



**ROCKETOWN**

**CHEATHAM COUNTY**

# Letter from the Founder

Dear Friends and Neighbors of Cheatham County,

I am filled with gratitude and excitement as I write to you today about a vision that is very close to my heart-- a vision of expanding Rocketown to Cheatham County.

When we first opened Rocketown over three decades ago, we did so with a simple but powerful mission. Since that time, Rocketown has touched the lives of countless teens, offering them not just a place to hang out, but a place to belong—a place where they are loved, valued, and offered the hope of Christ.

The impact we've seen in Nashville has been nothing short of miraculous. Rocketown has become a beacon of hope for teens, many of whom were searching for direction and purpose in their lives. It is a place where friendships are planted, talents are nurtured, and lives are transformed.

Now, we are looking to bring that same vision and mission to Cheatham County.

I have heard your community's call for more resources and opportunities for teens—a call for a place that will carry them through the challenges of growing up in today's world. We believe that Rocketown can meet this need and more.

Cheatham County is a special place, filled with wonderful people who care deeply about their children and their future. We see the expansion of Rocketown here as not just an opportunity to serve, but as a partnership with a community that already embodies so much of what Rocketown stands for: love, hope, and a commitment to making a difference in the lives of the next generation.

As we move forward, I want to personally invite you to be a part of this journey. Your prayers, your support, and your passion for the young people of Cheatham County will be crucial to making this vision a reality. Together, we can build something truly special—something that will impact generations to come.

Thank you for welcoming us into your community. I look forward to the amazing things we will accomplish together.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael W. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "S".

Michael W. Smith  
Founder, Rocketown

# Why Cheatham County?



Cheatham County is filled with a growing teen population, making it an ideal place for youth to connect, grow, and thrive. More importantly, it is a place where the future is being shaped every day—by the hands and hearts of its young people. In a community with such a solid foundation, Rockettown stands ready to be the hub where teens in Cheatham County can truly shine.

Because the community of Cheatham County cares so deeply about its young people, concerns have been raised about the troubling rise in drug and alcohol use among youth—a clear signal that alternatives are needed. A significant portion of the young population lack access to positive, structured activities, which can lead them down dangerous paths.



Rockettown offers a proven solution to this challenge. For over three decades, Rockettown has been a pillar for teens, providing a safe space where they can explore their interests, build positive relationships, and develop crucial life skills. This facility will not only serve as a refuge from the negative influences of drugs and alcohol but also as a hub of creativity, learning, and spiritual growth.

# Response to Concern

Local surveys and community meetings frequently **highlight substance abuse as a top concern for residents**, particularly the impact on youth and the need for more preventative programs.

## Opioid Crisis Impact

Tennessee has one of the highest opioid prescription rates in the country. Cheatham County has been significantly impacted by the opioid crisis, with prescription rates historically higher than the national average. The high prescription rate has contributed to a significant number of opioid-related overdose deaths in Cheatham County. The county's overdose death rate is approximately 29.5 per 100,000 people, compared to the national rate of about 21.6 per 100,000 people.

## Youth & Substance and Alcohol Abuse

Surveys have indicated that a significant number of teens in Cheatham County report have used drugs, particularly marijuana and prescription drugs. The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services reports that about 15% of high school students in rural Tennessee communities, including Cheatham County, have used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription.

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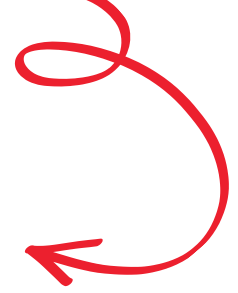
**The number of drug-related arrests in Cheatham County has been rising, particularly for offenses related to methamphetamine, opioids, and marijuana. These arrests often involve young adults, **underscoring the need for preventative programs.****

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Sources:  
Cheatham County Community Health Assessment  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Tennessee Department of Health  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
County Health Rankings & Roadmaps



# Project Overview



The community and its leadership has highlighted critical needs within Cheatham County county—**particularly the need for a dedicated space that supports the well-being of its youth, fosters health and wellness, and serves as a central hub for community engagement.**

In response to these needs, we propose launching **Rocketown in Cheatham County**, a facility with a proven track record of transforming the lives of young people through positive experiences in the arts, recreation, and entertainment. Rocketown’s success in Nashville, where it has become a beacon of hope and opportunity for thousands of teens, demonstrates its potential to make a profound impact on Cheatham County community as well.

