

Fund-raising

First, obtain seed money from private sources. A lot of it. This is the equivalent of venture capital, and enough is required so that work can start right away. Tony Kiser (through his family foundation) and Bob Tisch each contributed \$1 million to get things started. The \$2 million they contributed was in turn matched by the City, for a total of \$8 million. This was more than enough money to build the organization and complete the first project: the athletic fields at George Washington High School.

TTF regularly brought its potential donors to George Washington High School, at the northern end of Manhattan, to let them see for themselves how other school sites could be similarly transformed. George Washington was a showcase field, and for prospective funders to experience it firsthand was the best kind of sales pitch.

The completion of the George Washington field generated fund-raising momentum. Michael Bloomberg, before he became mayor, contributed \$1 million

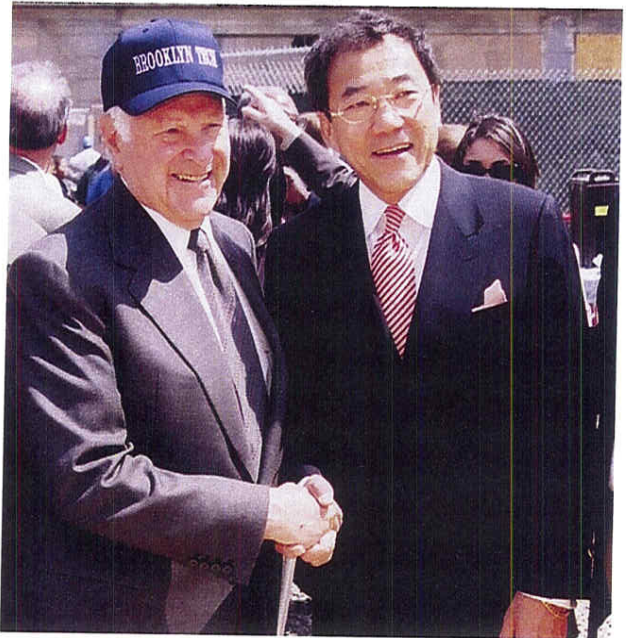
through the Bloomberg Foundation. Other early supporters were the Leucadia National Corporation, the Annenberg Foundation, the Charles Hayden Foundation, the Booth Ferris Foundation, the Heckscher Foundation for Children, and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. With many more millions of dollars of private funds now secured, TTF qualified for greater amounts of public money.



Above are members of the Heckscher family with Bob Tisch and Richard Kahan. Peter Sloane (not shown) and his mother, Virginia (second from left), championed TTF's cause early on and obtained significant funding through the Heckscher Foundation for Children.

Develop a Fund-raising Style

Take the Field invented a fund-raising technique that became known as “Breakfast with Bob.” Bob Tisch organized regular breakfasts at the Loews-owned Regency Hotel with potential donors. These were typical of the “power breakfasts” that his hotel restaurant had become famous for. Bob’s guests included sports team owners, politicians, members of the media, CEOs of New York corporations, real estate developers, and public relations experts. On the subject of TTF, he had gained a reputation for being determined and persuasive. As one breakfast guest turned donor put it, “Bob may have paid for breakfast, but it could still cost you a few hundred thousand dollars.”



Bob Tisch with Charles Wang, co-founder of Computer Associates Inc., owner of the New York Islanders, and alumnus of Brooklyn Technical High School (Brooklyn). Wang was one of Bob’s breakfast guests and a major Take the Field donor. “Breakfast with Bob” started at the Regency Hotel on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, continued with a site visit to a school, and typically ended with a financial pledge.

This facility will encourage the physical education that greatly increases children’s health, cultivates strong self-esteem, and promotes teamwork and discipline.

—Charles B. Wang, Brooklyn Tech alumnus
