

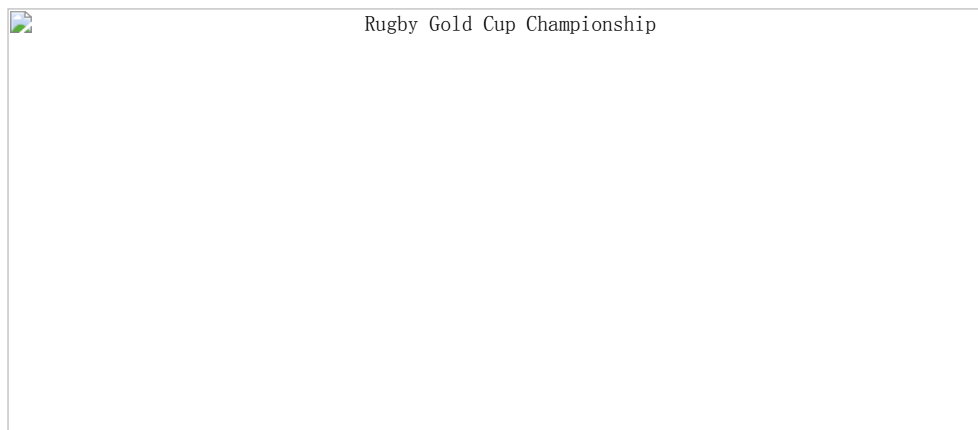
RIVER OF REFUGE PARTNERS WITH KANSAS CITY BLUES RUGBY FOR FUNDRAISER

Local rugby team will sleep on the roof of the soon-to-open transitional living center to raise money for local nonprofit; donors receive tickets to Gold Cup Championship games

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. - River of Refuge, a local nonprofit aiding homeless families, has partnered with the Kansas City Blues Rugby Club for an extreme fundraising stunt. The KC Blues Rugby players will sleep on the roof (rain, snow or clear skies) of the River of Refuge transitional living center to raise money and show support for the city's first-of-its-kind comprehensive transitional housing facility dedicated solely to homeless working families living in motels.

Every \$10 donation will receive one free ticket to the Gold Cup Championship Tournament weekend. USA Rugby named the Blues one of the four teams in the inaugural Rugby Gold Cup Tournament Nov. 13 and 15. This premiere level tournament features the top men's clubs in the country. The Kansas City Blues will host the first two rounds at the Championship Stadium of the Sporting Kansas City Training Facility at Swope Soccer Village in Kansas City, Mo.



With a 15-man roster, these close-knit teammates will go on the roof of the three-story building on the afternoon of Monday, Nov. 9, and come down Tuesday, Nov. 10, to show their support for River of Refuge, raise funds and generate awareness for homeless families in the city.

As one of the top rugby clubs in the country and the defending champions of the Midwest Rugby Premiership, the Kansas City Blues are a nationally renowned team. They make it a priority to get involved in their local community through nonprofit work and fundraising including an exclusive partnership with River of Refuge, helping homeless families throughout the metro area.

"We created a strong relationship with River of Refuge last year and are excited to be working with this organization again," said Kansas City Blues Rugby Club President, Derek Mannell. "Last year we were able to raise thousands of dollars in a similar fundraising stunt. We're happy to get involved again this year to do what we can to help open the doors of River of Refuge so they can better serve homeless Kansas City families."

The Kansas City Blues plans a practice training session on the grounds of the River of Refuge at 4 p.m. Monday, Nov. 9, prior to "taking their position" on the roof at 5:30 p.m.

Rugby team members and former team members will approach friends, family, business associates and the general public to raise funds through the website www.rooftopblues.com, where there is an easy-to-use, safe online donation process. Players individual web cameras will broadcast live the activities of the Blues teammates as they camp out on the roof and use social media to spread the awareness of their fundraising stunt.

This second Rooftop Blues event will aid River of Refuge to open its first 11 apartments, which will offer free temporary refuge for working parents and their children in a single location. The former Park Lane Hospital sat vacant for more than a decade before River of Refuge purchased it and began rehabbing the building.

