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IN

Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

Print

Changing Our World,

One Kid at a Time

Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

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A Tribute to the Harcourt General Charitable Foundation

"As long as companies like Harcourt see our young people as an investment and not a liability; as long as we all believe in the philosophy that it takes a village to raise a child; as long as we all continue to give positive encouragement to these already creative young people, there is no telling how far up the ladder of success our youth can climb."

-Stephanie Howell Joacine, mother of a Clubhouse member, giving a parent's perspective on the BGC B technology program.



Club member Valentine Howell presents bound digital book to Brian Knez and Rob Smith, Trustees of the Harcourt General Charitable Foundation.

A social investment of the highest order came to BGC B last year in the form of a \$1.5 million gift from the Harcourt General Charitable Foundation. The extraordinary gift is being used to purchase state-of-the-art computers and high-speed networks, to hire new staff to add a qualified technology coordinator in each Clubhouse, and to develop a comprehensive technology program.

The celebration to honor the Harcourt General Charitable Foundation and demonstrate the fruits of their gift was held at the Roxbury Boys & Girls Club on March 29. Noting that this remarkable gift is "generation-changing," Linda Whitlock pointed out that not only will technological fluency permit our members to compete in the marketplace for career opportunity, but also "dramatically influence the lives of their future children and families."

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Unprecedented Gifts Bring Chelsea Clubhouse Dream Closer to Reality

With just three days left before the expiration date of Robert and Myra Kraft's Chelsea Challenge, a \$200,000 gift from BGC B Director Marjie Kargman and her family made it possible for the Chelsea Campaign Committee to meet the \$2 million goal.

March 31, 2000, was the deadline for the fundraising challenge by the Krafts.

On November 3, 1999, the Krafts issued a challenge to the Chelsea Campaign Committee. They pledged \$1 million outright, with the pledge of a second \$1 million if an additional \$2 million in new donations could be secured during the five-month period. "We wanted to get the Campaign on a fast track," commented Myra Kraft. "We knew that

this was a lot of money for the Committee to raise in a short time, and Myra and I were as emotionally involved as the volunteers for all five months," added Robert Kraft.

Individuals and businesses with ties to Chelsea have pledged over \$1.8 million to the drive, \$1.2 million of

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BGC B Director Marjie B. Kargman

Spotlight on Staff: A Talk with Chris Sumner, New Director of Blue Hill Avenue Boys & Girls Club

B. Christopher Sumner joined BGCB as Director of the Blue Hill Avenue Boys & Girls Club at the beginning of March. A native of Dorchester, Chris holds a BS degree in Social Science and Human Services from Springfield College. He was formerly Executive Director of the “I Have a Dream” program, a long-term academic scholarship program. Currently, Chris is working toward his Master’s degree in Urban Development.

Q. Your experience includes a lot of what BGCB is all about, doesn’t it?

A. That’s true. I’ve spent a number of years working with inner city young people. I’ve worked with school administrators, the courts, DYS (the Department of Youth Services), family service agencies, and the Boston Police. Helping disadvantaged young people has been the focus of my career for the past 14 years.

In addition to my work at the “I Have a Dream” program, I was at the Justice Resource Institution, and was Director of the Opening Doors Truancy Intervention Program.

Q. What is your own background?

A. I grew up in Roxbury (and was, by the way, a member of the Club there), and went through the public schools. Frankly, when I graduated from high school, I couldn’t read or write at all well. So I accepted a basketball scholarship to the University of Prince Edward Island, which offered a post-12th grade program with intense tutoring. From there I went to college in Nova Scotia. Around this

time I met my wife-to-be [Katani Sumner, now Literacy Specialist at the Roxbury Boys & Girls Club], and that was a turning point in my life. I gradually recognized that I didn’t want to be just a jock. After we were married, we bought our first house in a gang-infested area. I got to know the neighborhood kids, played basketball with them, invited them over to the house, and went to court with them—and here is where my thirst to work with disadvantaged kids began.

Q. What are the target areas for special intervention in working with disadvantaged young people?

A. I see our primary targets as literacy and truancy prevention. I’d add to that good social and emotional development. I’d like to focus on helping young people reach their full potential—many of them are a decision away from trouble.

There are 17,000 kids living within a mile radius of this Clubhouse between the ages of 6 and 18—the age group of our members. We serve roughly 1,000 children and teens in a year’s time, with a waiting list of 200. What kids need is a place where they can feel they belong, with people who will help point them in the right direction.

