



2009 All-America City Award Application

Application Due: Monday, March 16, 2009

Competition: June 17-19, 2009, Tampa, Florida

Sponsors:



Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel and Marina
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Community Information

Community name and state: Statesville, North Carolina

Your community is applying as a:

Neighborhood Village Town City County Region

If applying as a region, name participating communities: _____

If applying as a neighborhood, name city: _____

Has your community applied before? Yes No If Yes, which years: 1997

Has your community been a Finalist before? Yes No If Yes, which years: 1997

Has your community been an All-America City before? Yes No If Yes, which years: 1997

Contact Information

All-America City Award contact (primary contact person available throughout entire competition and for follow-up):

Name: David Bradley Title: President

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List the 3 individuals who most actively participated in filling out this All-America City Award application (add additional lines if needed): (Provide name and title, organization/government, phone number & e-mail address)

David Bradley, President, Greater Statesville Chamber of Commerce, 704.873.2892, dbradley@statesvillechamber.org

Nancy Davis, Public Affairs Director, City of Statesville, 704.878.3586, ndavis@statesvillenc.net

The applying community will receive a complimentary membership (or membership renewal if an AAC application was submitted last year) to the National Civic League for one year. To whom should this membership be directed?

Name: David Bradley, President, Greater Statesville Chamber of Commerce


Address 115 E. Front St.

City, State & Zip Code: Statesville, NC 28677

Phone Number (704) 873-2892 Fax (704) 871-1552

Email dbradley@statesvillechamber.org

If we are designated an All-America City, we agree to follow NCL's rules regarding use of the All-America City Award logo, a registered trademark of the National Civic League.

Signature:  Date: 3/11/09

Name: David Bradley Title: President, Greater Statesville Chamber of Commerce

Community Statistics

Note: Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (source suggestions: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics).

POPULATION (in year 2000 or most recent): 26,704

Source/Date: 2007 population according to Office of State Budget and Management

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1990-2000 (indicate + or -): +32.7 %

Source/Date: US Census Bureau – 2000 population – <http://factfinder.census.gov>

RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN:

White	45 %
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	11 %
Black or African American	33 %
Asian	3 %
American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN)	0 %
Other	8 %

Source/Date: Claritas – Population quick facts (2006)

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: \$ 34,783

Source/Date: Claritas – Population quick facts (2006)

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 28 %

Source/Date: Claritas – Population quick facts (2006)

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 9.2 %

Source/Date: North Carolina Employment Security Commission, Dec. 31, 2008

POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP (percentages, if available):

19 years old and under	26 %
20-24	7 %
25-44	28 %
45-64	30 %
65 and over	17 %

Source/Date: Claritas – Population quick facts (2006)

PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP: 58 %

Source/Date: Sperling's

WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:

<u>Service Industry</u>	49 %
<u>Retail Trade</u>	25 %
<u>Manufacturing</u>	13 %

Source/Date: Greater Statesville Development Corp. 2008 annual report

MAP -- Please attach a state map with your community clearly marked.

ALL-AMERICA CITY AWARDS CRITERIA

- Participation of the public, private and nonprofit sectors and key constituencies to the maximum extent possible;
- Recognition and involvement of diverse segments and perspectives (ethnic, racial, socio-economic, age, etc.) in community decision-making;
- Creative use and leveraging of community resources;
- Significant and specific community achievements;
- Projects that address the community's most important needs;
- Cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries; and
- Clear demonstration of project results and impacts (dollars raised or lives impacted).

PART I: TELL YOUR COMMUNITY'S STORY

Tell us your story. Utilizing the awards criteria describe how your community addresses its pressing challenges and plans for its future. How are the neighborhoods, government, businesses, and nonprofits organizations engaged in these efforts. What is your community's vision? Include real examples of how your community has demonstrated its strengths and faced its challenges. How does it embrace diversity and demonstrate inclusiveness? (1,200 word maximum). Resource: NCL's Civic Index. Ask for a copy.

