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# Boys & Girls Club eyes Madison Sam's Club building for sports complex

CHRIS RICKERT crickert@madison.com 9 hrs ago



Sam's Club, 7050 Watts Rd. on Madison's Far West Side, will close Jan. 26. The Boys & Girls Club of Dane County would like Walmart to donate the building to the Club, which would convert it into a sports and job-training complex.

BARRY ADAMS, STATE JOURNAL

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The head of the local Boys & Girls Club is asking Walmart to give the agency a soon-to-be-vacated Sam's Club building on Madison's Far West Side so that it can be converted into a regional sports and job-training complex.

Michael Johnson, president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, said he mailed a letter today to the company's headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas. Walmart announced Thursday that the-106,000 square-foot Sam's Club at 7050 Watts Road would close Jan. 26.

In addition to the building, Johnson is asking the world's largest retailer to provide a "lead investment" to convert the building and a "Walmart space planner to work with our volunteers to redesign the location."

Johnson said the idea for the request came from his 13-year-old son.

His family shops at Sam's Club and when they discovered it would be closing, his son said, "dad, why don't they turn it into a sports complex for kids?"

"It might be a long shot," Johnson said, "but I think it's worth asking so that's why I'm doing it."

Johnson said that if Walmart donates the building, "I think I could raise \$1 million in a month" for renovations.

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