

Show Me the Money!

A \$5 Million Campaign for Youth

DAVE STENSRUD

CELEBRATING
50
YEARS
SERVING OUR YOUTH



How do you raise \$5 million dollars to grow an Endowment to assure perpetual support for your program? You find someone like Dave Stensrud to spearhead the campaign. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Yellowstone County Endowment Foundation was very fortunate to have Dave chair the *Campaign for Youth*. However, if you ask Dave he will say “I wasn’t responsible for the success of the campaign, everyone on the campaign cabinet did a great job, along with the Endowment and Club Boards, Mike Marnin (Chief Executive Officer for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Yellowstone County) and Joan Hendricks (Executive Director of the Endowment Foundation).”



The Boys & Girls Clubs Endowment Foundation was established in 1986 with the singular purpose of securing the financial future of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Yellowstone County. To accomplish this purpose, in 2002 the Endowment Foundation Board of Directors charted an aggressive course and embarked upon a five-million-dollar campaign to help secure the future of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Yellowstone County, which had recently opened a new Clubhouse in Lockwood School. Additionally, the Endowment Foundation Board recognized the need for additional Clubs in the community. Dave shared “I had been hearing about what was going on at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Yellowstone County for a long time. I had friends and clients that were engaged with the Club. I was asked to be on the Endowment Board with the intent of becoming the Chair of the *Campaign for Youth*. I had been involved with other fundraising campaigns and had just completed one.”

While it took a little urging, Dave agreed to serve as the Campaign Chair “under the condition that 100% of the Board of Directors for the Club and Endowment Foundation give to the campaign, and, before the campaign went public half the campaign goal would be secured.”

Dave’s “conditions” were fortuitous because during one of his first “sit downs”, George Selover, a distinguished community leader and philanthropist, the “first question was ‘have all of the board members personally given to the campaign?’ It was like a bolt of lightning went through the room. It was a very important question. Why would someone want to support the campaign if the board of directors didn’t? I was happy I could answer yes, 100% of the Club and Endowment Board of Directors have given to the campaign.”

Dave credits the success of the campaign to “a great Board (Endowment and Club), great Campaign Cabinet, great employees, great Clubs, great community and the great Joan Hendricks”. Dave attributes much of the success of the Campaign to her. “Joan exuded enthusiasm. She is a perfect example of who you would want on your team when entering into a significant fundraising campaign. I enjoyed being with Joan when she provided a tour of the Club to a potential donor. Afterschool the Club was filled with kids and it was fun to watch the

Club team and Joan's interaction with the kids and how the potential donor's eyes were opened to the importance of the Club."

"We had a vision and everything was molded around that vision. The entire genesis was 'Why do we want to have 2 Clubs (Bair and Lockwood) if we weren't financially secure?' We knew the need for funds was there and we knew we needed to provide *perpetual* funding," Dave shared. "Some board members feared that there would not be annual funding if people were asked to give to the endowment campaign. We weren't out to rob money out of annual giving. Part of our campaign commentary was that this is not a replacement for your annual giving. We encouraged donors to continue to make their annual gift and also give to the campaign."

Despite the tremendous amount of work required to make the campaign the huge success it was, "we also had a lot of fun," Dave shared. "My favorite memory is when Joan, Mike and I met with Sam McDonald Jr. who owned all the Wendy's Restaurants in town and was a remarkable businessman and generous philanthropist. While we waited for him to finish another meeting, Mike pulled a plate of cookies out of his briefcase and told me the Club kids had made them for Sam. I said let me have those. When we walked into Sam's office, he stated 'I know you are here to ask me for money.' I replied no, I am here to sell you cookies made especially for you by Club kids. That gave Sam a good laugh. Then he asked the price of the cookies. We left his office without the cookies and a with a significant 3-year campaign pledge!"

Another highlight for Dave was when the Charles M. Bair Family Trust presented the campaign with a \$1 million gift. With that historic gift, the campaign surpassed the half-way mark, and the check presentation was used as the kick-off event for the public portion of the *Campaign for Youth*. "I have nothing but good memories of the Club," reflected Dave. "It was exciting when we later surpassed our goal. We set out to achieve something special for the Club kids today and into the future. There were so many great people involved with the *Campaign for Youth* and many of those people are now people I call my friends."