Statesville, North Carolina

Visioning – our process to resolve problems, meet challenges and create opportunities

Statesville's vision is to become one community out of many cultures and a community providing opportunity and hope for all. As Mayor Costi Kutteh stated, "We are only as strong as our willingness to work together."

Statesville's can-do and get-involved attitude comes from an active citizenry that readily seeks and accepts challenges. Statesville has channeled this citizen activism into positive efforts, which sometimes emerge from a citizenry eager to determine its own future. Statesville has also largely escaped the apathy that leads to non-involvement. Statesville has truly been blessed but none of this happened without effort, leadership, and cooperation.

In 2001, the City participated in a Visioning process that pointed out a highway corridor, built in the 1970s to encourage industrial development, had divided the City into a "southside" and the "other side."

The survey and interviews revealed the southside had been neglected, resulting in a high rate of dilapidated structures, crime, absentee property owners, overgrown lots, unoccupied businesses and houses. Several efforts took place over several years to have clean-up days, increase police presence and demolish structures considered to be nuisances.

Tackling this problem was part of the City's 2001 Vision Statement. Fast forward to 2007, when city leaders revisited the Vision Statement. This time, however, efforts were successfully made to conduct a Visioning process involving the entire community. A new Vision Statement was developed from the work of 12 strategic partners and the input of citizens through community forums in hopes that as Statesville prepares to grow, this Shared Vision will help it grow together.

During the community visioning process, once again attention was called to the problems in the "southside."

This time, however, because of the community's desire to make it a shared vision, the efforts are more inclusive. Many positive things have happened in the southside:

- The Weed & Seed program is helping rid neighborhoods of crime and apathy;
- A newly constructed Boys & Girls Club opens in April, 2009;
- A new homeless shelter has been built with an emphasis on transitional housing;
- A problem motel was demolished and replaced with a skills training center;
- Renovation of a vacant motorcycle dealership into a 6,000-square-foot community health clinic with additional space for the first bank in the area in 15 years, a successful restaurant and other retail establishments;
- Functional police substation; and
- 86 moderately priced homes for first-time homeowners.

However, the challenge of the new vision is to not just restore the neighborhoods and commercial areas, but also restore the pride and respect in South Statesville among all citizens and remove invisible barriers established by the corridor. The challenge is bringing citizens from all parts of town together to solve problems and celebrate life together.

A recent study to develop the downtown corridor intentionally extended the area to include the "southside" to create one thoroughfare that highlights the diversity of the community but is seamless in uniformity of amenities.

Many successes

Statesville was recognized as a 1997 All-America City for bringing people together, meeting challenges, solving problems and creating opportunity. Despite the challenges of high unemployment, deteriorating neighborhoods in South Statesville and a growing cultural diversity highlighted by rapid population growth of the Hispanic community, Statesville is meeting today's challenges and building for tomorrow.

One key to Statesville's success is perpetual planning through the Visioning process. This brings together citizens and people from business, non-profits, health care, education and media together to discuss problems, solutions, opportunities and challenges. Over the years this has yielded many remarkable achievements, including these real examples of how Statesville has demonstrated its strengths and faced its challenges:

- Save Our Depot campaign rallied citizens who raised \$315,000 to relocate the historic depot with no public funds;
- A County, City, citizens, and businesses partnership built a new library downtown using an innovative land swap. Then the Iredell Friends of the Library raised \$80,000 in private money to buy books;