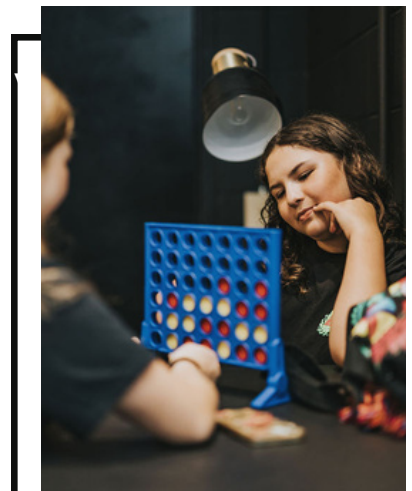
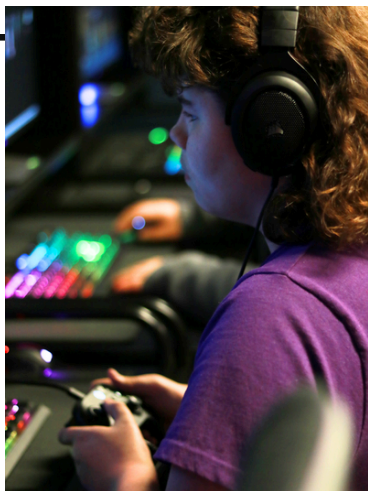
By aligning with the goals and values outlined by the community, Rocketown can provide a safe, supportive environment where youth can belong and offer programs that address the county’s desire for the next generation. This proposal outlines how Rocketown can meet these needs and why Cheatham County is the ideal location for this space.

## Mission

A place for all young people that offers hope and changes futures through Christ’s love.

## Vision

To be the place of peace, purpose, and possibilities for young people that offers hope and changes futures through Christ’s love.



# The Approach

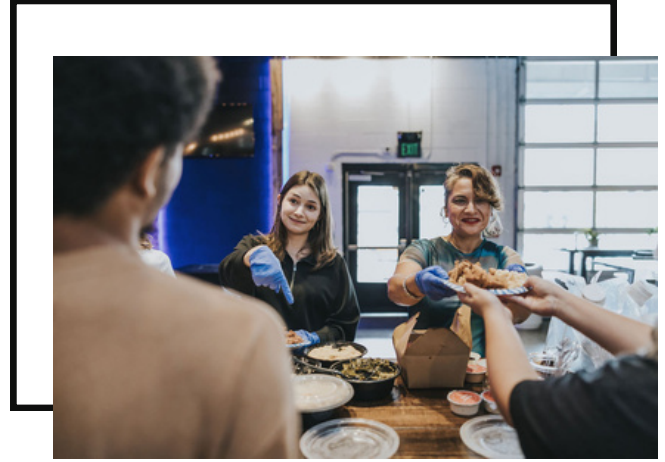
*Offering hope, together.*

## Attraction-Based Model

Rocketown's approach is an "attraction-based" model, designed to engage teens through activities they are naturally drawn to. This attraction-based strategy is not just about providing entertainment; it's about meeting teens where they are, tapping into their passions, and using these interests as a gateway to deeper engagement, mentorship, and the hope of Christ. By drawing teens in through activities they love, Rocketown creates meaningful connections that can guide them toward stronger sense of belonging within their community.

## Formation of Support Networks

Rocketown can tap into this existing momentum by engaging local leaders, parents, and volunteers in similar support networks. By doing so, Rocketown not only builds a strong base of financial and operational support but also fosters a sense of ownership among residents.

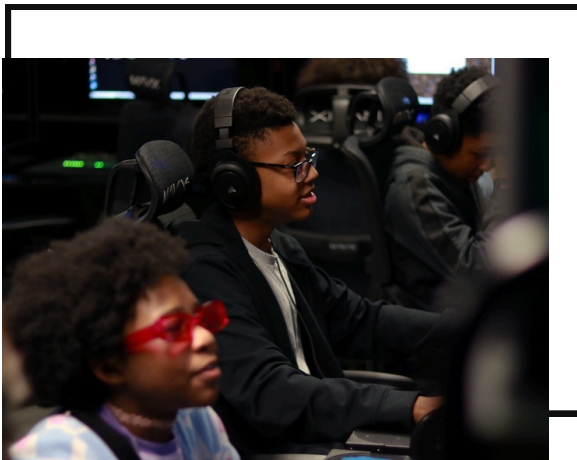


## Long-Term Commitment

The establishment of Rocketown in Cheatham County is not just about building a facility; it's about creating a sustainable, long-term resource for the youth in the community. With the community's strong support, this project has the potential to benefit generations to come. The initial enthusiasm from residents and the leadership's commitment to creating a positive impact will provide a solid foundation for Rocketown's success in Cheatham County.

## Community-Driven Programming

One of Rocketown's strengths is its ability to tailor programs to the specific needs of the communities it serves. In Cheatham County, we can develop programs that directly address the interests and concerns of local residents, whether it's through arts and music programs, sports leagues, or job readiness training. This community-driven approach not only ensures that Rocketown will meet the real needs of Cheatham County but also will create a deep, ongoing connection with the people it serves.



At Rocketown, we see something truly special in Cheatham County. We see a community that cares deeply about its youth, a community that recognizes the importance of giving its youth the best possible start in life.

We see parents, educators, and leaders who are committed to building a bright future for every child, ensuring they have the support, encouragement, and opportunities they need to thrive.

**So, why Cheatham County?** Because this is a community that understands the importance of investing in its future, and we would be *honored* to be a part of that journey with you.

**Together**, we can create even more opportunities for the young people of Cheatham County to shine, learn, and lead in ways that will benefit the entire community for years to come.