Q. What priorities would you like to set for the Blue Hill Avenue Boys & Girls Club?

A. First, strengthen our partnerships. There is a multitude of agencies, good ones, that are potential partners, including the schools, that we can join to strengthen our own programs. Second, I’d like to increase our focus



on the middle school, to capture this age group before they slide into truancy—which typically starts in the 6th grade.

We have some incredibly creative and strong role models on our Blue Hills Avenue staff. I had good role models when I needed them while I was growing up, and I want to give back what was a blessing in my own life: the desire to aim higher, and the confidence to stick to and accomplish my goals.

PLANNED GIVING AT BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF BOSTON

BGCB serves about 7,000 youngsters, most of them from disadvantaged backgrounds, in Greater Boston. We can do that because so many of you support us.

Gifts to BGCB account for over 40% of our operating budget—over \$4 million this year. Technology, the arts, tutoring support, teen outreach and counseling, and all the life-changing activities of this remarkable organization are made possible by your gifts. Most gifts come as cash; some as appreciated securities. However, there are many other ways of giving to BGCB, and often they include attractive tax incentives for the donor, as well. Trusts, personal property, life insurance and especially, bequests are just a few examples. For many, a gift through a will or trust is the most realistic way to make a major and lasting gift to BGCB.

We would be pleased to assist you and your advisor as you consider a planned gift to BGCB. And, if you have already made some provision for BGCB in your will or estate plan, please let us know, so we may say thanks. Naturally, this information is held in the strictest confidence.

For more information, please give Ron Stone, Director of Major and Planned Giving, a call at 617-973-5423, or get in touch with him at RStone@bgcb.org.

Curry College Establishes South Boston Scholarship

Curry College recently announced the establishment of a \$20,000 scholarship to be awarded to a member of the South Boston Boys & Girls Club. The grant is for \$5,000 per academic year, to be awarded to a “worthy student in the South Boston community,” according to Kenneth K. Quigley, Jr., Curry College President.

Ed Hoell, Director of the South Boston Club, said,

“This generous scholarship makes an important statement to our members—work hard, and college can be an attainable goal. Curry College is to be commended for its commitment to the young people of our club.”

Joseph P. Plunkett, a member of the Advisory Board for the South Boston Club as well as a Trustee of Curry College, brought the two institutions together. The gift will be awarded annually.



[l. to r.] Curry College President Kenneth K. Quigley, Jr., South Boston Boys & Girls Club Teen Education Advocate Kate Stuck, Club Director Ed Hoell, Curry College Trustee Joseph Plunkett, and Curry College Associate Director of Admissions Bruce Weckworth.

Staff Workshop on Shared Values Produces Inspiring Consensus

It was part revival meeting, part pep rally, part soul-searching workshop. Over 100 BGCB staff members spent Veteran’s Day at a day-long staff retreat, held at the Seaport Hotel, to draw up a consensus on the agency’s Shared Values. In all, it was an inspiring testimonial to BGCB’s institutional solidarity of purpose, consistency of vision, and a reaffirmation of personal commitment and staff cohesion.

Director Janice Morris-Hatch and her colleague at Fidelity Ventures, Tina Luddy, served as the day’s facilitators, with Linda Whitlock playing back-up master of ceremonies. Attendees were split into working groups, and the teams were asked to distill why they had chosen to work at BGCB, what they value most about themselves and their work, and the values they thought best described what the organization is and what it does. It was a day of translating ideals into the values that guide us in our work—and the values BGCB as an organization is committed to instilling in its members.

At times, it was difficult to separate views on job responsibilities from organizational principals. What the day revealed was an outpouring of personal commitment, a review of beliefs and principals, and a coming together of mind and spirit.

Michael Mitchell, Roxbury Club Director, set the tone when he stood and said, “If you don’t stand for something, you’ll fall for anything.” The recognition of the Clubhouse staffs’ important place in shaping young lives was illustrated by one working group easel with “Kids” in the center of a circle, ringed by a second circle labeled “Staff,” with a large outer circle labeled, simply, “World.”

As the day progressed, ‘values’ were defined as the behaviors and actions taken by the staff to live out the mission of the organization. At the conclusion of the meeting, the primary core values drawn up were: community, communication, respect, teamwork—and fun.

Ms. Morris-Hatch said later, “It was awe-inspiring. You could feel the energy in the room—the commitment and the dedication to the young people who come to the Clubs. As a new member of the Board, I was especially proud to share a part of this organization with this wonderful staff. It was positively energizing.”

