



The Cindy Platt  
**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**  
OF TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

P.O. Box 1360 • BREVARD, NC 28712 • (828) 885-7800

## News Release

# **Boys & Girls Club Opens Drive To Help Finance its Varied Programs**

The Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Club, with 432 members the county's largest youth organization, has launched its annual campaign to fund its many programs to help children grow into good citizens.

Officials say individual donations make up a major source of revenue to help cover the \$1,600 annual cost for each member. Annual dues are just \$50 to keep membership affordable.

More than a thousand appeals are going out this month, mailed by the 20 volunteer members of the Board of Directors, who themselves are among the first to contribute each year. Donors responding to the springtime appeal will be joined by other individuals, businesses, civic organizations and churches who also contribute.

"Our community fundraising is absolutely critical to our survival," said Board President Cary Hitchcock. "We receive only about thirty percent of our revenue through grants," he said. "The seventy percent balance must be raised right here in Transylvania County within our community. We are fortunate to be in such a community of giving and support."

A major part of that community fundraising is in the form of the individual donations sought in the current drive. The Club makes it easy for the public to help. People can donate on-line at its website, [bgctransylvania.org](http://bgctransylvania.org). There, you click on "Donate" on the home page and charge it to a credit card.

The donations goal this year, \$205,000, is the highest in the club's 15-year history because of ever-increasing expenses. The club runs some 27 after-school programs, with eight full-time staff members and 20 part-timers. Each day an average of 163 children, from ages 5 to 18 and from every school in the county, pour into the club's 25,000-square-foot building on Gallimore Road. During the summer the club runs a special all-day program of activities that includes breakfast and lunch.

The \$205,000 donations goal represents nearly one-third of the organization's \$682,000 operating budget for 2015. Other revenues will come from such sources as grants from government agencies and private foundations, donations from such groups as Rotary and other non-profit organizations and churches, special events, and sales at the club's downtown shop, Gravy.

"Last year we raised more than \$160,000 in donations," said Jackie Witherspoon, the club's director of Resource Development and Community Outreach, "so this is quite a bit more this year. But I'm optimistic... we live in such a wonderful community with wonderfully generous people."

The club's executive director, Candice Walsh, says its mission is to enable young people, especially those most in need, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. "We are more than an after-school program," she said. "We are a youth-development organization."

The club prides itself on providing "a home away from home" for its members, almost 40 percent of whom come from single-parent households. "Children feel welcomed here, and they join together in wholesome recreation and companionship," said Walsh.

## Lots to do

The children arrive each day after school from nine county schools, most coming on one of the club's buses. The large building and its grounds suddenly turn from silent and tranquil to bustling with youthful exuberance. The children fill the clubhouse's classrooms and its large gymnasium and outside they play on the grassy fields. In warm weather, they work in the Club's garden.

There is a concentration on academic pursuits – daily “Power Hour” study sessions and one-on-one time with tutors – and character building. But the children also have fun with such activities as field trips, indoor and outdoor games and sports, and lessons in such things as music, martial arts and art and photography. A third of the children stay each day for a dinner meal the club provides before they go home.

Supervising all this are the staff and a corps of volunteers. The staff members serve as positive role models and mentors to the children. “They're always there for me,” said 15-year-old Kaylee Holland, who is active in the club's Teen Center and has been coming to the club since she was 7. “They are my second family.”

All this attention to children at critical times in their daily lives, when they might otherwise be in vulnerable situations and make poor choices, pays off, says Executive Director Walsh. “We take great pride in helping children learn how to make healthy, wise choices,” she said. “We even counsel our children, especially our teen members, to help guide their plans after high school.”

Holland, for instance, is already planning to go to Liberty University in Virginia.

“A strong Boys & Girls Club is a tremendous benefit for our community,” said Board President Hitchcock. “We serve a great need. But even with our success we can still do much more and we invite the public to join alongside us and help us serve the children of Transylvania County.”

Aside from donating on the club's website, people can mail a donation to the club at P.O. Box 1360, Brevard, NC 28712. Or they can call the club at 885-7800 for information on how to donate. The club is a qualified non-profit organization, so donations are tax deductible.