- Private investment rebuilt much of downtown, including the historic Montgomery Building and American Renaissance Charter schools, while public money built the Statesville Civic Center and other public buildings. In total, 170 buildings were renovated, 727 jobs created and 61 businesses expanded;
- A school, City, parents and citizens partnership kept Statesville High School downtown. In an innovative effort, the City provided \$1.6 million to renovate the school's historic auditorium and create a performing arts theater. This saved taxpayers millions of dollars;
- Dove House, a children's advocacy center and recipient of the Governor's Crime Commission Award of Excellence, is building a \$1.5 million facility entirely from private funds. Last year it served 288 cases with a successful prosecution rate of 79%;
- Teen Health, a collaboration of many agencies and organizations, helped reduce teen pregnancy 42%, which saves taxpayers over \$1 million annually;
- The Martin Luther King Jr. Community Celebration brings together over 3,000 citizens in a community-wide series of events promoting unity of races, religions and languages;
- Our school system went from below average to being one of North Carolina's top-ten systems with rising scores in math and science for white and black students. Community support was evident in the overwhelming passage of two school bonds for new facilities;
- Mitchell Community College became America's first, and only, community college accepted in a NASA competition to design rockets;
- Statesville branch of the NAACP has been recognized as the best in the state three times in the past decade;
- The Big Read is a community-wide program to promote reading and create dialogue. This year's book was *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Public forums brought different races and ages together to discuss race relations. This was thoroughly covered by a positive media;
- Political forums are conducted through a partnership of the local newspaper, radio station, educators association and chamber of commerce; and
- Three other successes – Mi Familia Institute, Fifth Street Ministries and Boys & Girl Club -- are featured projects. Two included simultaneous multi-million dollar capital campaigns for facilities.

Challenges ahead

Even with its many successes, Statesville faces challenges and two are outlined in the next section. Our Visioning process helps meet these challenges. The City hosts annual sessions and invites leaders from schools, government, business and non-profits to come together to discuss community needs. The City solicits citizen involvement through the media, direct mailings, and phone calls. The result is several hundred people coming together for a day of dialogue. It seeks input from everyone possible; forms partnerships with everyone possible and seeks solutions before problems become a crisis.

This provides a venue for citizen input and creates a culture of inclusion and unity. The outcome is the community viewing challenges as problems to be solved instead of battles to be fought. Our Visioning process gives us the ability and wisdom to address any issue. This has served us well and led to many of the successes highlighted above. The strategy continues as we confront the challenges of today and the highlighted projects detail how this strategy is leading to continued success in addressing our problems.

PART II: DESCRIBE YOUR COMMUNITY'S CHALLENGES

What are your community's two most pressing challenges? (400 words maximum)

Statesville was shocked into action when seven teenagers died in a single-car accident hours from New Year's Day 2004. The tragedy brought people together, many of whom asked how could this happen and what could be done to avoid another disaster. Community and City leaders quickly realized there was no one solution or quick fix. It would take a coordinated, multi-faceted approach to give our youth, and especially our disadvantaged youth, a brighter future. Simultaneously, two other urgent problems became apparent. The rapidly growing Hispanic community existed as a nearly invisible subculture and the former blue-collar area of South Statesville had become a quagmire of poverty and hopelessness for many.

From this emerged a new vision for Statesville – we would become one community out of many cultures and provide opportunity and hope for all. Major challenges included:

- Overcoming cultural segregation created by race, language, ethnicity, income, social status, family composition, education, age, religion and gender. A specific challenge is incorporating the rapidly growing Hispanic culture into the mainstream of government, education, social and economic organizations.
- Providing hope, help and opportunity for disadvantaged citizens with a specific emphasis on at-risk youth.

Efforts to address these problems include:

- Mi Familia Institute, a wide-ranging and inclusive program, with minimum funding and maximum volunteering, serving the Hispanic community and incorporating those citizens into Statesville's mainstream.
- A far-reaching and comprehensive plan with dozens of programs to address problems of South Statesville, including simultaneous capital campaigns to build a \$5 million Boys & Girls Club and \$4.5 million Fifth Street Ministries facility mostly from private donations.

Statesville's transformation from a traditional Southern town, where children often followed parents to work in cotton mills, into a dynamic suburb adjacent to a metropolis required an accelerated response to change. Our once-homogenous culture became increasingly diverse as these rapid changes culturally segregated our town and restricted our potential. As Mayor Costi Kutteh stated, "We are only as strong as our willingness to work together."

