year, “Keystoners” develop a National Service Project with a common theme. The combined action of thousands of local Keystone Clubs results in a service project with national impact. Service projects are recognized each year during the national and regional Keystone Conferences sponsored by the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens. These are premiere leadership events for teens and draw thousands of youth from Clubs nationwide.

How is the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens Funded?

Funding comes from the generosity of Taco Bell customer donations and the support of Taco Bell, its employees, franchisees and partners. Canisters are placed in participating restaurants so patrons can support the program by donating their spare change. Additionally, franchisees have developed fundraising and volunteer opportunities within their own communities to support local teen programs. Taco Bell’s 2010 national fundraiser to support the TBFT will take place June 3-June 15, 2010. During that period, participating Taco Bell restaurants nationwide will invite customers to donate \$1 in support of the “*Graduate To Go*” initiative. By doing so, customers will receive a free taco coupon and all proceeds will go to the TBFT.