



IMPACT100 TRAVERSE CITY

2022 HEALTH & WELLNESS FINALIST: TRAVERSE CITY CURLING CLUB, INC.

INITIATIVE: Keep Our Community Cool

OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVE – IN THE APPLICANT’S WORDS

The Curling Club recently purchased and is renovating the Kmart property on Garfield. In addition to providing a home for our club, the Curling Center will serve as a community hub, promoting health, wellness and camaraderie.

The Curling Center will provide an opportunity for anyone — youth, wheelchair users, seniors, men and women — to cultivate physical and mental wellbeing.

We are asking Impact100 to help us purchase the dehumidifier which is a critical piece of equipment to maintain safe and consistent ice conditions for curling.

The dehumidifier will reduce the time spent treating and preparing the ice, reducing the strain on our volunteers and increasing the time available for community programming.

Dry, safe, and consistent ice will make it possible for current curlers to improve their skills. The TCCC will also expand our outreach efforts, introducing a sport and culture that champions community and belonging on and off the ice.

The following sections contain certain key information from the application, as written by the applicant.

While detailed financial information has not been provided here due to its confidential nature, each applicant submitted an initiative budget and supporting financial documents as part of their application. Each proposed initiative and the supporting financial documentation has undergone a thorough financial review by our Financial Review Committee (FRC) and the initiatives proposed by our finalists have met our standards for moving forward.

ORGANIZATION’S VISION STATEMENT

The Club strives to be the epicenter of an inclusive, socially engaging community through the culture of curling.

ORGANIZATION'S MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Traverse City Curling Club is to build a strong community through the sport of curling.

DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATION AND ITS HISTORY

As the 2014 Winter Olympics came to a close, Traverse City chiropractor Don Piche looked at his sister Cara and asked, "would you help me organize a curling open house and see if anybody else wants to curl?" Cara responded with, "but we don't even know how to curl!" While true, that small detail turned out to be insignificant in the face of their enthusiasm.

Don contacted USA Curling, the national governing body of the Olympic sport of curling and the Paralympic sport of wheelchair curling, which put them in touch with curling clubs around the state of Michigan. Eager to encourage their interest, clubs from around the state hauled their curling rocks and ice preparation equipment to Traverse City, volunteering their time to make the event a success. More than 500 people attended the open house, excited to learn how to curl; our region's appetite for this sport was clear. Later that year, a board of directors was formed and the organization became a 501c3 nonprofit organization. The Traverse City Curling Club (TCCC) was born!

Dedicated to growing a healthy, inclusive community through the accessible sport of curling, TCCC now includes members of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. The Club takes pride in its role as a community connector and its focus on creating a sense of belonging and a passion for learning and growth.

Since 2014, TCCC has made its home at Centre Ice, offering seasonal programming such as recreational leagues, Learn to Curl classes, Give it a Curl open houses, team building curling classes, corporate events, and the annual Cherry Bombspiel event, which has sold out every year it has been held.

Eight years later, we've arrived at a watershed moment in our organization. Interest in our programming continues to grow from all corners of the community and feedback from our participants is overwhelmingly positive. However, our ability to meet this demand is hampered by the ice availability and times we are able to lease space at Centre Ice, as well as ice that is often unprepared for the specific needs of curling. Having purchased a vacant building in a conveniently-located commercial corridor, we will soon be ready to serve our community for the next eight years – and beyond.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF INITIATIVE

TCCC seeks an Impact100 grant to fulfill a critical piece of our community Curling Center initiative: the purchase of a dehumidifier.

In addition to providing a home for our club, the Curling Center will serve as a community hub dedicated to promoting health and wellness, camaraderie, and a greater sense of community, all while breathing new life into an underutilized community resource.

TCCC has purchased the former Kmart property in the Cherryland Center mall in Traverse City. We will revitalize the 84,000 square-foot property, unoccupied since 2017, by building a 28,000-square-foot curling center with a social area, warming kitchen, meeting room, curling proshop and, most importantly,

5-sheets of dedicated curling ice which will allow for increased programming and the improvement of skills and competition for curlers in northern Michigan. The remaining square footage will be leased as retail space.

By repurposing a substantial percentage of the mall's real estate, we hope our facility will become a catalyst for further development at the Cherryland Center. The multi-generational curling community will begin to anchor the corner, providing the energy and sense of community that is the essence of the Barlow-Garfield neighborhood plan.

As the new home of the Traverse City Curling Club, the Curling Center will also host other local and regional curling clubs, as well as school programs. Through club use, ice rentals, and other community events held at the Curling Center, the Club is eager to see activity at the Cherryland Center increase to a point where other businesses can benefit and thrive there. The ability to host tournaments and to become regionally, and nationally, known as a significant curling facility will bring visitors, and their dollars, to the area, deepening the overall economic impact of the project.

The Curling Center will provide an opportunity for anyone — youth, wheelchair users, seniors, men and women — to cultivate physical and mental wellbeing, while getting first-hand experience with the fastest growing winter sport in America.

Curling ice is prepared and treated differently than ice used in other sports; it is scraped and textured (known as “pebbling”) to create traction. This ice preparation is not only integral to technical aspects of the game, and therefore a high-level experience for all players, but it creates a safe environment for curlers. To achieve the conditions necessary to protect curling ice, a specialized dehumidifier is imperative. This sophisticated equipment removes excess moisture from the “ice shed,” helping maintain the necessary building humidity that ensures ideal, very dry ice conditions. Without a dehumidifier, there is no consistency to the ice. Inconsistent, melting ice is both a safety hazard and a deterrent to our community of users. A condition called “greasy ice” (similar to the floor in a commercial kitchen) occurs when there is too much ambient humidity on the surface of the ice, which happens often on humid days, especially between April and October.

