



Medical College of Georgia  
**FOUNDATION**  
AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY



## **MCG Foundation, Community Foundation for the CSRA and Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA Partner to Make Positive Impact in Harrisburg, Laney Walker Neighborhoods**

*Media invited to an announcement ceremony at St. Luke United Methodist Church, 309 Crawford Ave, Augusta, Georgia, 30904, Wednesday, November 11, 2020 at 3:00 pm*

**AUGUSTA, GA** – The Medical College of Georgia (MCG) Foundation is partnering with the Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area (Community Foundation) and the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Central Savannah River Area (Boys & Girls Club) to bring two new community support centers to the Harrisburg and Laney Walker neighborhoods – the first phase of a project designed to serve and uplift these underserved Augusta communities.

The MCG Foundation, having long planned the redevelopment of its commercial properties as a gateway to Augusta University, recognized a unique opportunity to leverage this investment to benefit the surrounding neighborhoods. In order to solidify their commitment to community engagement and create a sustainable and equitable plan, the MCG Foundation partnered with the Community Foundation and the Boys & Girls Clubs, who share in the vision to support those most in need.

“It is our mission and sole purpose to support Augusta University, but that does not discharge us from serving the community of which we are a part,” says Ian Mercier, President & CEO of the MCG Foundation. “When it became clear that we could invest in the lives of the residents of Harrisburg and Laney Walker while serving our institution, the challenge quickly became determining how to make the greatest impact. The creativity and the leadership of the Community Foundation and Boys & Girls Club helped take an idea and make it a vision, and the generosity of the Augusta National and its partners made the vision a possibility.”

Presented with this opportunity, the Community Foundation and the Boys & Girls Club came together to reimagine and redefine community support structures in these historic downtown neighborhoods to better serve and prepare the families in the community for imminent change. Although conditions in the community present opportunities for growth, the changing environment poses significant challenges for current residents who grapple with poverty, a lack of access to basic resources, and generations of neglect and disinvestment.

Augusta National Golf Club has announced a contribution of \$2.5 million to support the redevelopment project, a donation that will be matched by its partners at AT&T, Bank of America and IBM. Their collective gift of \$10 million will provide funding for construction of “The Hub” – a Center for Community Innovation – and the new Augusta headquarters for the Boys & Girls Club.

The Hub is designed to be the epicenter of the work towards creating and sustaining solutions to often intractable community problems. The challenge is formidable, but we can start with the nonprofits already working in these neighborhoods. They know what the residents are lacking and work tirelessly to meet those needs. And most of the time, they are things that we all take for granted – stable shelter, access to food that heals rather than harms, access to quality healthcare, and the ability to meet the educational needs of their school age children. There is impactful work that is being done, but with limited resources and on a limited scale. The Hub

will include several of the nonprofits that are working on these issues and each will have the resources to sustainably and collaboratively expand their work.

“This plan to foster innovation and collaborate between community organizations, corporate citizens, and residents will create synergies that will ultimately transform the future of these historic neighborhoods,” says Shell Berry, President and CEO of the Community Foundation, “The Community Foundation is really proud to be partnering in this effort with Boys & Girls Club, MCG Foundation and many other individuals and nonprofits who will be critical to the success of this effort. Our collective gratitude to the Augusta National Golf Club and its partners for their support is immeasurable.”

The new Boys & Girls Club headquarters will deliver much needed space for administrative program support, expanded teen workforce development programs, a hub for virtual program production, and collaboration with other youth-serving organizations in Augusta. Demand for Boys & Girls Club services continues to increase as young people in the community navigate their futures amid the many challenges we are facing today, with limited guidance and resources.