Linda Whitlock, BGCB President and CEO, seconded the thought. “This is a first step in defining our Core Values—in turn, a necessary step as we begin our long-range strategic planning. I was hoping we could arrive at some sort of consensus, and never could have dreamed of today’s outcome. The spirit and unanimity of our staff has left me both moved and inspired.”

Record Year for BGCB Decorative Arts and Antiques Show

What has become one of Boston's major winter events, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston Decorative Arts and Antiques Show, drew collectors, decorators and antiques window-shoppers alike, and was a success by any account. Held at the Park Plaza Castle February 25-27, the show attracted larger crowds this year and netted \$165,000 to top last year's revenue. Forty-seven dealers from 12 states exhibited at the show and sale. The benefit

Preview Party on Thursday evening preceding the show, which attracted some 750 sponsors, was described by a number of attendees as the "best party in town." On the business side, Alan Cunha and Wayne St. John, of Cunha-St John Antiques in Beacon Hill had sold a ship's figurehead before the first tray of hors d'oeuvres had been polished off.

One antique lover described the show as "remarkable for its variety, the different



[l. to r.] BGCB Chairman, Myra Kraft; President and CEO, Linda Whitlock; Event Co-chairs Bernadette Rehnert and Tiina Smith.



Overseer Bill Vose and Director Kevin Phelan, flanked by a Preview Party attendee and [r.] Ann Phelan.



[l. to r.] Lois Gallagher, Chair, Charlestown Club Advisory Board; Ed Hoell, South Boston Club Director; Durant Hunter, BGCB Director; Linda Whitlock, BGCB President and CEO; James Gallagher; Jerry Steimel, Charlestown Club Director.

kinds of collections, and also for the range in prices." Another attendee chimed in, "There are some very affordable pieces here," she said, "and that, of course, makes it more fun."

A "Boston Tea Party" kicked off the show's pre-publicity. While the adults struggled to restrain themselves at the trays of glorious tea sandwiches and scones, four members of the Charlestown Boys & Girls Club had no such qualms about the effect on their waists. Paul Revere attended, as well, to show off some of his original pieces that are part of the FleetBoston Financial corporate art collection. Fleet, the Decorative Arts and Antiques Show corporate sponsor, loaned the exhibit of treasures for the duration of the show. In her remarks at the tea, Michele Courton Brown, President of the FleetBoston Foundation, said "Fleet is pleased to sponsor the show in support of the important work of Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston. The loan of this art collection is another way that we can give support to both the arts

and the boys and girls served by the Clubs."

The display of tea items from the Federal period included silver pieces crafted by Paul Revere, China trade items, and furniture of the same era. The annual show, which is one of the agency's major fundraising events, drew 2300 to the 4-day show. Bernadette Rehnert, a BGCB Director and Chair of the Development Committee, Tiina Smith, Overseer, and Elizabeth Beretta Perik, Director, co-chaired the event. Deb Curran, Associate Director of Development, served as staff coordinator.



Laurie Champion, Event Hospitality Vice Chair; and Peter Barrett

Black History Month Celebration a Crowd-Pleaser at the African Meeting House



Lee Bierly, Overseer, and Chris Drake, accompanied by client Beth Currie and the restored antique Chinese ginger jar donated by Bierly-Drake as the grand door prize. The opening proved to be a productive shopping expedition for Ms. Currie's new house on Nantucket.



Paul Revere helps unveil the FleetBank tea party treasures, with [l. to r.] Michele Courton Brown, President of FleetBoston Foundation; Bernadette Rehnert, Event Co-chair; Myra Kraft; with Charlestown Boys & Girls Club members, Sammie Thomason, Paige Curry, and Cameron Anzalone.

A room that stands as testimony to spirit and faith in the face of struggle was the setting of a smart and lively Black History Month commemoration. Performed by BGCB members, the extras were the talent and stage presence also on display at the historic African Meeting House in Beacon Hill, where the celebration was held on February 9. Citizens Bank sponsored the event.

The rich history of the African Meeting House in Beacon Hill provided an ideal setting for what turned out to be a warm, thoughtful and, at times, very moving, evening. The building, constructed in 1806, served as a center for abolitionists and the Underground Railroad, and was the social and political center for Boston's black community in the 19th century. Reverend Raymond Hammond asked everyone

to stand and join hands to sing "We Shall Overcome," and the struggles overcome in the African Meeting House added weight to the familiar song.

BGCB members from all five Clubs were invited to showcase their own Club's Black History celebration at this event.

