

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Baton Rouge

Great Kids. Great Futures. Capital Campaign Case

Spring 2019

Community Need

In Baton Rouge, more than 41,000 boys and girls under the age of 18 are disadvantaged—often living below the poverty line. Their schools are regularly below acceptable standards with community-wide crime (as well as hunger) a part of their everyday lives. Frequently, their parents work multiple jobs, preventing them from spending quality time with their children. In fact, more than 60% of Baton Rouge children are so-called “latchkey kids.” Unsupervised time often leads to unsafe behavior and abuse from opportunistic elements present in poorer neighborhoods. Local Boys & Girls Club membership reflects the surrounding census tract and Greater Baton Rouge community, where: 27% of children under the age of 17 live in poverty; 48% have only one parent; fewer than 68% graduate from high school; 33% are obese; and 10% are victims of physical abuse. These are all staggering (and sobering) statistics.

Despite continual growth since the early 1980s, the Club could be doing a great deal more to serve the expanding needs of the Greater Baton Rouge community. One of the biggest limiting factors has been that service delivery of afterschool programs currently takes place only in participating local schools. This differs from the traditional Boys & Girls Club model, which serves youth primarily through a stand-alone “Clubhouse.” The advantage of a Clubhouse is that it provides a safe, supervised environment where children from any school in the district or region can participate in programming. And, unlike a school-based model, as children change schools or encounter other disruptions, the Clubhouse serves as a consistent, stabilizing force for good in their lives.

Currently, Baton Rouge is the largest urban BGC-served community in the USA lacking a Clubhouse facility. Stepping up to the challenge, we have embarked on a capital campaign to develop a new, custom-designed Clubhouse which will more than double the number of children served annually, from approximately 1,800 to 3,900. Additionally, the Clubhouse will increase the number of program hours spent with each student from 730 to 1,940 hours per year. The stakes are high, but so are the potential rewards: more positive life trajectories for more area youth. And a more stable Baton Rouge.

Overview: Great Kids. Great Futures. Campaign

The *Great Kids. Great Futures.* campaign is an unprecedented public-private partnership between the Club and the Recreation and Park Commission for the Parish of East Baton Rouge (“BREC”). Through a Cooperative Endeavor Agreement signed in September of 2018, the partnership will establish the first-ever youth center, or “Clubhouse”, in the Club’s more than

35-year history in Greater Baton Rouge. The 31,000-sf facility will be featured within Howell Community Park, a shuttered municipal golf course (flooded in 2016), currently being repurposed into a true community venue. The redesigned park will ultimately include a gym, pool, and rec center which, along with the Clubhouse, will be cooperatively managed by BREC and the Club to provide a safe environment, staffed with caring and professional adults and offering proven youth development programs.

The Club selected Howell Community Park for its first facility because it is situated in an area with great need for our services. Located in North Baton Rouge, this neighborhood is 94.2% African American with 63% of children living under the poverty level (2011-2015 American Community Survey; factfinder.census.gov). Some 45% of households are single-parent homes and 43% of adults did not graduate high school. We also selected this site because it is easily accessible by bus and will be convenient for Club Members from other sites to travel to the facility for special activities.

The *Great Kids. Great Futures.* campaign will raise approximately \$10 million. Six million dollars is required by the spring of 2019 to fund the construction and furnishing of the facility. Within a few years of construction, the Club plans to raise an additional \$4 million for an endowment fund to ensure long-term maintenance and operational support.

To date, the Club has raised nearly \$3 million in gifts and pledges; an additional \$2.25 million are in other requests currently under consideration. Finally, aided by the professional counsel of Capital One Bank, Crescent Growth Capital, LLC, and Butler Snow, LLC., we expect to acquire nearly \$2.5 million in New Market Tax Credits (NMTCs) for the project.

In order to take full advantage of available NMTCs, and fully fund the Clubhouse's construction, our immediate need (by the spring of 2019) is \$2.5 million in new gifts and/or pledges.

Summary of Benefits

While the Clubhouse building itself is a new project, the facility's activities will be an expansion of our outstanding, ongoing programming. The Clubhouse will increase the Club's capacity in five key ways: (1) The Club will be able to serve more children in the Baton Rouge area, regardless of which school they attend; (2) The Club will be able to provide more access for new and existing Club Members (open weekends and late); (3) Club Member tenure will be expanded, leading to stronger outcomes; (4) The custom-designed and professionally-staffed Club will be able to create more safety by managing its own building; and (5) The Club will be able to offer more programs, both for our Club Members and the larger community.

These benefits will make the *Great Kids. Great Futures.* campaign a massive "win-win" for the entire Baton Rouge community.