



SPECIAL | HPE
Donna and Tubby Smith, pictured with Mary Bogest, took a tour of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater High Point's new headquarters and club, The Congdon Hub for Great Futures.



MARY BOGEST
From left, High Point Mayor Cyril Jefferson with his sons, Royce and Cyrus II, explore the Boys & Girls Clubs' Congdon Hub for Great Futures with Joe Barnes and Marshall Morgan.



MARY BOGEST
David Black tends to the delicious Brunswick stew served at the Shuckin' at The Hub.



MARY BOGEST
From left, Samantha Klemme with Catherine Niebauer, vice president of resource development, Warren Preston and Bert Klemme enjoy conversation at the Boys & Girls Clubs preview event.

Boys & Girls Clubs celebrate new hub

It was billed as a preview, and what a preview it was! Not only was it a preview, but it was also a total transformation. Do you wonder what I am talking about? It is the new (or should I say newly transformed) headquarters and club for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater High Point. Before the amazing transformation, the site at 314 Barker Ave. was Rankin Memorial United Methodist Church. Now it is The Congdon Hub for Great Futures. How wonderful that this site on Barker Avenue will continue to serve others in an underserved area.



MARY BOGEST
ABOUT TOWN

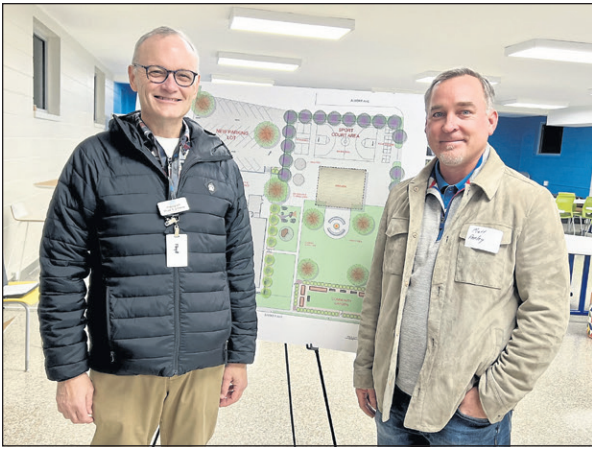
The event was not only a preview but also a fundraiser, Shuckin' at The Hub. With that palatable name, how could I resist? I love oysters. In addition, they were serving Brunswick stew, beer, and wine, an essential for my Mary Mingle. Oh, and there would be continuous live music throughout the evening. All of this would be happening outside while tours would be given on the inside.

As I arrived, the Boys & Girls Clubs super advocate Tom Shaaf was on the outdoor stage, announcing various monetary donations. It was impressive. He is the one who at the last major event made the comment, "the Congdon family, maybe you have heard of them." And yes, indeed, it was the Earl and Kathryn Congdon Family Foundation that stepped up once again for our community. The Congdon Hub for Great Futures aptly describes the work of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater High Point. As stated, the mission of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater High Point is to enable all young people, especially those who need help most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

My friend Catherine Niebauer, who serves as the vice president of resource development, keeps me posted with updates about the new Congdon Hub. She is always so enthusiastic about her work and the difference the Boys & Girls Clubs makes in so many children's lives.

How fortunate I was to get an "up close and personal" tour with Floyd Johnson, president/CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater High Point. With me on this tour was Matt Penley, who with his twin brother, Mark, and cousin Megan Oglesby are the owners of the professional Carolina Core FC soccer team. Yes, they are all Congdons.

We began on the first level, the cafeteria where the children will receive catered hot meals. We peeked into the kitchen, where I saw Chef David, as in David Black,



MARY BOGEST
Floyd Johnson, left, president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater High Point, and Matt Penley pose with the Congdon Hub floor plan.

stirring the Brunswick stew. Floyd said that the kitchen would function as a teaching kitchen. He looked quite comfortable in his job.

Oh, but what was to come on the tour! We began walking down the hallway. The wooden (or LVP) floors were shining, and throughout there were wide stripes of the official Boys & Girls Club blue (Pantone Process Blue) as seen on their logo. The logo is representative of their mission as it shows a clasped hand symbol in that blue. This represents the guiding hands that Boys & Girls Clubs extend to youth. That blue is the theme throughout the club. Designing the floors in this was the brainchild of Barbour Spangle Design.

I'd like to take a sidebar to congratulate Christi Barbour on her appointment as board chair and president of the executive committee for the High Point Market

Authority. She is the first woman as well as the first interior designer professional to be named to this high position. Congratulations, Christi!

Now back to the tour. Individual single-unit bathrooms were spotted along the way. As Johnson told us, "Now we don't have to worry about gender issues." The blue motif continued into the production room for video and music production. There were multi-purpose classrooms, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics) rooms, kid-friendly exercise, and athletic equipment. There are kid-friendly and fun furnishings. No stone was left unturned for this facility.

As we walked (and talked), Johnson mentioned that he is a foster parent of two boys. He took both boys on a tour, and they were unanimous in their excitement. Soon we arrived at the gymnasium,



MARY BOGEST
From left, Warren Preston poses by the oysters with Audrey and Jack Harris at the Shuckin' at The Hub.

huge with high ceilings (formerly the nave of the church). There will be pickleball, basketball, volleyball, a climbing wall! The teen center will be on a different floor from the elementary school activities, and they will have separate check-ins.

They are starting slowly, serving 200 students a day of the 400 maximum. The schools the new Congdon Hub will serve will be Oak Hill Elementary, Jamestown Elementary plus High Point Central, Ferndale Middle School, Penn Griffin and the Newcomers School.

From the gymnasium we went to the administration offices. Not surprisingly Johnson scored the biggest, though all were very nice. All the windows in the facility are new. There was no air conditioning in the building, and with just the boiler heat in winter the temperature could be anywhere from

0 to 95 degrees. Johnson said, "It would get so hot sometimes, you could grow bananas."

During the tour it was great to see Tubby and Donna Smith. The couple have been big supporters in the work of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater High Point. As the tour finished, it was time to delve into some of the oysters that had been roasting over an open fire. They were absolutely delicious, as was the Brunswick Stew that Black had so diligently stirred. Forgetting any diet, I also plowed into the banana pudding. What a treat.

As I enjoyed the repast I spotted another member of the Congdon family, Audrey with husband Jack Harris. I thanked them and offered a toast, "Here's to the Congdon family and the magnificent Boys & Girls Club Congdon Hub for Great Futures!"