



Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex

The Seminole State College Educational Foundation (SSCEF), in partnership with the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation (CRSF) and the Brian Crawford Memorial Foundation (BCMF) requests \$250,000 to support funding for development of the Brian Crawford Memorial (BCM) Sports Complex in Seminole, OK. With the critically needed support from the **Love's Family of Companies**, this project will transform the lives of at-risk youth and people with special needs by providing distinct, targeted and proven assistance. The economically depressed communities and rural areas in Seminole, Pottawatomie and adjacent counties do not have well-managed outdoor recreational facilities with structured programming to ensure that kids have a healthy, positive outlet for energetic growth activities. There is a clear need for the types of proven intervention and positive developmental programs operated by the CRSF. This collaboration of committed partners will work together to fund, build, maintain, and implement life-changing programs on this new state-of-the-art synthetic turf athletic complex.

As an overview, Seminole State College (SSC) is a public, open door, two-year institution located in the city of Seminole in central Oklahoma. The College's five-county service area (Hughes, Lincoln, Okfuskee, Pottawatomie, and Seminole Counties) covers 3,796 square miles and is home to nearly 158,000 people (U.S. Census-2015). Low rates of educational attainment and high rates of illiteracy are the norm with a large number of the students being first-generation, low-income students. While Oklahoma is home to one of the largest Native American populations in the United States, the Native American population in the target counties (16%) is almost twice the Native American population (9%) in Oklahoma (Quick Facts, Census.gov, 2015). Most of the rural schools in the service area have Native American populations in excess of 20%. These data are significant due to family, educational and social problems endemic to first-generation, low-income and Native American populations.

Many schools in the service area are located in communities with populations of fewer than 2,000 individuals. Those isolated communities and schools do not have the capacity to offer special programs to individuals who need it the most. The programs offered through CRSF and the BCM Sports Complex will serve people with special needs, as well as other high need populations such as high school dropouts, veterans, adults with special needs and students attending alternative schools. So, the pool of potential beneficiaries is quite large and far-reaching. Furthermore, almost one-third of children in this area live in poverty with roughly 76% of students being eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches.

The education attainment level of adults in the area is low. Given the high number of low-income families, many do not have the ability or funds to go to college or even finish high school. Those that do are often the first in their family to do so. An astounding 85% of individuals in the SSC service area do not have a baccalaureate degree and 17% do not even have a high school diploma. With these dire statistics, one can easily see the difficulties faced by kids from single parent homes, those with special needs and so many others who face the challenges of poverty and the related lack of opportunities to succeed.

Determination, self-confidence and other interpersonal skills must be developed at early ages to enable kids to be successful in high school, college, or life. Those opportunities are scarce in this area and are

virtually non-existent for persons with special needs. Furthermore, research shows that adolescents who do not participate in healthy activities are nearly three times more likely to skip classes at school, three times more likely to use marijuana or other drugs, and show a higher likelihood to drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and engage in sexual activity than teens in afterschool programs. Intervention strategies and opportunities created by the Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex will specifically address these issues.

After several design changes and re-bids, and having acquired a multitude of in-kind contributions from the City of Seminole, Seminole County, the Citizen Potawatamie Nation and others, the first phase of the Brian Crawford Memorial Sports Complex now has a hard cost project price of \$8.25 million that will include a collegiate-sized baseball stadium and field, a high school sized field, three youth baseball/softball fields, a soccer field, a training facility, lighting for three fields, artificial turf, landscaping, restrooms, a snack bar, press box, and ample parking. In addition, a special “Adaptive Field” for persons with special needs will enable the project to provide services to everyone. This link shows a video of one such field recently installed by our field contractor HELLAS Construction: https://youtu.be/nSH3_OxJovc.

Project Goals & Anticipated Outcomes

The new BCM Sports Complex will encourage healthy physical activity, and build productive, strong relationships with caring adult mentors who will work with kids on the field through proven youth development programs. Some of the major objectives for the BCM Sports Complex include:

- Provide this underserved area with vibrant community space for kids and their families to gather and play. The BCM Complex will bring families together and give them the opportunity to celebrate something positive for their children.
- Keep kids healthy and safe with a place to play team sports and learn in a recreational setting during and after school and over the summer. In this Complex, all children will be able to interact with their peers in a positively structured environment.
- Create an environment of discipline, self-respect, and success.



- Build partnerships and engage mentors to help kids make smart choices through comprehensive youth programs. These partnerships enable children to feel self-confident and have a sense of self-worth, as well as establish leadership abilities and peer support.

Empirical data have shown these programs to be effective. As just one example, in 2018, the University of Michigan's Prevention Research Center concluded a three-year study on *Badges for Baseball*. This study showed that participants reported significantly better outcomes

than non-participants at the completion of the program in areas such as academic improvement, self-worth, conflict resolution skills, leadership abilities, and peer support. At-risk youth and law enforcement mentors around the country who have participated in *Badges for Baseball* have reported building stronger relationships within their communities.

