



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Community Foundation for the CSRA, Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA, and Medical College of Georgia Foundation Break Ground on HUB for Community Innovation, Catalyzing Multi-Year Reinvestment in Harrisburg and Laney Walker Neighborhoods***

*Opening in Spring of 2022, New Project Will Enhance Residents' Access to Critical Education Support, Health Services, Quality Food Options and More*

**Augusta, GA** – A coalition led by the Community Foundation for the CSRA, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA, and the Medical College of Georgia Foundation broke ground today on a new project designed to catalyze revitalization in the historic Harrisburg and Laney Walker neighborhoods, two of the most underserved communities in Augusta's urban core.

The project will be centered around two distinct but mission-aligned facilities that will be known jointly as the *HUB for Community Innovation*. One building will provide a new home for multiple nonprofits currently serving thousands of Augusta-area families. The other will be a new headquarters and support center for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA, which is in its 70<sup>th</sup> year of service to the neighborhoods.

Located on Chafee Avenue near the corner of Fenwick Street, on the Eastern boundary of Harrisburg, the HUB will unite multiple nonprofit organizations onto one common campus. The co-location of services will make it easier for local residents to access needed support.

Design and construction will be funded through a combination of federal grants and private contributions, including a \$10 million donation announced by Augusta National Golf Club in November 2020 and gifted jointly with AT&T, Bank of America and IBM. Both of the HUB campus buildings are expected to be completed and operational by the spring of 2022.

The HUB project is intended to serve as the cornerstone of an ambitious, multi-year community revitalization strategy to uplift Harrisburg and Laney Walker and the thousands of families who live there. Over the past several decades, both neighborhoods have suffered greatly from public disinvestment, the incremental departure of locally-owned businesses, and erosion of many basic community services. The HUB will help rebuild connection and collaboration among nonprofits and neighbors by hosting community events, welcoming public speakers, providing space for civic groups to gather, and much more.

"We want to encourage innovative, collaborative approaches for revitalizing Harrisburg and Laney Walker. By bringing existing resources and nonprofits together in one location, we can start to bolster equitable access to all the essential elements of a thriving community," said **Shell Berry, CEO of the Community Foundation for the CSRA and a co-leader of the project.** "Eventually that includes mixed-income housing, a variety of food sources, quality healthcare, and educational support. The HUB for Community Innovation is the first step in making these services more easily accessible and affordable for everyone living in these historic neighborhoods."

The larger of the HUB's two buildings will be a 33,000-square-foot facility on the western side of Chafee Avenue. It will house four locally-based nonprofits, each with a track record for delivering essential services that advance community wellbeing. They include:

- **[Augusta Locally Grown](#)**, which is dedicated to growing the local food community and promoting public health through farmers' markets, community gardens and educational programming.
- **[Augusta University Literacy Center](#)**, which provides free tutoring services for children and adults in our community.
- **[Harrisburg Family Health Care](#)**, which provides free medical care to more than 3,000 uninsured and under-insured Augusta area residents annually.
- **[RISE Augusta](#)**, which effectively links community resources, literacy remediation, mentoring, and basic needs services to struggling children and their families.

"There is a great need 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. Boys & Girls Clubs serve the kids most impacted by these inequities and provide a comprehensive approach to youth development that builds connected pathways out of poverty," said **Kim Evans, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of the CSRA and a co-leader of the project.** "As we chart the future of Boys & Girls Clubs in Augusta, we are committed to enhancing our programs and our facilities, allowing us to serve more kids, more often, with greater impact."

The new Boys & Girls Clubs support center will be approximately 16,000 square-feet, a significant expansion from its current headquarters. According to Evans, the state-of-the-art support center will help the organization extend the reach and impact of services that focus on youth mentoring, college readiness, workforce readiness, virtual programming and more.

Working together, the Community Foundation, the Boys & Girls Clubs and the MCG Foundation hope to bring their respective strengths to the challenges of developing a plan for growth that is truly equitable and inclusive of the current residents in these neighborhoods. Today's groundbreaking marks an important step in that direction and the start of a long-term commitment to those living in Harrisburg and Laney Walker, according to the groups.

"We are deeply honored to play a part in cultivating a community where everyone can thrive," said **Ian Mercier, MCG Foundation CEO and a co-leader of the project.** "Not only will the HUB help transform Laney Walker and Harrisburg, two important communities deserving of investment, it will deepen Augusta University's partnership with and connection to the neighborhoods where we live and work."

Design and construction for the project is being led by [Johnson Development](#), [Doug Neil/Daniel Communities](#), [Chris Booker & Associates](#), [Choate Construction](#), and [Cranston Engineering Group](#).

For more information, visit [www.CommunityHubAugusta.org](http://www.CommunityHubAugusta.org).

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

The Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area has been embedded in the greater Augusta community for more than 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. The Community Foundation is one of the largest grantmakers in the region, awarding grants to more than 50 organizations annually through a Community Grants Fund which is its largest unrestricted pool of resources. The Foundation's focus areas include Education & Youth Empowerment, Health & Environment, People in Need, and Arts, Culture & History. Since its inception in 1995, the Foundation has made more than \$112 million in grants throughout the CSRA and beyond. Learn more at [www.cfcsla.org](http://www.cfcsla.org).

***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 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. Learn more at [www.bgccsra.org](http://www.bgccsra.org).

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

The Medical College of Georgia 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. Learn more at [www.mcgfoundation.org](http://www.mcgfoundation.org).