The ambient conditions at Centre Ice do not allow for summer curling due to this “greasy ice” issue. The upgraded dehumidifier at our new Curling Center will allow us to offer curling programming to the community all year long. Ice preparation for curling currently takes up to 30 minutes for every leased iced time at Centre Ice. The upgraded dehumidifier will greatly reduce the significant time previously spent treating and preparing the ice for use, reducing the strain on our volunteers and increasing the time available for expanded community programming.

Dry, safe, and consistent ice will make it possible for current curlers to improve their game and for TCCC to expand our outreach efforts, introducing our region to the celebrated sport of curling and a culture that champions diversity and inclusion — on and off the ice.

COMMUNITY TO BE SERVED

This initiative will allow TCCC to continue to serve all current members of the Club while expanding our programming, particularly to youth and senior populations. Regardless of age, physical or athletic ability, or expertise, TCCC is dedicated to helping people reach their full and unique potential.

With the flexibility and freedom that comes from having our own facility, TCCC will grow our outreach to Traverse City and its surrounding communities and counties, attracting participants to our leagues; Learn to Curl classes; competitive play; bonspiels (recreational curling tournaments); curling camps; and junior, senior, and adaptive programming.

Our facility and programming will provide healthy and fun team-building opportunities for organizations and businesses throughout our community, as well as enriching activities for underserved populations via our many partnerships with nonprofit and government entities. These populations include wheelchair users, individuals recovering from addiction, and those with injuries or other limitations that may not allow them to participate in other sports.

Curling is truly a lifetime activity, with integrity and respect at its core. Curling is also an affordable activity for individuals or families. It provides physical and mental wellness at any age and in any season. With a team dynamic comes motivation and accountability for staying active — a little healthy competition helps too!

The Curling Center will provide an opportunity for anyone — youth, wheelchair users, seniors, men and women — to cultivate physical and mental wellbeing, while getting first-hand experience with the fastest growing winter sport in America.

NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY TO BE SERVED

As the Curling Center allows TCCC to increase its programs, we will continue to work with partner organizations to welcome underserved populations to enjoy our expanded offerings. As a member of USA Curling, TCCC follows all Diversity and Inclusion programming enhancements.

We are particularly interested in providing a safe, supportive and healthy experience for members of the recovery and rehabilitation community, and this focus was incorporated into the new facility as early as the design phase. While the Curling Center will include a community room and bar, the bar can be closed up and locked to respect those recovering from addiction. There will also be designated days and/or hours where alcohol will not be served or accessible. Studies have shown connectedness and a sense of belonging can help those overcoming addiction. We hope these community members experience being part of a curling community as a positive step in their recovery.

General participation in curling requires ordinary athleticism and minimal equipment, minimizing physical and economic barriers common to participating in many sports. Additionally, adaptive techniques and equipment can be used to engage curlers of all ages and abilities.

“I have curled in many places across the country. There is a common theme; a community of kind, warm, welcoming individuals from ALL walks of life who come together to play this wonderful, frustrating, exciting game. Even though I curl using a wheelchair, the playing field is level whether I am playing with

other wheelchair curlers or if I am the only person in a wheelchair on the ice,” says Jeff Snover, TC Curling Club member and USA Wheelchair Curling Development Team.

TCCC and our Curling Center project is endorsed by the following organizations representing the needs of these populations: Life Beyond Barriers Rehab, Light House Neuro Rehab, Mary Free Bed Rehab, Neuro Restorative TC, Special Olympics Michigan Area 2, and Grand Traverse County Senior Network and The Senior Center. Each of these organizations sees our sport, club and facility as a way to build camaraderie within their community, and between communities, to facilitate diversity, inclusion, and most importantly, belonging.

The Curling Center will also provide much-needed programming for two other populations in our region: youth and seniors. Having our own year-round ice provides opportunities for robust youth programming in the summertime, when children and teens are more free to participate. Our vision for maximizing youth opportunities over time, includes youth camps, and NMC has expressed interest in creating an intramural curling league to enhance both the health and mental wellbeing of its students.

Senior leagues will be offered during the day to promote healthy and active lifestyles at a time most convenient for this community. Many senior players also play with younger teammates and are very involved in the mentoring of young players. In curling, experience goes a very long way. It is not uncommon for seniors to compete with much younger players and win!

Curling invites anyone to experience the connection, competition and support that comes with a healthy team environment.

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROPOSED INITIATIVE

The initiative will allow us to reach approximately 1,500 people in the first year of our new facility.

Many of these new curlers will be first-time club members and facility users—all potential supporters. The conversion of even a fraction of these new users to philanthropic supporters will bolster contributed income. The positive impact of this model on our local economy will help facilitate the acquisition and retention of sponsors and advertisers, incentivized by enhanced visibility compared with our previous location.

In 2019, TCCC paid for an independent review of our 10-year Curling Center business plan by York Urbanist, a recreation planning and design firm specializing in curling center sustainability models. The resulting feasibility report determined it was economically feasible to build/operate a curling center of this magnitude, and gave us the confidence that, if we could raise the necessary philanthropic dollars, the revenue model was sound and sustainable.

We have had a balanced budget for the last eight years, even considering the limitations of our leased facility. The new facility also will allow us to host private, corporate, and community events, all sources of earned revenue.