“There is a great need in this community to address the issues of low employment, underperforming schools, and food desert conditions which place families and young people at risk for continuing the cycle of generational poverty that has plagued the area for decades.” says Kim Evans, CEO of the Boys & Girls Club, “The Boys & Girls Club has a long history of serving the kids most impacted by inequity and has a comprehensive approach that builds connected pathways out of poverty. We are honored and excited to be a partner in this transformative project as we seek to deepen our impact in Augusta. We are deeply grateful to the Augusta National Golf Club and its partners for their commitment to our community that is demonstrated by this substantial gift.”

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### ***About the Medical College of Georgia Foundation***

The Medical College of Georgia Foundation (MCG Foundation) was established in 1954 when a small group of supporters pooled together \$450 to create a philanthropic arm of support for the State of Georgia’s only public medical school. For nearly 70 years since, the MCG Foundation has supported the academic, research and patient care mission of the Medical College of Georgia and Augusta University through endowed scholarships, chairs, and programs.

Through a gracious gift from George Weiss, the MCG Foundation expanded its support of the university through real estate. With the support of the Community Foundation and Boys & Girls Club and its development partners, the MCG Foundation recognized that serving the institution and serving the community were not meant to be mutually exclusive. “When we understood that the development plans could provide benefit to the Harrisburg and Laney-Walker communities, we didn’t realize just how significant those benefits could be,” says MCG Foundation CEO, Ian Mercier. The Hub community center and Boys & Girls Club headquarters present tremendous opportunities to be true partners with the neighborhoods we work and live in – to determine our collective futures together through education, health care, and community.

### ***About the Community Foundation for the CSRA***

The Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area (Community Foundation) has been embedded in the community for over 25 years and uses its resources, both financial and human, to fulfill its mission to

engage, inform and inspire donors and nonprofits to build a stronger and more vibrant community. In everything we do, we strive to cultivate generosity by giving donors the tools and information they need to make a significant difference in our community; strengthen non-profits by connecting organizations to financial resources, training and opportunities for meaningful collaboration; and engage our community around issues that matter to us all.

We are one of the largest grantmakers in our region, awarding grants to more than 50 organizations a year through our Community Grants Fund which is our largest unrestricted pool of resources. Our four areas of focus are Education/Youth Empowerment, Health/Environment, People in Need, and Arts/Culture/History. In 2018, the Community Foundation developed a new granting program that employs current best practices regarding effective grantmaking to address tough, often intractable, community challenges. This program is place based and multi-generational – meaning that the work focuses on one defined geographic area - in this case Harrisburg - and addresses needs throughout a person’s life from birth to adult. Working with a small committee made up of people who were already working in this area, we developed a granting process that focused not just on direct funding for literacy programs but also on the wrap around services aimed at reducing barriers to learning. This important work has helped us deepen our understanding of those barriers and created the call to action to do more. The Hub is designed to be the epicenter of the work towards creating and sustaining solutions that address many of the intractable community problems that exist today. As economic pressures exacerbate these challenges, the Community Foundation will work to help historic residents *thrive in* their changing community instead of being simply *impacted by* it.

### ***About the Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA***

Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA (Boys & Girls Club) has a rich history of service to the downtown Augusta community, particularly Harrisburg and surrounding neighborhoods. For nearly 70 years, Boys & Girls Club has been a life-saving solution for tens of thousands of kids, providing a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun, friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours for the kids who need us most. Focused on three primary outcome areas of Academic Success, Good Character & Leadership, and Healthy Lifestyles, Boys & Girls Club prepares kids for life beyond high school, ensuring they have a solid plan for their future. At the Club, youth receive homework help, participate in physical activity, enjoy healthy meals and learn to cook, explore STEM and arts programming, and so much more. Research confirms that high-quality out-of-school time programming, like those offered by the Clubs, has the power to create positive change, providing role models and dynamic activities to support all kids on their paths to great futures. The new Support Center will serve as our Headquarters in addition to providing much needed space to expand services to youth in the community. As we chart the future of Boys & Girls Club, we are committed to enhancing programs and our facilities. The Support Center will be the catalyst to help us extend our reach, increase our impact, and build long-term sustainability.