



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida Receives  
\$1.5 Million Capital Gift from The Darden  
Restaurants, Inc. Foundation**

**ORLANDO, April 1, 2019** – Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida (BGCCF) has received a \$1.5 million gift from The Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation toward the construction of the Jacqueline Bradley and Clarence Otis Family Branch in Orlando and the expansion of the Joe R. Lee Branch in Eatonville.

With this most recent gift, Darden Restaurants and its Foundation's cumulative support of BGCCF now exceeds \$5 million. One million dollars of the gift will offset construction costs for the new Bradley-Otis Branch in Orlando's West Lakes Community, near Camping World Stadium, and \$500,000 will go toward the 14,000-square-foot expansion of the Joe R. Lee Branch, which will double that Club's service capacity. Combined, the two Clubs are expected to serve more than 500 children daily from two of Central Florida's lowest-income neighborhoods.

Through the years, Darden and its leaders have been among BGCCF's most steadfast supporters. The Eatonville Club is named for Darden's first CEO, Joe R. Lee, who helped finance its construction in 2011. Clarence Otis, who succeeded Lee, served as CEO of Darden from 2004 to 2014, and his wife, Jacqueline Bradley, is a 20-year board member of BGCCF.

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***Darden gifts \$1.5 million to Boys & Girls Clubs (cont'd).***

“Joe and Clarence played significant roles in building Darden into a great company,” said Gene Lee, President & CEO of Darden. “Joe and his wife, Dale, and Clarence and Jacqui have also made significant impacts in helping shape our community. I am honored to call each of them a friend, and all of us at Darden are proud to support them and BGCCF to help children in Central Florida reach their full potential.”

“Jacqui and I are deeply grateful that Darden has honored the Bradley-Otis Branch with such a generous contribution,” said Otis. “With this gift, the Foundation is helping transform the lives of some of our community’s most vulnerable children. Darden has a rich legacy of community building, especially in Central Florida, and that pioneering spirit continues. I am so proud to be a member of the Darden family.”

“We are profoundly thankful for Darden Restaurants’ partnership and significant investment in our organization for many years,” said Gary Cain, President & CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida. “From former CEO Joe R. Lee’s chairing our first capital campaign, to numerous volunteers who have mentored children and advocated for our mission, to the very significant capital gifts that have been made, Darden Restaurants’ involvement has been transformative.”

There will be a groundbreaking ceremony for the Joe R. Lee Branch expansion on Thursday, April 18 at 10 a.m. at the Eatonville Club, located at 400b Ruffel Street, Eatonville, 32751. The groundbreaking for the Bradley–Otis Branch is expected to take place in late summer 2019.

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**About Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida:**

Since 1944, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida has provided at-risk children from the local community, between the ages of 6 and 18, with a safe place to learn and grow. Our membership totals more than 15,000 young people at 35 Clubs and middle school sites in 7 counties. The mission of Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. Learn more at 407.841.6855, [www.bgccf.org](http://www.bgccf.org), [facebook.com/bgccf](https://facebook.com/bgccf), or Instagram [bgccf\\_clubs](https://instagram.com/bgccf_clubs).

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