Thanks to widespread community involvement and visionary leadership in education, public agencies, volunteer groups, churches and government, Statesville is rapidly becoming one community out of many cultures and providing its youth and disadvantaged adults with renewed hope, help and opportunity. The work continues and is beyond the scope of this application. The highlighted projects are centerpieces in the progress we have made -- progress worthy of the All-America City honor.

PART III: DESCRIBE THREE COMMUNITY-DRIVEN PROJECTS

Describe your three best collaborative community projects that have resulted in a significant local impact within the past five years. Ideally, the first two projects should be drawn directly from the two community challenges stated above. The third project should benefit youth and children. Include examples of how these projects promote collaboration, inclusiveness, innovation, and impact.

PROJECT ONE (Challenge #1)

Provide a description of the first project and its qualitative and quantitative impacts in the past five years. (1,200 word maximum)

Mi Familia Institute

Introduction

Close your eyes and place your finger anywhere on a United States map and you will land on an area with a growing Hispanic population. How these U.S. communities respond to that growth is what makes the difference and Statesville knows it firsthand.

In North Carolina, the Hispanic population is growing at the highest rate of any state in the nation. In 2000, Statesville's 23,000-plus population was 3.5% Hispanic. By 2008, the City's population had grown more than 3,000 people while the Hispanic population more than doubled. During that eight-year period, many agencies and organizations began targeting the variety of issues facing the Hispanic community including:

- affordable healthcare;
- accessibility to social services programs;
- job training;
- employment and income;
- homelessness;
- teen health;
- cultural adjustment & language barriers;
- comprehension of the government and judicial systems; and
- money management.

Great efforts were made by many Statesville agencies to translate important community information into Spanish and distribute it within the Hispanic populace. Institutions and businesses gave higher salaries to bilingual employees and agencies intentionally offered translation services. Statesville public schools and the local community college offered English as a Second Language classes.

Mi Familia Institute established

Even with the efforts above, the Hispanic community continue to have many unmet needs. In 2002, Eunice Soto Rossback, an inspirational speaker who regularly appeared at the Landmark Church of God in Statesville talked to the church about the lack of resources for the Hispanic community. Eunice preached "first build trust" and with the support of Landmark began focusing her efforts on removing the existing language and education barriers.

In 2002, the church conducted a survey on Hispanics living in Statesville. It pointed out the alarming number of educational deficiencies: more than 75% of those surveyed had not completed high school and only 22% had some form of higher education experience. To tackle this problem better, Eunice gained experience, learned more about the community, earned a degree, and in 2007, established a non-profit organization, Mi Familia Institute.

Eunice is currently the executive director of this non-profit agency and operates on a minimal budget as an extension mission of the church. Its purpose is to help Statesville's Hispanic community navigate the difficult journey of assimilation by "building family strength through education, promotion of respect, and advocacy for social justice." The church provides the space for Mi Familia Institute at no cost and funds much of the organization's operational expenses. Mi Familia has a wide range of programs, ranging from domestic violence prevention to financial planning. They rely heavily on volunteers – currently, there are three full-time and 27 part-time volunteers – to help keep costs down.

A new survey was conducted in 2007 to see what changes had taken place within the Hispanic community since 2002 and whether there were new concerns. Alarmingly, the educational attainment levels of Hispanics had not changed. Mi Familia set out to change this by offering preparatory classes for the GED test. These classes are different from those offered by Mitchell Community College in that they are scheduled at convenient times for the working Hispanic community, provide free childcare and are taught in Spanish. Students must also take a Basic English comprehension course concurrently.

Currently, 35 students are enrolled in the class and three other students have passed the GED exam. With better education tools, the Mi Familia participants are better equipped to take advantage of other services.

The 2007 survey also showed that nearly 75% of the community's Hispanics were unable to speak English. Mi Familia began offering English as a Second Language classes to supplement those offered by the community college. Again, these classes are offered at times that are more convenient and with childcare.

