

Suncor Boys & Girls Club: Community Impact, Today and Tomorrow

The old Commerce City Boys & Girls Club branch was without a facility of their own and were cohabitating in a small part in a local elementary school. With little space and none of the typical activity spaces, the Club operated a limited program for an ever-growing number of members. Due to a greater number of lower income families being pushed out of the Denver City Center and into Commerce City, a “full-sized” Boys & Girls Club was critical.

Suncor, one of the area’s major employers recognized this need and donated \$1MM to make sure that the next Boys & Girls Club was built in Commerce City. In addition, Howell Construction and our subcontractor partners raised over \$225K in donations, as well as putting into action several ideas that saved the club over \$300K that helped make the new Suncor Boys & Girls Club a reality. This project was seven years in planning and fundraising as well as critical enough to be one of U.S. Congressman, Ed Perlmutter’s first key initiatives when he took office.

The broader community impact was the conversion of the blighted, 20-year abandoned Mile High Greyhound Track into a new community redevelopment. The Boys & Girls Club served as the anchor project for additional planned development, including retail, a sports field and affordable housing. The club project was the test case for a number of site issues that had to be resolved in order to kick start the revitalization of this neighborhood.

The impact on this rapidly growing community is huge. Perlmutter says, “The new Boys and Girls Club in Commerce City will benefit future generations and have a positive impact on our neighborhoods for decades to come. The facility will serve as a cornerstone for redevelopment in the area. Thank you to Howell Construction for helping to create this valuable community asset which will provide opportunity and a safe place for children to learn and grow for years to come.”

Howell also worked closely with Commerce City to get a number of advantages in the land transfer for the Club property, including donations of site work such as entrance drives from the City. Additionally, Howell staff worked with the City to redesign utilities for better efficiency and less upfront installation cost, which will pay dividends not only for the Suncor Club, but for the other buildings yet to come on the site.

John Barry, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver sums it up: “The new Club will allow us to double our impact in Commerce City and support hundreds of kids in need of a positive place to go during the out-of-school-time hours. This Club would not have been possible without Howell Construction.”

A 50-year Partnership Celebrates a Milestone of Achievement

Howell Construction has been an active partner with Boys & Girls Clubs in Colorado since their first day. James R. Howell was one of the original Boys & Girls Club founders, helped build the first local facility, and served several terms as a Club board member. Three successive generations of Howell family

members served as board members and builders, and the Howell board involvement continues with Howell's current President, Joe Slavik. In one way or another, Howell Construction has touched every Boys & Girls Club facility in the Denver metro area through building, planning, maintenance projects and volunteer activities. This half century of involvement and commitment has come full circle with the completion of the Suncor Boys & Girls Club.

Company Commitment from the Ground Up

From the beginning, Howell Construction was determined to be a key contributor to this important project, which serves one of the Denver metro area's chronically underserved communities. Over the past 50 years, Howell has donated more than \$1.5 million to the Boys & Girls Clubs and continues to sponsor several annual fundraising events. Additionally, Howell staff and their spouses have donated a considerable number of hours as volunteers for the Club programs, teaching classes in life skills, literacy, and job opportunities. The Suncor Club was a natural choice for the next generation of giving.

Howell held a subcontractor event at the new Vickers Boys & Girls Club in north Denver to orient their building partners to the life-changing work the Clubs do and the importance of their individual financial contributions to the success of the new Commerce City Club. This encouragement resulted in a total of \$225,000 in contributions to the Suncor Club – and an even greater commitment on the part of each subcontractor to make this Club a success as it was constructed. Throughout construction, there was a special sense of involvement in every one of the trades on-site, beginning with the Howell team.

One example of a personal commitment to the Commerce City Club is Howell Carpenter Nate Lerma, who is an elite-class runner. Nate started his own "Runraiser" to solicit funds for the Club building fund. His goal: to run 2,000 miles in a series of runs to raise \$2,000. The Runraiser was going well until Nate suffered a sports injury that prevented him from continuing. With 200 miles still to go, several other Howell employees volunteered to complete the distance in his place. They reached the goal, each completing individual runs while Nate recuperated – a true team effort.

The Next Chapter for the Commerce City Branch

The new \$4.0M facility was completed on schedule and opened as planned on August 26th, 2015 despite several weeks of delay caused by severe winter weather. The new building delivers a full range of services, events, and programs. With a gymnasium, training and recreation rooms, athletic areas, recording studio, pottery kiln and the only Boys & Girls Club futsal field in the U.S., kids can take advantage of a full array of athletics. Scholarship is an important component of the day for Club members, with a learning center, art room, and a technology lab for learning new skills. Hot meals and snacks are prepared in a dedicated kitchen and served in a dining area separate from other gathering spaces. For many Club kids, this is where they'll eat their best meal of the day. Office space for staff and counselors completes the Suncor Club.

From a "green building" perspective, the Suncor Club was built to maximize sustainability best practices to create a healthy and efficient building. The project converted a large existing impermeable parking lot

to open green space. The facility has energy-efficient evaporative cooling, and the building is sited to take best advantage of sun/shade at different times of the year to reduce heating and cooling costs.

A Commitment to Safety

Howell and our construction partners worked diligently to make sure we created a safe worksite that would ensure that our team members returned to their families healthy at the end of the day. Howell's safety team played a significant role in daily evaluation of jobsite conditions and detailed planning for potentially dangerous tasks. The results speak for themselves. With over 46,000 hours worked onsite, we had zero injuries, incidents, or lost time!

Impact for the Club Members - Here for the Long Run – A Continuing Commitment

The Colorado Boys & Girls Clubs have changed children's lives since their founding in 1961. More than just an after-school experience, the Clubs ensure that every child who walks through their doors has their basic needs met, a hot meal, and a safe environment for learning, sharing and growing. The new Suncor Club provides such a place for neighborhood kids.

As a natural learning experience as well as to foster a sense of pride for Club members, Howell involved the Boys & Girls Club kids throughout the construction process. From the groundbreaking, to a hard hat tour midway through construction to the grand opening, the Club members watched a valuable addition to their community – and to their lives – being built.

Howell Construction's close involvement with the Suncor Boys & Girls Club continues. This is the new "home club" for Joe Slavik, Howell's President and Boys & Girls Club Board Member, and the Howell staff who volunteer with their time.

At the Suncor Club, they'll see Cristal Dominguez, a former member and now an employee at the Club. Howell first met Cristal when she was a guest at their table at the annual Youth of the Year Gala, and Cristal and the Howell staff became friends/mentors and have kept in contact ever since. Cristal sums up the impact the new Club will have: "I am only one person impacted by my once small Club, so imagine the amount of love, support, and opportunity the community kids will receive in our new facility. I know that they will carry these positive experiences with them for the rest of their lives."