At least once each summer, parents of participants will be invited to “Super Saturday,” a workshop designed to encourage parents to become involved with their children’s sports-education. Project personnel adapt workshops to meet the needs of parents of participants from each grade level and from all ethnic and racial backgrounds. Parents will be coached on the importance of positive feedback and the advantages of participation in these extracurricular activities. The “I am a wonderful person, **and so are You**” program approach will be practiced. Similarly, volunteers from organizations like **Love’s** will be invited to join school administrators, teachers and counselors for special occasions designed specifically for them to interact in positive ways with participants.

Outcome Measurement Process

In order to continually improve and show demonstrable outcomes, the BCM Complex will utilize thorough evaluation methods appropriate for monitoring implementation of initiatives that increase student participation and impact important social metrics such as teen drug use, suicide and school persistence. Our evaluation plan is modeled on key elements described in Notes on Evaluation Design (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/fipse/evaluate.html>) and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Evaluation Handbook.

In addition, the SSCEF will continue to partner with CRSF through their “No Park Left Behind” initiatives. Program partners supply semi-annual reports that address specific measured outcomes. The SSCEF will be responsible for the maintenance and management of programs on the field while the CRSF will monitor progress and supply ongoing resources to ensure the success of the new complex. The Ripken Foundation projects and programs are often monitored by a unique system known as Qualtrics. Qualtrics is an online surveying tool that allows for streamlined, accurate collection of impact statistics from program sites located around the country. This tool allows the CRSF to measure a number of kids and mentors participating in the program. Qualtrics also consolidates the data collection process and allows for a smooth transfer of information from the sites to the Ripken Foundation.

Projected Number of Individual Served

A facility similar to this one outside of Sandusky, Ohio served over 350,000 people this past year. For the past five years, the annual BCM Tournament has averaged over 100 teams, roughly 1500 athletic-participants. Total participation and attendance for that one tournament averages more than 6,000 people. Based on these data and planning discussions that are on-going with Perfect Game Midwest, we anticipate serving over 20,000 students and approximately 100,000 total people in the first year. We anticipate this increasing by 50% each of the next two years.

Critical Relationships and Collaborations

Key individuals from the three partnering Foundations with oversight responsibilities on this project include:

- Dr. Jim Utterback, President Emeritus of Seminole State College, will oversee construction of the new Youth Development Park. Dr. Utterback has more than four decades of administrative experience which has included overseeing roughly \$100 million in grants and \$50 million in construction projects.
- Kenneth Crawford, President and CEO of the Brian Crawford Memorial Foundation, will direct the day to day operations of the BCM Sports Complex and has supervised tournaments for 15 years.
- Steve Salem, President & CEO of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation, has supervised the development of a significantly expanded National Board of Directors; the growth of the organization's staff infrastructure; the creation of a board program direction, including the development of the National Youth Development Park Initiative; and the creation of a sustainable, comprehensive resource development plan.
- Chuck Brady, Sr. Vice President of the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation will oversee fundraising activities and program delivery initiatives to ensure sustainability of the project.
- Lance Wortham, Chair of the SSC Educational Foundation Board of Trustees, will act as CEO of the Project and will serve as a Liaison between the BCM Sports Complex and the SSCEF Board.

Uniqueness of Services

There are no facilities like this in the area, and no adaptive fields of this kind in the State. With the help of the **Love's Family of Businesses**, we will build a multi-field Ripken Youth Development Complex that will create a symbol of hope, opportunity and healthy choices for at-risk children and persons with special needs. Strategically located for easy access right off of highway 9, the new BCM Sports Complex will create new opportunities for youth to engage with caring volunteers from **Love's** who will work with them through proven programs.



Every child wants to play, and everyone deserves the opportunity to live a healthy, active lifestyle. With the support of **Love's** and the dedicated partners invested in this project, thousands of at-risk kids and persons with special needs will be provided amazing new opportunities.

Organizational Capacity & Final Comments

The Ripken Foundation brings nationally recognized expertise and an established, unique process for building Youth Development Parks. The SSC Educational Foundation, through its binding long-term priority usage lease for the Stadium with Seminole State College and strong community support, ensures the financial sustainability of the project. The BCM Foundation provides 15 years of proven expertise in operating multi-field complexes and supervising leagues and tournaments. This powerful partnership will culminate with the Ripken Foundation's program staff and the youth-serving professionals at the site working together to provide impactful, life-changing programs implemented by caring adult mentors throughout the year.

As currently planned, this park will do wonders for youth of all ages and all walks of life. With the assistance of the **Love's Family of Businesses**, this real life "Field of Dreams" will become a reality. Properly constructed synthetic turf fields, and especially Adaptive Fields, are expensive when done to the highest standards. The people at HELLAS Construction and at the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation are experts at designing and installing the highest quality fields possible. This initiative to address poverty, crime, equity, diversity and inclusion fits well with previous programs supported by **Love's**. Our values align perfectly. We would be honored by your willingness to join our partnership.