In addition to working with the continuing education department of the local community college, Mi Familia also collaborates with the South Statesville Skills Center, which offers educational programs for at-risk adults and teens, to provide GED and ESL classes for those unable to commute to the church location. This addresses one of the major difficulties uncovered in the survey – lack of transportation and difficulty commuting.

Expanding programs

As Mi Familia's reputation grew and participation increased, the staff and church were able to deal with other issues facing the Hispanic community:

- A Citizenship Literacy class prepares students for the CIS examination, community leadership, voting and self-advocacy; and
- The Financial Literacy class teaches the basics for opening a bank account, budgeting, goal setting, credit loan understanding and home ownership education/information.

While working on education goals, Mi Familia also offers parenting classes, men's leadership programs, women's success workshops and teen projects – all to help Hispanics assimilate into their new home.

The community also learned from the survey that 73% of the Hispanics in Statesville lack medical insurance. Mi Familia started a medical program through which individuals seeking general health care services can, at no cost, see a nurse one day and, if necessary, be referred to a doctor later that week. Volunteers provide medical and translating services. In just one-year's time, the nurse saw more than 440 individuals and more than 210 were referred to a doctor. In one case, a patient underwent surgery to treat a serious matter only four days after being diagnosed by the doctor.

Participation in these programs has grown. Statistics kept by Mi Familia indicate more than 1,900 persons have been served by one or more of the nonprofit's programs. As confidence and trust grows between Mi Familia, the Hispanic community and the entire Statesville community, more programs are receiving support.

Mi Familia recently received funding from a local community foundation to establish a domestic violence prevention program in 2009. Persons involved in domestic violence-related programs and local law enforcement indicate they are seeing an increase in the numbers of domestic violence situations involving Hispanics. Mi Familia's efforts in domestic violence prevention will involve collaboration with local law enforcement, judicial officials and other community programs. It includes the establishment of a 24-hour hotline, special training for counselors and the creation of programs to help empower women.

Mi Familia is respectful of the many programs offered only to documented Hispanics and does not attempt to circumvent their policies. Mi Familia's policy is to provide according to need without asking about the participants' legal status. "First build trust," explains Eunice again and again. As seen through Mi Familia, trust then builds a connection that strengthens families, quality of life and self-dependency.

Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (*This person may be contacted to verify information.*)

Mi Familia Institute
Eunice Rossback, Executive Director
2200 East Broad Street
Statesville, NC 28625
Phone: 704-873.9701 ext. 19
Fax: 704.871.9720
mifamiliainstitutue@gmail.com

PROJECT TWO (Challenge #2)

Provide a description of the second project and its qualitative and quantitative impacts in the past five years. (1200 word maximum)

Fifth Street Ministries

Introduction

Retired Air Force Gen. Bill Lackey had seen enough. The men, women and children were struggling against poverty, hunger, sickness, inadequate shelter, mental illness, addiction and abuse. Survival required a daily search for life's basic needs. The general was not back in Vietnam. Regretfully, he was home in Statesville, North Carolina, and the people suffering were his fellow citizens.

Turning away from a challenge was not in his nature nor was it the nature of Patti and Gary West, who have fought against great odds to provide basic human services to Statesville's most impoverished citizens for two decades at Fifth Street Ministries.

Much had been accomplished and thousands of people given assistance in a variety of ways over the years, but continuing the mission's work looked improbable largely due to structural problems associated with the aging facility. The old school building housing the ministry was literally collapsing upon them.

This story is about a diverse group of people joining hands to provide an adequate facility to enable Fifth Street Ministries to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, protect the abused, aid the sick, comfort the afflicted and provide hope for a better future.