"The Blues partnership has been a tremendous community asset to River of Refuge and is exactly the kind of thing we enjoy being a part of. It helps us raise the funds we need to open our doors to help families and it helps us build awareness for the dire problem of homelessness," said John Wiley, founder and president of River of Refuge.

Some data compiled by River of Refuge:

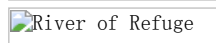
- An estimated 300 to 400 working families are living in motels with their children throughout greater Kansas City on any given night.
- River of Refuge had to turn away 105 families in 2014 because it did not have the space to house them nor the funds to support them.
- River of Refuge's mission is to help working families get out of motels, teach them to live independently (operating on a budget they already earn at their jobs) and find permanent affordable homes.

"Because there has been incredible growth in family homelessness in the past several years due to the economic recession, there just simply aren't enough beds available at family homeless shelters to serve the number of local families looking for shelter," Wiley said. "We hope that when we open River of Refuge with the community's help, we can reduce the burden on the area's family homeless shelters, which we know are already at capacity."

River of Refuge will open its transitional family housing facility in the former Park Lane Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., in February to serve as a regional lodging complex for families. The complex, located at 5155 Raytown Road, will provide an alternative to pay-by-the-week motels. It also will offer a complete program for transition to self sufficiency including financial counseling and access to significant community resources needed to succeed in finding permanent housing.

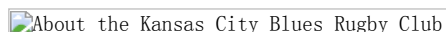





 John Wiley founded River of Refuge in 2009 after he witnessed a group of children boarding a school bus from the parking lot of an old, run-down motel near his home in Raytown, Mo. River of Refuge was created to specifically address thousands of working families who have become trapped in pay-by-the-week motels throughout greater Kansas City and the suburbs. For more information, please visit www.riverofrefuge.com.

River of Refuge





 Established in 1966, the Kansas City Blues Rugby Club is nearing 50 years of success both regionally and nationally. The Blues pride themselves on winning with homegrown talent, which translates to a strong commitment to its community. Through youth rugby coaching and other philanthropic endeavors, the Blues are generously involved in a variety of community programs. For more information, please visit www.kcblues.org.

Rooftop Blues February 2014 Event

In February 2014, the Blues announced a unique partnership with River of Refuge. Local community leader John Wiley founded River of Refuge in 2009 after he witnessed a group of children loading a school bus from the parking lot of an old, run-down motel near his home in Raytown, Mo. River of Refuge was created to specifically address thousands of working families who have become trapped in pay-by-the-week motels throughout Greater Kansas City and into the suburbs.

An estimated 400 working families are now living in motels with their children on any given night throughout the metro. Blues Hall of Famer Kirk Miles connected the Blues with John, and in March the Blues partnered in the inaugural Rooftop Blues, an attention-getting fundraiser to help open the city's first-of-its-kind comprehensive transitional housing dedicated solely to assisting families trapped in pay-by-the-week motels. On Thursday, March 6, players ascended the rooftop of River of Refuge at the former Park Lane Hospital building at 5155 Raytown Road, intending to stay up there and 'camp-out for cash' for as long as it took to raise \$25,000. The funds would benefit River of Refuge, a soon-to-open 11-unit apartment complex designed to offer resources and transitional refuge to homeless working parents and their children.

Over the course of 48 hours, 31 players and coaches spent time on the roof - with each staying at least one overnight - raising money for River of Refuge. Local Television stations KMBC 9, Fox 4, KCTV 5, and KSHB KC Live all provided daily coverage, and the Blues social media push via Facebook and Twitter did the rest. As of 6:30pm on March 8th, the Blues had eclipsed their goal of \$25,000 by raising \$29,498.35 for River of Refuge! As of March 15th, donations reached over \$32,000 for River of Refuge! We couldn't feel more fortunate to be a part of such an incredible event, and truly appreciate all of the support.

Special thanks to John Wiley and Kirk Miles for letting the Blues get involved in such an important project, to all of the people who helped organize the event, and to the players for putting in their time on the roof. And thanks especially to the countless donors who made this happen! Kansas City is a better place because of this kind of generosity and partnership.

 Rooftop Blues

 Rooftop Blues Event Photos

Click the links below for additional photos from the Rooftop Blues February 2014 event.

[Rooftop Blues Day 1](#)
[Rooftop Blues Day 2](#)

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