The "Talking Drums" by the Charlestown Club were followed by a complex step dance and recitation on the meaning of Kwanzaa by the Chelsea Club. Langston Hughes' poetry alternated with original poetry recitations by Roxbury Club members; South Boston presented examples of African arts and craft, and the Blue Hill Avenue Club members rounded out the evening with a rousing dance number by the Glitz dance group that had everyone on their feet to clap in time with the music.



The Glitz Dance Group from the Blue Hill Avenue Boys & Girls Club demonstrated the power of practice, and everyone got the beat.

When Cyberspace Leader Speaks, Directors Listen

David Wetherell, founder, President and CEO of CMGI, cyberspace's leading venture capital investment company, was the featured speaker at BGCB's Annual Meeting on November 18. Often credited with being the Internet's kingmaker, Mr. Wetherell's topic was "The Shape of Tomorrow: Making Sure We're All There." Describing the Internet as the radio for the future, he went on to urge his listeners to get kids involved and to encourage them to "follow their passions."

At the conclusion of his talk, work designed on the computer by Shantel Woodard and Audie Jacques, Blue Hill Avenue Club members who have developed special com-

puter graphics expertise, was projected on a giant screen behind the stage. They presented a computer-doctored photograph of David Wetherell wearing a BGCB T-shirt with Shantel and Audie beside him. Following the ceremony, Mr. Wetherell—who has a high forehead—complained to the teenagers that they might have given him some hair while they were at it.

Director John Spooner wasn't the only member of David Wetherell's audience taking careful notes—instead of rehearsing their lines while the Internet guru held the stage, the two future cyber-entrepreneurs were observed taking down notes on his talk, as well.



Future cyberspace powers, Audie Jacques[l.] and Shantel Woodard[r.], Blue Hill Avenue Club members, flank David Wetherell holding his computer-designed "portrait" with the two computer whizzes.



David Wetherell, internet guru, gets rapt attention from Annual Meeting audience.

Annual Meeting Welcomes New Directors and Committee Chairs

In a city of high-profile charities, BGCB stands out in the excellence of its board. It is a large board, numbering some 65 members, and each of them serves on a standing committee of the board, and many on more than one. The importance of this dedication of time and spirit to BGCB's mission and ongoing work can never be adequately reckoned, or given sufficient recognition.

Special thanks were given to retiring Directors Howard L. Carver, Leslie E. Harris, Richard W. Lewis, and Marianna M. O'Brien.

New members were appointed to the Board of Directors.

They are:
Mohammed Fotouhi
Robert J. Haynes
Janice Morris-Hatch
Peter M. Nicholas
Mary L. Reed
Donna B. Stoddard

Senior Advisory Board:
John W. Calkins
Russell L. Epker
Terrence B. Gagne

New Chairs for the Standing Committees of the Board of Directors, were also appointed: Chris A. Hynes and Bernadette Rehnert, Co-chairs, Development Committee; Sandra Edgerley and Helen Chin Schlichte, Co-chairs, Nominating Committee; R. Gregg Stone and Dana Weiss Smith, Co-chairs, Program Committee; Chris A. Hynes, Chair, Investment Committee; Michael J. McHugh and Helen Chin Schlichte, Co-chairs, Governance Committee;

Janice Morris-Hatch, Chair, Human Resources Committee;

Michael L. Carson, Communications Committee;

Christopher J. Haughey, Anne Moran, and Bridget Basilico, Co-chairs, Overseers Steering Committee;

and John D. Macomber, Chair, Facilities Committee.

Harcourt General Charitable Foundation

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She also noted that the technology program places Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston in the vanguard of innovative after-school programming nationwide.

The Harcourt gift addresses the “digital divide” that separates the haves from the have-nots in our information-driven society. At a time when more and more Americans have access to computers and the Internet, a recent report by the National Telecommunications and Communications and Information Administration shows that the “digital divide” is widening every year. In 1998, 80.8 percent of urban households with combined incomes of over \$75,000 had a computer in the home. By contrast, only 24.7 percent of low-income households had a home computer. As income level grows smaller, the divide grows wider. The goal of the gift is to give low-income children access to state-of-the-art technology in an environment that encourages learning and exploration.

At the tribute, Mayor Menino, an advocate of quality after-school programs to advance learning opportunities, praised the trailblazing program and the gift that helped make it possible, noting its importance to the City of Boston as a whole.

