

One infrastructure, many lifelines



Cisco and Intel® partnering in innovation



Boys Town, a century-old nonprofit serving at-risk youth, has implemented a software-defined architecture to support diverse, nationwide operations.

Boys Town will do whatever it takes to help at-risk youth and families. And over the course of a century, the services it provides have expanded and multiplied in dramatic and impactful ways.

What started as a single boarding house for homeless boys in 1917—based on the vision and dedication of Father Edward Flanagan—is now one of the largest nonprofit agencies focused on child welfare in the United States. Its primary campus in Omaha, Nebraska, is an entire village that includes homes, schools, hospitals and clinics, a career center, police and fire departments, a credit union, and even a fully regulated SEC trading company. And its reach extends nationwide with a suicide and counseling hotline, network of in-home consultants, and 19 additional locations.

Everything is dedicated to treating the behavioral, emotional, and physical problems of children and families. Each year, Boys Town touches the lives of more than two million people.

And those interactions are now fully supported by a software-defined architecture.

AUTOMATION, MANAGEMENT, SECURITY

With such a varied and extensive set of programs, facilities, and services, it is imperative that Boys Town uses technology to connect, monitor, and enable all of its operations.

“We need enterprise-class solutions that can benefit many groups and do many things,” says Jamie Pearson, vice president of IT at Boys Town. “As a nonprofit, we don’t have the people or the budget to support a bunch of standalone environments. And yet, we need to provide technology for education, healthcare, banking, and other entities.”

To do so, Pearson wanted a software-defined architecture. One that could deliver network service segmentation, self-service provisioning, and flexibility to support new applications—all with centralized management and policy-driven automation.

A multi-pod implementation of Cisco® Application Centric Infrastructure (Cisco ACI™) met all of those requirements and more. The industry’s leading software-defined networking

(SDN) solution, Cisco ACI helps automate, manage, and secure distributed IT resources and applications.

“Our organization continues to make technology investments to ensure Boys Town can be a leader and innovator of child care services,” says Pearson. “ACI is really exciting because it enables us to move in any direction to support and enable our internal development teams and customers.”

ADVANCING THE MISSION

With a common, software-defined architecture, Boys Town was able to merge its two data centers into a single, logical infrastructure. This “stretched” environment has simplified everything from network engineering to web infrastructure to backup and disaster recovery, says Matt Welna, senior director of IT operations at Boys Town.

“It’s a powerful core backbone that has simplified all of our IT operations, opening up a host of IT and business possibilities. Questions like ‘How much will this cost?’ or ‘Is it even feasible?’ have been replaced with ‘How fast can we get it up and running?’” Welna explains.

Boys Town is in the process of building a new enterprise-class private cloud with the Intel® Xeon® processor-based Cisco Unified Computing System™. It’s establishing multi-tenancy for its internal departments as well as external foster care organizations. It’s implementing self-service provisioning, with showback and chargeback capabilities. It’s developing container-based applications. And it’s improving the security and availability of its hosted web environment, which supports the Boys Town National Research Hospital and affiliates across the United States.

One infrastructure to create many lifelines.

“Most people invest in software-defined architecture to reduce their costs or ease technology administration. We did it to advance our mission, impact more lives, and change the way America cares for its families and children,” says Pearson. “Father Flanagan was ahead of his time and would think outside of the box to help kids and families. We feel like we are continuing that legacy with advanced technology.”

LEARN MORE ABOUT SDN

For more information about Cisco ACI, the industry’s leading SDN solution, visit www.cisco.com/go/aci.

