



**FULFILLING A DREAM**





BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
of Glasgow-Barren County

GREAT FUTURES START **HERE.**

# Fulfilling a Dream



The late Ruel Houchens, along with his wife, Nell, set aside a considerable amount of money to benefit children in their community. At that time, Ruel told Patrick Gaunce—then a Papa John’s franchisee with his father, Wayne—to use the money to start a Boys & Girls Club in Glasgow, Kentucky (pop. 14,000).

It wasn’t long before the Boys & Girls Club in Glasgow was up and running. The board had secured leased space at the Liberty District Ralph Bunche Center and hired the Club’s founding director, Kelly Jenkins, to oversee the organization. While the leased space was a good place to begin, it was never intended to be the Club’s permanent location.

The new director built relationships with individuals from area schools as well as with the Housing Authority of Glasgow. The House Authority helped make connections with families who might benefit most from the Club’s programs and activities. The Club opened with almost 30 members. In less than one year, it had grown to 50 members and, soon after, there were almost 150 members. They were growing fast, and the waiting list suggested an even greater need was yet unrealized.

Everything was going so well. However, the location continued to be a concern. Although Jenkins and her small staff made every effort to use every bit of space available, there were challenges. “We loved the space and our partnership with Liberty District,” she said. “But we were bursting at the seams.” The classroom-style space also made staffing difficult. “When you have so many rooms

and exits, you have to hire more staff to make sure every base is covered,” Jenkins added.

Five years later, with operating expenses of over \$200,000 each year, it became apparent the Houchens’ established fund would not sustain the organization for much longer. This is when the board began to think seriously about the long-term fundraising needs of the fledgling club. At the time, it was still a satellite organization of the Boys & Girls Club of Bowling Green. Becoming its own club would require the Boys & Girls Club of Glasgow-Barren County to be established as a 501(c)3—which was another big commitment.

They needed a new building with more space, but the idea of undertaking a \$2.5 to \$3 million building project—on top of current and future funds—seemed inconceivable. There were a couple of nonprofit organizations in Glasgow that had raised large donations from the community, but those efforts had taken place a long time ago and their goals had been less than a million dollars.

What the Club really needed for a new location, operating funds and financial security was \$5 million ... \$5 million from a community with a population fewer than 15,000! On top of that, it was at a time not too long after the Great Recession when the country was still struggling financially.

Securing annual operating funds was a continuing problem. The Club was barely able to raise \$50,000 a year with its Pancake Fry, Golf Tournament, a couple other small events and a grant or two.

Even if they were to continue operating on a shoestring, they knew they would run out of funding in less than a year.

“We had to make a hard choice,” said Gaunce. “We could either run the Club for one more year or we could take the remainder of Nell and Ruel’s generous gift and invest it for the Club’s future. It’s clear now we made the right decision, but it sure wasn’t an easy choice to make.”

Bottom line: The Boys & Girls Club of Glasgow-Barren County was at a crossroads. The funding established by Nell and Ruel Houchens had been making up the shortfall, but at the rate they were going, it would be depleted soon. There were two options: cut corners and serve fewer children or invest what was left of the Houchens’ gift in a bold future for the new Club.

Gaunce spoke with his friend, Commonwealth Broadcasting President and CEO Steve Newberry, who had a connection with Hartsook Chairman Bob Hartsook. “Steve mentioned Hartsook. We thought perhaps our project would be too small for the consulting firm, but we knew we needed help. We didn’t know how to raise the money we needed,” said Gaunce. “We needed millions of dollars—not just a few here and there.” They invited Hartsook to come to Glasgow to talk with the board.

“No one in our town had ever conducted a pre-campaign study for a nonprofit campaign. When we needed money, we just raised it,” said Board Chair Bob Cary. “No organization in Glasgow had attempted a project of this scale, but we trusted Hartsook from the start. The strategic, relationship-building approach made perfect sense to us.” Hartsook Senior Executive Vice President Karin Cox conducted the pre-campaign study, testing a \$5 million campaign to build a \$3 million facility, expand the Club and provide several years’ worth of operating funds, plus estate gifts for future needs.

Cox returned to the board with news that while a \$5 million goal was not impossible, donor confidence in Glasgow was low, and many did not fully understand the Boys & Girls Club organization or its mission. Hartsook recommended a \$3.2 million campaign with a six month pre-campaign period to develop communications, build a donor file, establish fundraising processes and recruit volunteer leadership. Due to their limited staff size, Cox also recommended they outsource their campaign and allow Hartsook to manage it.

After much discussion, the board made a necessary and courageous decision to outsource the entire campaign to

Hartsook, and as Gaunce emphasized, “...it was the right choice.”

