



## Heart of America Council, Boy Scouts of America: *Keeping Our Promise*

Due to its camping program's long history, the Heart of America Council's two summer camps were stretched far beyond capacity. The facilities at H. Roe Bartle Scout Reservation near Osceola, Missouri and Theodore Naish Scout Reservation in Bonner Springs, Kansas were aging and in need of significant repairs and upgrades.

Heart of America sought fundraising expertise from Kinetic\* for the Council's campaign, *Keeping Our Promise*. The original goal was \$15.25 million was met and surpassed, finishing at \$17.5 million.

While the Council had completed successful campaigns in the past, it had never attempted such a large effort. A lead gift from Campaign Co-chair, Cliff Illig and his

wife, Bonne, set the stage for the kind of generosity the campaign would enjoy. Other Campaign Co-chairs, Dr. John and Mary Hunkeler and Terry and the Hon. Peggy Dunn, followed the Illig's lead with substantial gifts.

Early in the campaign, the leadership committee flew to Tulsa, Oklahoma to make a proposal to the J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation. The campaign had already garnered approximately \$5 million in commitments but still had a long way to go.

Said then Heart of America Council Scout Executive Jim Terry: "After landing in Tulsa, we headed right into the airport conference room and ran through the questions we expected to be asked by the Mabee



Foundation. Once we were in the meeting, things clicked. Kinetic had prepared us for every question they asked us. Nothing took us by surprise.”

After receiving the \$1-million challenge grant from Mabee, one of the largest ever conferred by the foundation at the time, the leadership had one year to meet the foundation’s requirement and raise the remaining \$12 million.

Other foundation gifts made that more than possible, including \$500,000 from the Hall Family Foundation; \$250,000 each from the Sunderland, the Victor E. and Caroline E. Schutte and the William T. Kemper Foundations; and a generous gift from Joe Jack and Ellen Merriman all provided a boost to the campaign.

One committee member suggested a unique approach for involving a large number of Scouts in the campaign. The members of the Tribe of Mic-O-Say, an honor camping program unique to the Council, were issued a challenge. Each member was invited to donate a dollar a day for three years.

The same challenge was reiterated at Council meetings, Scout camps and other Scouting events. The Tribe of



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Mic-O-Say supported the campaign with individual gifts totaling more than \$250,000. The challenge successfully drew many individuals to the campaign that might not have otherwise given.

The intensity of these connections was also represented by the size of gifts compared to similarly sized campaigns. There were more gifts of \$25,000 and above than many campaigns receive.

Even with the many major gifts received—\$460,265 from James Kidwell Construction, as well as generous gifts from Glenn and Mary Beth Illig and David and Mary Lockton—the campaign came down to the wire in meeting its Mabee grant deadline.

But in end, the campaign not only met, but exceeded expectations. With the success of its multi-million-dollar capital and endowment campaign, the Heart of America Council certainly fulfilled its goal and kept its promise.

*\*This campaign took place prior to Hartsook becoming Kinetic in 2022.*

