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Then-Gov. Tom Ridge, right, and Joe Paterno attend a Penn State fundraiser called The Second Mile with Kerry Collins in 1997. Over the years, Penn State strengthened its brand through Second Mile programs and events.

A SPECIAL REPORT: THE SECOND MILE AND PENN STATE

ONE BIG FAMILY

PSU and charity are so closely tied, one's fate affects the other

BY DONALD GILLILAND, JEFF FRANTZ AND SARA GANIM • The Patriot-News

The Penn State Nittany Lion mascot wore a Second Mile T-shirt.

There's no more striking image of the bond that existed between the university and the kid's charity founded by Jerry Sandusky.

The charity was one of President George H. W. Bush's "Thousand Points of Light." Now its founder faces massive charges of child sexual abuse in a scandal that decimated the leadership and reputation of Penn State.

Gov. Tom Corbett has said the at-

torney general's investigation is now looking at what The Second Mile did — or didn't do.

The Second Mile and Penn State were locked in an embrace so tight that the fate of one inevitably impacts the other.

The charity basked in the imprimatur of Penn State. Sandusky ran it at the same time he was the Nittany Lions' greatest defensive coach. Joe Paterno served as master of ceremonies at its biggest fundraiser. Penn State players helped with fundraising.

When Sandusky announced his

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The Second Mile distributed Penn State football cards in hundreds of Pennsylvania school districts.

retirement in 1999, saying he wanted to spend more time with The Second Mile, Paterno called him “a person of great character and integrity.” That’s all the validation many people needed.

At that time, The Second Mile had an annual budget of \$894,000 and just more than \$1 million in the bank. It now has an annual budget of \$2.4 million and almost \$9 million in the bank.

At a university that makes a production of inducting graduates into the alumni “family,” those who wanted to be philanthropic turned easily to The Second Mile. It was seen as a Penn State “family” business.

Nearly all the top employees at the charity had Penn State degrees.

The son of Penn State’s board chairman served on The Second Mile’s board. More than three-quarters of the current Second Mile board are Penn State alumni.

Penn State students served as interns at The Second Mile, soliciting donations from local businesses for charity events, and received university course credit for doing so.

Penn State football players volunteered for The Second Mile. And The Second Mile featured Penn State

players on inspirational sports cards it distributed to children in 421 of Pennsylvania’s 500 school districts.

It was great public relations for Penn State’s athletic program. More than 1 million sets of cards were distributed.

Teachers and school counselors used them as rewards for good behavior. One school counselor told The Second Mile in 2007: “The students know when new cards should be arriving and ask for them. Some of the kids will do special things to gain cards for their collection.”

Penn State’s Prevention Research Center partnered with The Second Mile to study the effectiveness of its programs. The center’s director, Mark Greenberg, recently joined the charity’s board of directors.

Big donors

The Second Mile board has close — and very lucrative — ties to the university.

Dorothy “Dottie” Huck and her husband, Lloyd, are big Penn State donors. In total, the Hucks have given the university more than \$20 million.

Lloyd Huck, a former chairman of the board at Merck, sits on the Penn State board of trustees. Dottie Huck

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At-risk kids swim at a Second Mile Summer Challenge Camp in Berks County in 1998. The Second Mile raised about \$17 million between 2002 and late 2008, when new charges surfaced and Jerry Sandusky stepped away from the charity's programs.

raising," she said, like she'd done in the years before Penn State: hosting events, an annual appeal, applying to foundations and corporations.

The Second Mile "certainly has a much wider donor base than just Penn State," Marshall said.

But Penn State alumni were critically important to the charity, particularly the football alumni. Sandusky coached 10 All-America linebackers, giving Penn State the nickname "Linebacker U."

The theme of The Second Mile's annual "Celebration of Excellence" fundraiser four years ago was "A Salute to Linebacker U."

But sometimes it was difficult to tell who was saluting whom. "Several generations of former Penn State linebacking greats" were there to raise money for Sandusky's charity.

John Skorupan, who played from 1970 to 1972, told The Patriot-News: "I think all of us would do anything for Jerry. He's been an important part of our lives, in growing up and maturing and through our NFL careers."

"If Jerry or The Second Mile call, we're going to come," he said.

People paid to eat dinner and listen to football legends. When those legends took the podium, they paid homage to Sandusky and The Second Mile.

Former NFL player and ESPN commentator Jon Ritchie, who did not attend Penn State but knew Sandusky well, said he would go to Second Mile benefits and speak. "Every time I was up there, I was just pouring out the way that I felt about Jerry," Ritchie said recently on ESPN. "My reality was that Jerry Sandusky was Mother Teresa."

Ritchie was not alone.