This remarkable and successful story has a yesterday, today and tomorrow. Thanks to hundreds of volunteers and donors, many Statesville citizens with a troubled yesterday now have a better today and new hope for tomorrow. Here is the story:

Yesterday

For more than 25 years, Iredell County's homeless have found refuge in Statesville. In 1990, the faith-based organization Diakonos Inc. took over shelter operations with Gary and Patti West as co-directors. Under the name Fifth Street Ministries they, and dozens of volunteers, began running an emergency, winter and battered women's shelters. Later, the soup kitchen moved under the same roof.

In winter, 1991, faced with inadequate space and a deteriorating facility, Fifth Street Ministries moved to a dilapidated and abandoned school. This large facility lay deeper in South Statesville, the geographic center of our poorest area, and closer to Statesville's neediest citizens. The move allowed the soup kitchen to move into a functioning cafeteria and the expansion of the winter shelter program into a year-round night shelter.

In subsequent years:

- The Open Door Clinic, a free health and medical center, opened.
- My Sister's House, a battered women's shelter, built a new facility.
- The Molly McKay Children's Program started to serve children in the shelter and neighborhood.
- A thrift store opened providing employment opportunities for shelter guests, a warehouse for storage, clothes for shelter guests, and appliances and other necessities for guests when they established their own residences.
- And, always, hope was offered to all who walked through the doors.

Today

Hope continues to be the primary motivation behind all services provided through Fifth Street Ministries. More than 500 individuals find shelter from life's storms there each year. With that shelter comes:

- a place to sleep and keep one's belongings;
- three meals a day, seven days a week;
- transportation assistance to jobs, schools and doctor's appointments;
- help in applying for income assistance;
- daily cleaning responsibilities around the facility;
- assistance in finding permanent housing;
- life skills and training such as how to interview, fill out an application, basic computer skills, budgeting, parenting, health and wellness; and

- health care in the form of case management and a nurse clinic with occasional volunteer physician clinics on site.

No one else does all this in Iredell County. No one else looks past the bloodshot eyes, make-shift suitcases out of trash bags, brash attitudes and past failures and says, *“Welcome. Come on in.”*

With a small staff and limited funding, the work of restoring hope is done each day at Fifth Street Ministries. While one guest may need a ride to check out a job, another may just need a hand in trying to stay sober. While one man may ask the staff to help him save up for an apartment down payment, another may ask the staff to help him remember to take his medications.

Tomorrow

After years of offering more than a dozen services to Iredell County's neediest it became apparent to continue making a difference in this community, several new facilities were needed.

The first need was a new battered women's shelter, which, in 2002, with support of the community and N.C. Housing Finance Agency, successfully built the region's finest women's shelter facilities and programs. Those involved in this project continually pointed out a new emergency and shelter building should be next.

The old school building, which housed the emergency shelter, night shelter, soup kitchen, administrative offices, food pantry, community room (gym) and clothes closet, had been stitched up and bandaged. Insulation, roofing, structural damage, broken furnaces and rotting floors were constant problems for the staff and a drain on resources.

Under the direction of Fifth Street's Board of Directors, staff and volunteers traveled across the state to get ideas for a new shelter. In support of Fifth Street's efforts, the N.C. Housing Finance Agency funded a study to determine whether the existing shelter should be restored or a new facility constructed. The study's findings overwhelmingly pointed to building a new shelter. G.L. Wilson, a Statesville construction company and strong supporter of Fifth Street, began developing plans for the new facility. The N.C. Housing Finance Agency awarded Fifth Street a \$500,000 grant to begin construction.

Fact & Figures

Fifth Street Ministries served a lot of people in a lot of ways in 2008, including: providing 58,247 meals, providing 11,005 shelter nights in the overnight shelter, providing 13,335 shelter nights in the emergency shelter, and providing 7,852 shelter nights in the battered women's shelter.

Making this possible were over 350 volunteers who donated well over 5,000 volunteer hours.

Over 30% of the current \$900,000 operations budget came from 911 individuals, 207 churches and numerous local businesses. Another 20% came from grants and 40% came from public funds. About 10% came from fundraising activities conducted by the staff and shelter guests, including the operation of a thrift store.

