

Boys & Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana
Contact: **Jennifer Hoffman (502) 585-5437**

The Wheelhouse Project
Community Foundation of Louisville
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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF KENTUCKIANA SETS THEIR SIGHTS ON SMOKETOWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Closing in on Collaboration with The Wheelhouse Project and the Community Foundation of Louisville.

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY (September 15, 2017) – Boys & Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana (BGCK) and the Community Foundation of Louisville in partnership with The Wheelhouse Project, have come together to announce a collaboration that is headed to the Smoketown neighborhood. The announcement was made Friday at the annual KFTC “Smoketown GetDown for Democracy” block party by officials with BGCK, The Wheelhouse Project, the Community Foundation of Louisville, and Smoketown neighborhood leaders.

“Over the past year, Boys & Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana has focused on opening new Clubs in community middle schools. We began our third school-based Club at Meyzeek Middle School in Smoketown and feel the Smoketown neighborhood needs us to extend our reach. Through The Wheelhouse Project’s partnership with the Community Foundation of Louisville, we can work with great partners as advocates for local kids,” says BGCK President and CEO Jennifer Helgeson. “We want the community to know that we’re listening and we’re willing to establish a place that promotes safety and offers programs geared toward the success of our youth.”

The Wheelhouse Project is a community development partnership with the Smoketown neighborhood. Central to The Wheelhouse Project’s success is the utilization of a strategic property generously donated by Hillerich & Bradsby Co. to the Community Foundation of Louisville.

“This announcement is the culmination of two years of work with Smoketown residents to envision what type of innovative partnerships can best serve their neighborhood in the future,” said The Wheelhouse Project’s Founder Heather Farrer. “More than 1,500 suggestions came from people living in Smoketown who took part in fifteen events that served up nearly two-thousand idea-generating scoops of Comfy Cow ice cream.”

Once community ideas were analyzed and shared back with the Smoketown community, several central themes evolved. Residents want a safe space for children to play, a place that will foster economic opportunity, community green space, and a place for programming that will benefit family learning.

The Wheelhouse Project, the Community Foundation of Louisville, and BGCK are in talks to help bring programs and resources to serve the entire youth community. BGCK is a leading resource for youth in several key impact areas. *Academic Success* with 98% of Club members expected to graduate from high school and 91% expected to complete a post-secondary education. *Good Character and Leadership Programs* with 86% of Club teens involved with community volunteering.

This is an exciting opportunity for BGCK to collaborate with the Community Foundation of Louisville and The Wheelhouse Project. This partnership will allow us to not only focus on providing site-based Clubs, it will further extend the reach to serve the community of Smoketown with extended hours and summer programming for youth ages 6-18.

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About Boys & Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana (BGCK):

For more than 50 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of Kentuckiana (BGCK) has been at the forefront of youth development. *Our mission: To inspire and enable all young people, especially those most at risk in our community, to realize and develop their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens is what drives our organization's success.* BGCK serves over 2,200 youth (ages 6-18) and services areas throughout Louisville and Southern Indiana, including Shawnee, Parkland, Newburg, Frost-Stuart, Bullitt Lick and Meyzeek.

About The Wheelhouse Project:

Established in 2015 The Wheelhouse Project is a community development partnership with the Smoketown neighborhood of Louisville, Kentucky. The Wheelhouse Project will create a pathway to allow the longtime residents of Smoketown to participate in the economic advancement of the broader area and to eliminate multidimensional poverty in the neighborhood. Together we will drive the social and economic revitalization of the historic, but underserved Smoketown. Central to the Wheelhouse Project's success is the utilization of a strategic property generously donated by Hillerich & Bradsby Co. to the Community Foundation of Louisville. The Wheelhouse Project will focus on: a safe place for children to play, community green space, an improved quality of life, and employment opportunities. For more information, visit www.wheelhouseproject.org

About Community Foundation of Louisville:

Founded in 1984, the Community Foundation of Louisville is the largest charitable foundation in Kentucky with \$494 million in assets and more than 2,500 charitable funds. Each fund has its own name and charitable purpose as defined by its donors. In 2016, these funds made over 9,000 grants totaling \$54 million, approximately 80% of which stayed in Kentucky and Southern Indiana to support area nonprofits. A community foundation is unique in that it works with the donors and community partners to leverage collective knowledge, creativity and resources for greater impact than anyone can working in isolation. For more information, visit www.cflouisville.org

About Hillerich & Bradsby Co.:

Hillerich & Bradsby Co. is a fifth-generation manufacturer of sporting goods with roots dating to 1859. Based in Louisville, Ky., the company makes Louisville Slugger® wood bats, the Official Bat of Major League Baseball®, for Wilson Sporting Goods. H&B also owns and operates the world-class Louisville Slugger Museum & Factory™ in downtown Louisville. The company designs and sells Bionic Gloves® for a variety of sports and activities.