In 2004, Sandusky took the pulpit during Sunday morning service at Grace United Methodist Church in Hummelstown and told the congregation: "My parents reached out to people who were handicapped or rejected by society and made them feel special. ... I wanted to do the same." Congregation members said they found him inspirational.

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DAN GLEITER, The Patriot-News

Second Mile offices are on Rosemont Avenue in Lower Allen Twp. Penn State University donated money to the charity last year, as did the Penn State Altoona Campus and the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.

A celebrity aura

For members of the Penn State “family,” the roles of coach, father figure and icon were not always distinguishable.

“When I first retired from professional football,” Ritchie said, “my first thought was, ‘I should call Jerry and see if he’ll let me join The Second Mile.’”

In 2004, NFL greats Lydell Mitchell and Franco Harris, former Penn State teammates under Sandusky, helped to raise money for The Second Mile through charity golf tournaments.

Harris, who helped the Pittsburgh Steelers win four Super Bowls in the 1970s, posed for photos on the golf course with Louis Sheetz and his nephew. Sheetz was representing the charity’s newest corporate sponsor, his convenience-store chain Sheetz Inc.

The football stars not only helped The Second Mile attract donors by lending their celebrity aura to its functions, but they donated money themselves.

Mitchell and Harris run Superbakery Inc., which sells nutritional doughnuts to school districts in all 50 states. Superbakery has donated

to The Second Mile every year since 2005.

Former NFL head coach Dick Vermeil was master of ceremonies for the charity’s Celebration of Excellence fundraiser in 2000. Vermeil Enterprises Inc. has been a contributor to The Second Mile multiple times since then.

Internal investigation

The university, meanwhile, basked in a certain afterglow of goodwill from being so closely related to the charity.

It opened its campuses for Second Mile summer camps.

In 2002, the same year the university barred Sandusky from bringing boys to the locker rooms, it sold 40 acres of land to The Second Mile to build a “Center for Excellence.”

According to the Centre Daily Times, the charity was allowed to purchase the land for “\$151,500 less than a Pittsburgh man paid for it in 1990” and \$15,470 less than the deed says Penn State paid for it in 1999.

University officials contend the deed is inaccurate and that they sold the property to The Second Mile for the

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same price they paid for it.

Either way, Penn State strengthened its “brand” through Second Mile programs and events.

The Nittany Lion mascot in The Second Mile T-shirt was a regular feature at fundraisers and at programs for the children.

But prosecutors now say running the charity gave Sandusky “access to hundreds of boys, many of whom were vulnerable due to their social situations.” They say Sandusky invited certain boys to join him at Penn State games, tailgate parties and workouts, after which he would shower with the boys and allegedly sexually assault them.

They also allege that Sandusky brought victims with him to Penn State bowl games, traveling and staying in hotels with the team. Prosecutors say Penn State officials were aware of this when an allegation was brought to them in 2002 but did not notify law enforcement.

Penn State officials did notify The Second Mile, according to the grand jury. In fact, the university supposedly banned Sandusky from bringing Second Mile boys into the football locker room, though a top official admitted the ban was “unenforceable.”

Charity officials have said they were merely told an employee was “uncomfortable” about seeing Sandusky in the locker room shower with a boy, and that an internal investigation revealed no wrongdoing.

Sandusky continued his Second Mile activities and fundraising after the 2002 and received an annual consultant fee of \$57,000 from the charity.

The Second Mile raised approximately \$17 million between 2002 and late 2008, when new charges surfaced and Sandusky quietly stepped away

from the charity’s programs.

The Patriot-News has learned that in 2008 Second Mile executive Katherine Genovese told a person in authority that the charity already had concerns about Sandusky and certain boys.

That conversation is said to have occurred around the same time that a Clinton County boy came forward with detailed allegations of sexual abuse. Genovese, Second Mile’s vice president of development, is married to Jack Raykovitz, who resigned on Sunday as Second Mile CEO.

Even after 2008, Sandusky continued fundraising and Penn State continued to send its Nittany Lion mascot to help out.

In 2009, when the mascot posed for photos next to Sandusky and Second Mile donors on a golf course in Chester County, Sandusky was already under investigation by the grand jury. It had been eight months since he’d told The Second Mile board that he was facing allegations of child abuse.

Penn State University and its “family” continued to support The Second Mile through 2010.

The university donated money to the charity last year, as did the Penn State Altoona Campus, the Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center and the Lake Erie chapter of the Penn State Alumni Association.

The Patriot-News donated more than \$2,000 to The Second Mile in 2010.

A host of alumni continued to make donations.

One, remarkably, did not.

Over the years, Jerry Sandusky and his wife had consistently donated at least \$1,000 back to the charity they founded.

Last year, they stopped.