The ministry is governed by a board of directors that includes eight men, 10 women, 14 white, two black, two of Hispanic origin and one formerly homeless person.

Success

The new Fifth Street Ministries facility opened December 6, 2008. It has room for overnight guests, a cafeteria, and rooms for counseling, training, education and support groups. The old school has been razed. Of the \$4.5 million goal, \$4.4 million has been raised. Despite the tough economy, this project is nearly complete.

The new facility allowed the shelter to remain in the heart of South Statesville. It is near Bentley Gym, an outreach physical education effort; Statesville Housing Authority; South Statesville Skills Center, a cooperative education program between Mitchell Community College and Statesville Housing Authority; and the newly completed Boys & Girls Club, which provides a wide-ranging variety of programs highlighted as another project.

The new facility also enables Fifth Street Shelters to offer, for the first time ever, transitional housing, life skills and training in a variety of areas.

The credit goes to the caring and committed community of Statesville, N.C., – an All-America City.

Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (*This person may be contacted to verify information.*)

Fifth Street Shelters
 Gary West, executive director
 Patti West, program director
 1400 Fifth Street, Statesville, NC 28677
 704.872.4045
 Patti West [pattihwest@bellsouth.net]

PROJECT THREE (Benefit Youth and Children)

Provide a description of a project and its qualitative and quantitative impacts on youth in the past five years. This project may address issues such as literacy, community service, health, recreation, or other youth-related issues. Projects addressing underserved youth are particularly valued in this program. (1,200 word maximum)

Boys and Girls Club

Introduction

Seven teenagers were dead -- seven!

The worst single-event loss of life in Iredell County history became horrific when the ages of the victims became known – all teenagers and none old enough to drive. It happened hours away from the New Year of 2004. When the police officer noticed the car riding on a donut spare the driver panicked and sped away. We will never know why. When the officer arrived, it was too late. All seven were dead. How could this happen?

The New Year dawned with Statesville struggling to comprehend the reasons and issues leading to the deaths. Boredom, lack of opportunity, little hope for a bright future and poverty were all factors. Did Statesville offer engaging programs where teens could be safe and have fun? What would make the future different? How would teenagers be given new hope and a positive direction? How would this tragedy, which shocked the community, lead to something positive?

Community leaders vowed to provide a place for youth to gather. Dozens of citizens of all races, ages and backgrounds quickly joined the effort. Miraculously, an anonymous donor issued a challenge. His foundation would provide \$400,000 if our community raised \$900,000 to build a Boys & Girls Club. The donor knew the tremendous impact a club would have on children.

This would be no ordinary Boys & Girls Club. It would be a comprehensive effort providing help and hope to a generation of disadvantaged youth. It would be a coalition of the Boys & Girls Club, Statesville Housing Authority, Mitchell Community College, Iredell-Statesville Schools and other agencies with a common mission and shared dream.

It is important to emphasize the Boys & Girls Club was part of the solution. The effort started with seven dead children and grew into a multi-faceted approach with a coalition of many efforts, one of which was the Boys & Girls Club.

Building the dream

A committee was formed and board recruited. Ten acres owned by Iredell-Statesville Schools, a big supporter of the club, were donated. An adjoining ten acres were bought and donated by a board member.

Plans started on a \$5 million, 28,000 square foot facility to house two gymnasiums, game room, exercise/weight room, a learning/technology center, kitchen, two classrooms, a teen center, and five activity rooms to accommodate programs in photography, drama, music, dance, and art. The project also included outside ball fields, basketball courts, playground and picnic area.

The Statesville Housing Authority received Community Learning Centers Grants for afterschool and summer enrichment program for children scoring below grade level and suddenly South Statesville, thanks to the partnership of Iredell-Statesville Schools, Statesville Housing Authority, Mitchell Community College, and other partner agencies, was receiving money to operate afterschool and summer programs.

