

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB BOOSTERS HAS RAISED OVER \$500,000 FOR THE ORGANIZATION

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
SERVING OUR YOUTH



For Kitty and Neil Sundheim, their journey with the Club started in 1987 with a stop at a garage sale. The garage sale was hosted by Pauline Hartman and was located at the corner of Orchard Lane and State Avenue. During Kitty's stop at the sale, she learned that Hartman would collect garage sale items from community members and host sales to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Yellowstone County. Kitty said to Hartman "You should consider hosting a Flea Market." Neil and Kitty had always been interested in antiques and after the ladies visited that fateful day a great friendship and partnership took hold. It was later that year that Kitty and Neil became members of the Boys & Girls Club Boosters Club and helped Pauline Hartman organize the first Flea Market event.



Kitty & Neil Sundheim



Pauline Hartman

For the next 35 years, the Boys & Girls Club Boosters would host the Flea Market three times a year, in February, April and October. Each Market would net the Boosters an average of \$4,000 (\$12,000/year). During the Flea Market's peak they had 180 vendors at the show. Kitty remembers that initially the Boosters would provide food during the Market. They recruited a family member of Hartman's who was 78 years old. Kitty recalls "She would make 75 homemade pies and cinnamon rolls for every Flea Market. That is 225 pies a year and she would make them the old fashioned way with lard, not butter. They were so good." Laughing, Kitty adds that "she would never let Pauline or me in the kitchen to help. We were strictly the clean-up crew." Additionally, Kitty's mom and dad would make homemade chili. "When my dad passed away, my mom and brother made it. When my mom passed away, my sister and brother made the chili." The Big Sky Optimist Club eventually partnered with the Boosters to help provide the food during the events.

Since 1987 the Flea Market has raised over \$500,000 for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Yellowstone County. One of the Booster Club's first purchases was the

property just south of the Bair Family Clubhouse on Orchard Lane. The Boosters felt like when the property went up for sale that one day the Boys & Girls Club would need that property to expand and until then the lot could be used for parking, especially during the Flea Market events. Additionally, early on, the Boosters shared their funds to hire a staff member to sit at the front desk at the Bair Family Clubhouse. Neil and Kitty recalled “there were limited staff available to help keep kids safe. The Boosters helped hire a Club staff member to answer phones and monitor who was entering and leaving the Clubhouse. The Boosters funded this position for over five years.” Kitty stated “we hired Tommie, who lived in the neighborhood and she loved to cook. The Boosters bought a soup pot and she would make soup every day for Club members. I think she worked at the Club for five years and it was her soup that started the Club’s food program that is still going today.”



Neil & Kitty Sundheim during a Flea Market Event

Kitty worked at Orchard Elementary school for 18 years and Hartman volunteered for the Southside schools; Newman, Orchard, Ponderosa, and Garfield Elementary schools’ reading program. Kitty and Hartman knew many of the students who attended Club from their roles at the Elementary Schools. Both women realized the need to help safely transport kids from School to Club. It was this belief that sparked the Boosters to purchase the Club’s first vehicle to transport kids afterschool. “We worked to purchase the van from Archie Cochrane Ford. At the time, it cost \$30,000.00. The Boys & Girls Club Endowment Foundation allowed us to borrow the funds from them as we secured the funds through the Flea Market over several years. We repaid the Endowment Foundation for all the costs of the van.” Over the years, the funds raised through the Flea Market have helped fund program needs like kitchen supplies, oven, ice machine, board games and field trips.



Pauline Hartman

Pauline Hartman passed away in May of 2017 and it was shortly after that the Booster Club dissolved. The Big Sky Optimist Club now hosts the Flea Market twice a year as one of its largest fundraising events. Neil and Kitty Sundheim still help with the set-up and staging of the events. Kitty shared that “The Boys & Girls Club is near and dear to Neil and I’s heart. We have met

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some wonderful people and really nice kids during our time volunteering. We have always felt it was important for our community kids to have a place to go and be safe. We are glad we got to help provide that for so many on the Southside.”

Thank you to the many people involved with the Boys & Girls Clubs Booster program through the years, especially Neil and Kitty. It is community supporters and partners that have helped the Boys & Girls Club thrive for 50 years. The Big Sky Optimist Club hosts the next Flea Market event in October 2021.