

December 15, 2006

Michelle D. Monse  
President  
Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation  
2929 Carlisle Street, Suite 222  
Dallas, TX 75204

**Re: Letter of Inquiry**

Dear Ms. Monse:

The mission of the Boys & Girls Club of Phillips County (BGCPC) is to serve the young people of the community, providing them with the opportunities they need to realize their full potential as responsible, productive, and caring citizens. By offering a safe and stable environment along with an array of nationally-proven programming, the Boys & Girls Club of Phillips County is in a unique position to bring about dramatic, measurable change in the lives of Phillips County's youth.

The needs of Phillips County are immense. With a poverty rate of 32.7 percent, Phillips County ranks by some estimates as the 12<sup>th</sup> poorest county in America. Phillips County's extraordinary poverty is most evident in the ills pervading its youth, including low state test scores, high rates of crime and drug use, and one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the country.

Even in its early stages, the Boys & Girls Club of Phillips County has experienced remarkable success serving the community's at-risk youth. In the seven months since its opening, the Club has grown to serve over 220 members, with approximately 70 children attending each day.

At the Club, children find a qualified, caring team of staff members who provide a safe, nurturing space in which members can grow and flourish. The Club opens its doors every weekday after school from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m., as well as on Saturdays from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m, the hours when young people are most often unsupervised and susceptible to negative outside influences.

To ensure measurable gains in its members' lives, the BGCPC offers nationally recognized Boys & Girls Club programming in five key areas: Character and Leadership Development; Education and Career Development; Health and Life Skills; the Arts; and Sports, Fitness, and Recreation. The BGCPC is a chartered member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, a nationwide network of clubs with over 100 years of collective experience serving 4.6 million members at over 4000 club locations. Independent research has confirmed the effectiveness of the Boys & Girls Club model. Studies by the Columbia University School of Social Work and the American Health Foundation have demonstrated that, compared to peers in similar programs, Boys & Girls Club members show a marked *increase* in school attendance and grade point average, as well as a substantial *decrease* in juvenile crime rates, drug use, and other risky behaviors.

Specifically, the Boys & Girls Club of Phillips County has been successful at implementing programs in two areas that are central to the King Foundation's mission: Education (equipping young people with skills needed for success in school) and Children and Youth (addressing the special physical and emotional needs of at-risk youth).

During Power Hour, club members take time to complete their homework each day before they move on to physical recreation or other programming. Under the guidance of staff and trained volunteers, children receive help in specific content areas as well as assistance with general learning strategies and study skills. Members receive bonus points for every assignment they complete and can exchange these points for various rewards. Additionally, with the support of parents, staff members track members' grades to ensure the work and training received at the Club translates to measurable academic improvement at school.

In addition to the direct educational support children receive, they also receive physical and emotional support through targeted programs such as SMART Girls and Male's Place. In these age- and gender-specific programs, young people receive comprehensive health and life skills training to ensure they are equipped with the skills they need to make healthy choices in an environment that too often fosters destructive behavior.

Whether members are completing homework training, participating in physical activities, or mastering critical health and life skills, they are constantly under the close supervision of caring adults. With constant exposure to and interaction with these role models, the Club's young people develop the sound character and values they need to thrive. In fact, in a recent Boys & Girls Club national alumni survey, 80 percent of club members said that club staff helped them "learn right from wrong."

While the Boys & Girls Club of Phillips County is dramatically impacting the lives of its 220 members, the number of young people the Club can reach has been limited by the space out of which it is currently operating. In fact, since the Club opened in June, it has maintained a substantial waiting list of children it cannot serve because of these space limitations.

Therefore, the Club's top priority is to expand into a permanent facility that will allow the Club to substantially expand the scope of its already successful operations. The new facility will include a spacious classroom and homework room, a computer lab, an arts and crafts room, a gymnasium, and two age-specific common areas in which members can socialize and engage in wholesome, supervised, recreational activities. The new facility will allow the BGPC to accommodate three times the number of young people currently being served in its temporary facility.

It is to this end that the BGPC seeks the aid of the Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation.

The estimated cost of the project, which will more than triple the current capacity of the Club, is \$626,000. Already, \$236,000 towards that goal has been received in the form of a facility donated through a challenge grant. An estimated \$40,000 of the \$236,000 raised through the facility challenge grant will be used for the renovation and remodeling of that facility, and receipt of a \$200,000 grant from (name omitted) is likely in the next three months, which leaves \$150,000 yet to be raised over the next 5 months in our Capital Campaign.

The most immediate measure of success in the operation of the new facility will be the number of young people attending the Club on a daily basis. Additionally, the effectiveness of programming will be evaluated both internally and externally through a variety of standardized academic assessments to measure academic growth, as well as standardized health and fitness assessments to track growth in those areas. The BGPC will additionally compile data from surveys of participants, parents, Club staff, and

teachers, which measure changes in participant attitude, behavior, and skills. All assessment results are compiled annually in the form of the Club's Annual Report – as required by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America – and made available to the public in print and through the BGCPC website.

In order to assure timely completion of the Capital Campaign, the Boys and Girls Club of Phillips County is requesting a grant of \$20,000 from the Carl B. & Florence E. King Foundation for the remodeling and renovation of the permanent facility.

The Club's Facilities Committee is currently finalizing plans for the remodeling project as it evaluates preliminary plans from several architects. The BGCPC would ideally use the King Foundation funds by the summer of 2007, at which time the organization will be completing construction plans and selecting a contractor in order to begin construction. The timeline for the project is as follows:

- December 2006 – February 2007: Architect evaluation
- January 2007 – June 2007: Final phase of capital campaign for facility
- February 28, 2007: Select architect and finalize architectural vision
- July 16, 2007: Design Development, Construction Documents and Permitting Completed
- August 15, 2007: Selection of Contractor
- September 17, 2007: Construction Begins
- February 15, 2008: Construction and Inspections Completed
- March 7-9, 2008: Grand-Opening Event

Youth across the country are in dire need of positive role models and guidance in the areas of education and character development. Nowhere is that need more pressing than in Phillips County.

On behalf of the more than 5,000 children in Phillips County, we thank you for your consideration in helping us reach our goal in accommodating all of the young people so desperately in need of a safe, nurturing environment.

Sincerely,

Jason Rolett, Executive Director  
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West Helena, AR 72390

Anna Skorupa, Board President  
P.O. Box 511  
Helena, AR 72342