The Board of Directors for the Boys and Girls Club asked if all these programs could be rolled into it thus building sustainability for these programs, and having a ready-made core of members to charter the club. We now have approximately 300 members attending afterschool and summer programs in four different locations until the new facility is opens in April.

Our focus is character and leadership; education and career development; health and life skills; the arts; and sports, fitness, and recreation

Our goals are first to increase each member's chance of academic success. This success will lead to higher graduation rates and higher percentage of our members entering college. Second, is to strengthen family relationships through utilization of community resources with a special focus on young family members. Third, is to upgrade local capacity for afterschool and summer enrichment programs for children 6 – 18.

Our vision is a future in which the Boys & Girls Club is a catalyst for an age in which success is within reach of every child, and whole generations of children are inspired to a level of civic engagement not seen since the founding of our nation.

Our mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Our promise to Statesville's youth is to provide a safe, positive place and have a significant impact on their lives.

Our programs

While the Boys and Girls Club of the Piedmont reaches its members through various programs, clearly, the main thrust is guidance. The children come to have fun but it is fun with a purpose administered by a professional staff especially trained to deal with the needs of disadvantaged children. It is an approach we know works. We see it in the generations of successful Boys & Girls Club alumni who over the past 100 years have gone on to lead successful and productive lives. Specific programs include:

- Keystone Club – ages 14-18. Keystoners elect officers and implement activities in six areas: service to Club and community, character and leadership development, education and career exploration, unity, free enterprise and social/recreation.
- Torch Club – small-group leadership group meeting special character development needs of younger adolescents at a critical stage.
- Youth of the Year participation promotes and celebrates service to Club, community, and family, academic performance, character, life goals, poise and public speaking.
- Power Hour – helps members be successful in school by providing homework help and tutoring and encouraging members to become self-directed learners.
- Skill Tech – basic computer skills program developing proficiency through fun, hands-on engaging lessons and projects for all ages.
- SMART Moves –nationally acclaimed comprehensive prevention program helps young people resist alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, as well as premature sexual activity.
- Triple Play – empowering youth to eat right is a generation-changing, life-enhancing program goal and covers the power of choice, calories, vitamins and minerals, the food pyramid and appropriate portion size.
- PHASAC basketball and cheerleading program where participants maintain a “C” average in school and sign a drug-free statement and code of ethics. Inspirational and/or educational speakers are featured each day we play.

Growing success

In 2008, the club served 254 teenagers in a variety of programs. Homework assistance was offered and tutoring provided by certified teachers. Certified curriculum classes were taught in five areas along with summer programs and field trips. Volunteers are essential and nearly 150 volunteers provided over 4,500 volunteer hours.

The facility fundraising efforts are remarkable. Of the \$5 million budget, 80% has already been raised without any public funds. A variety of businesses, individuals, churches, civic clubs and foundations provided the money. Of the annual operating budget of \$390,000, less than 20% comes from public funds.

The twelve-member board of trustees is comprised of nine men, three women, with ten white and two black members. The 32-member board of directors is diverse.

The facility is located in the midst of the population it serves in South Statesville along with the nearby Fifth Street Shelters, South Statesville Skills Center, South Statesville Police office, Bentley Gym, Statesville Housing Authority and other agencies. The result is a comprehensive effort among public, private, business and citizen entities to provide hope and opportunity for those who need it most. We hope this will create an environment where a tragedy will never again occur with the loss of seven children.

Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. *(This person may be contacted to verify information.)*

Crystal Pratt- Chief Professional Officer
Boys & Girls Club of the Piedmont, Inc.
PO Box 6694, Statesville, NC 28687
704-978-2460
crystalrpratt@yahoo.com

End of application

Submit the application by email and one hard copy with \$100 application fee by

Monday, March 16, 2009, to:

National Civic League, 1640 Logan Street (NEW ADDRESS), Denver, Colorado 80203, 303-571-4343, kristins@ncl.org