Computer Clubhouse founder, Professor Mitchel Resnick, who is a pioneer in research on technology and learning at MIT’s Media Laboratory, recounted the inspiration for the development of the program. The learning model is designed to help underserved young people acquire technological tools and skill to lead successful lives. Two years ago, he related, the MIT Media Lab set up a digital Lego demonstration at the Children’s Museum, and they discovered that kids were breaking into the Museum to play the game. The Computer Clubhouse concept was then born. The innate creativity of kids, he and his colleagues reasoned, and the infinite potential of computer learning, were natural allies.



[l. to r.] Robert A. Smith, Co-CEO, Harcourt General; Mitchel Resnick, MIT Media Lab professor and technology and learning pioneer; Linda Whitlock; Brian J. Knez, BGCB Director and Co-CEO, Harcourt General.

The celebration featured the presentation of a digital “book” created by members of the five Clubhouses. An imaginative stop-animation collage of computer graphics and sequencing, it illustrated the young people’s visual reflections on Self, Club and Community—and also their expertise. Valentine Howell, a member at the Blue Hill Avenue Clubhouse, introduced the film, and presented a bound version of the digital book to Harcourt General, Inc., Co-CEOs, Brian J. Knez, BGCB Director, and Robert A. Smith.

A plaque commemorating the gift will be placed in each of the Clubhouse technology centers, to be named the Harcourt General Technology and Learning Centers. Brian Knez, speaking for the Harcourt General Charitable Foundation, noted his company’s educational mission, and expressed hope that the gift would not be viewed as an end in itself, but the beginning of a program to be built and added to in coming years.

Unprecedented Gifts Bring Chelsea Clubhouse Dream Closer to Reality

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which was in response to the Krafts’ Challenge. “This level of giving by the Chelsea community is unprecedented,” commented Campaign Chair and BGCB Director, Richard Voke. Voke, a practicing attorney and businessman in Chelsea, added that the outpouring of local support reflected both concern for the future of the City’s youth and widespread admiration for the work of

Chelsea Club Director Josh Kraft and his staff.

Seven current or former Chelsea businesses contributed \$100,000 each, one contributed \$50,000, and nine contributed \$25,000-\$40,000. Leading the list of local contributors are Broadway National Bank, M. Burstein Co., Carbone Metal Fabricator, Inc., Casty-Dunn Foundation, Catamount Corporation,

Citizens Bank, Eagle Air Freight, Eastern Salt Company, Global Petroleum, Kayem Foods, Frank Mastrocola, New England Produce Center, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Quigley, Revere Federal Savings Bank, Trans Del Corporation, and Richard D. Vitale.

The unusual and timely gift that put the Challenge over the finish line involved the participation of not only

Marjie and Robert Kargman, but also her cousins and their wives: Samuel and Carolina Bloomberg, Jeffrey and Suzanne Bloomberg, and Michael and Ellen Bloomberg.

Marjie Kargman and her cousins have deep ties to the City of Chelsea, following the arrival from Russia of Harry Bloomberg, their grandfather, at the turn of the century. “As we recalled



Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston

The mission of BGCB is to help boys and girls develop the qualities needed to become responsible citizens and leaders. To achieve this, we offer a variety of program activities and support services designed to assist in the educational, emotional, physical and social development of 6 to 18 year olds, without regard to social, racial, ethnic, or religious background.



A United Way Agency

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our grandfather's and his sons' involvement in city life during much of the last century, it was not a difficult decision for the eight of us," commented Kargman. "Although we don't live in Chelsea, our contribution is a way to honor their heritage."

"From the outset, the Chelsea Campaign has attracted a wonderfully broad range of new supporters," noted President and CEO Linda Whitlock. "Our heartfelt appreciation goes to Richard Voke, who has

worked tirelessly for many years on behalf of Chelsea, and the many dedicated Campaign volunteers."

The Kargman-Bloomberg gift and numerous donations brought the total raised to \$6.3 million for the construction of a new Clubhouse for the Chelsea Boys & Girls Club. Preliminary plans for the new facility on a proposed site in Chelsea's southeast sector are being prepared on a pro bono basis by The Architectural Team, of Chelsea. The overall cam-

paign goal of \$10 million includes a \$3-\$4 million operating fund to support expanded programming in the new Clubhouse, which is expected to open in mid-2001.

The Chelsea Boys & Girls Club is currently housed in the former girls' locker room of the former Chelsea High School. This is its fifth temporary home since the City of Chelsea asked BGCB to set up a Clubhouse in 1993 to provide after-school programming for the children of Chelsea.

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