In the meantime, board member Sam Dickinson, a Hilliard Lyons financial manager, happened to be speaking with Sheri Lee, head of the Housing Authority of Glasgow. The Housing Authority had plans to build a community center, and it was looking for a program to serve low-income families. Dickinson suggested the Boys & Girls Club as an appropriate group, since one of the greatest needs for families was parenting support and after-school programs. A perfect partnership was formed which involved the Boys & Girls Club board “putting some skin in the game.”

The board raised gifts totaling around \$1.4 million which covered a portion of the building expense for children served by the Club who were not served by the Housing Authority. This included about \$600,000 for equipment and the addition of a commercial kitchen used to prepare meals and provide opportunities for life-skills programs.

**"In good times and bad, we know that people give because an organization is meeting the needs of others, not because the organization has needs."**

— Kelly Jenkins  
Chief Professional Officer

Gaunce and Newberry were obvious leaders for the Boys & Girls Club *Fulfilling a Dream* campaign. With their commitment to co-chair the campaign, a campaign leadership team was formed with Nell Houchens and Betty Bailey as honorary co-chairs. Other members were recruited based on their strong commitment to the needs of children and the high level of respect each of them had earned in the community: Don Baker, Green Mechanical Construction; Tommy Jackson, Edmonton State Bank President; Sam Dickinson; Bob Cary, management consultant; Bud Layne, SpanTech CEO and Founder; Tim Miller, Sitel Regional Director; Larry Glass; Larry D. Glass; Helena Chase-Birdwell; and Daryl Vann.

The first four gifts of \$250,000, which came from individuals close to Ruel and Nell, gave the campaign a solid start. Encouraged by Cary, the board members understood they would need to make their gifts first. After this, the next two gifts catapulted the campaign, not just because of the size of the gifts, but because they built the confidence needed to gain community support. Don and Denell Baker had always been very generous supporters of the Club. He was immediately ready to make a gift of about \$5,000—until he and his wife came to understand the tremendous need and impact their \$75,000 cash gift could make.

Then, Citizens First President Jim Lee and Newberry presented the compelling project to the Citizens First Board of Directors, along with a request for \$75,000. When the board voted to make this



gift, campaign leadership was energized. Soon, a \$100,000 cash gift from Edmonton State Bank would follow, as well as a long-term pledge of \$200,000 from T.J. Samson Community Hospital.

“The most important thing we learned was to quit talking about money and listen to what people were saying. When we engaged people in the mission—showing them who we serve and the difference we make, we started having more success than we ever imagined,” said Newberry. “Hartsook taught us to know where we were going, but also taught us how to focus on the kids and to show people how the Club changes their lives. It was a process—learning how to get away from trying to talk to everyone in the same way—but it made all the difference.”

Newberry initiated long conversations with Tim Miller, Sitel Site Manager. Sitel’s Call Center and its many employees were very receptive. Some from Sitel toured the Club to learn more about its mission. They were also very interested in workforce development and the potential the Club could have on preparing students with the life skills needed for a successful future. Their gift—which combined corporate support and employee giving—was one of the most significant of the campaign.

Daryl Vann took a tour with Newberry and saw how proud and content the children were and remarked on what an extraordinary job the director and her staff were doing. She noticed the secondhand pool table being used by the older teens and immediately told the director to order a new pool table. Shortly thereafter, she and her husband, Pat made a gift of \$250,000 in honor of Vann’s mother, Joy Bale Boone.

SpanTech’s Bud Layne, an entrepreneur with a huge heart for children, made it clear he did not intend to give capital support without providing ongoing operating support. He wanted to make

sure his gift of \$500,000 would be lasting and could continue to change kids’ lives long after the building was completed.

Said Jenkins, “In good times and bad, we know that people give because an organization is meeting the needs of others, *not because the organization has needs*. It has been a pleasure working with Hartsook. Karin Cox has taught us what fundraising is all about. We learned how crucial the relationships are with our donors. People invest in ideas and in people in whom they believe.”

The original campaign goal of \$3.2 million was exceeded eight months early. With the board’s encouragement, the campaign leadership team decided to increase its goal to the original \$5 million. Offered Cary, “Operating a Boys & Girls Club in a small community is a tremendous challenge—especially when it comes to raising enough funds to remain operational. Our Club existed because of the legacy gifts of two of the founding families. This money was running out when we were introduced to Hartsook. Working with the Hartsook team has been an incredible experience. Our campaign has been overwhelmingly success beyond anything anyone ever imagined. Hartsook’s expertise and professional competence is top of the line.”

The Boys & Girls Club of Glasgow-Barren County and its 175 participating members moved into its new home at the new HERO Center, and average daily attendance quickly grew to 280 members. The new, state-of-the art facility has two gymnasiums, classrooms, commercial kitchen and security features throughout. Said Jenkins, “It’s an amazing space, and the kids feel so proud. While new building is fantastic, it is so special that these kids know how the community has put their arms around them. We won’t be able to measure the impact of the kind of love that has been shown to them through this campaign.”

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