One of the fondest memories I have as a young kid growing up in a small community was just jumping on my bicycle after school with my brother, riding past the fire station, and on to the Arlington Boys & Girls Club for Teen Night on Friday nights. It was the place to be; the place we all felt safe, where we could laugh and play without our parents, but then calling them later to come pick us up because it was too dark to ride home. The Arlington Boys & Girls Club is also where I essentially “learned” how to play basketball, it’s where I made new friends, competed against the boys, and understood the importance of community at a young age.

Those memories created as young kids stay with us well into our adult years. I don’t remember every basketball game I played in at the Club, but I remember enjoying new teammates, strengthening friendships, and always wanting to go back to the Club the next day and the next day after that. It felt like my second home and there was nowhere I’d rather be when I had free time.

Today, the Arlington Boys & Girls Club is in need of expansion to provide for our expanding population and community. To me, that speaks volumes to the opportunities they continue to afford our kids and teens growing up in the best small town that I know. We all have recently witnessed with the Oso landslide what community means, what community does, and how community comes together to provide and strengthen what we already know exists. I can promise that the lessons these kids are learning will be with them for life and that’s something we can all feel great about.

Kayla Burt