FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Boys & Girls Clubs of Polk County to Host Ribbon Cutting for $4.8 Million Renovation of George Jenkins Memorial Club

Winter Haven, FL – April 11, 2025 — Boys & Girls Clubs of Polk County is proud to announce the grand reopening and official ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly renovated George Jenkins Memorial Club. The celebration will take place on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at 2400 Havendale Boulevard in Winter Haven, marking the completion of a $4.8 million renovation that will greatly expand the Club's services, resources, and impact on local youth.

The George Jenkins Memorial Club has long been a cornerstone of youth development in Winter Haven. Its history dates back to 1955. Later, Alice and Ralph Thompson, local philanthropists, donated additional land along the shoreline of Lake Cannon to the former Citrus Center Boys Club, adding 200 feet of valuable lakefront property. These early acts of generosity laid the groundwork for decades of impact.

The current renovation is part of the organization's "Kampaign for Kids" capital campaign, launched in 2019 to address aging infrastructure and accommodate the growing needs of families across the county. With the leadership of campaign co-chairs Wesley and Ashley Barnett, the commitment of community donors, and the guidance of the Board of Directors, the George Jenkins Memorial Club has undergone a transformational upgrade. The revitalized facility now offers modern learning spaces, a dedicated teen center, upgraded athletic and recreational areas, enhanced security, and new technology resources—all designed to help young people thrive in a safe and inspiring environment. The facility renovation also added a kitchen, recording studio and dedicated tutoring space.

The "Kampaign for Kids" capital campaign also supported updates to the James J. Musso Club in Lakeland which were completed in 2024 and the creation of the Mulberry Workforce Readiness Center that is currently under construction in Mulberry.

"This project is a tribute not just to the Jenkins family, Publix, the Barnett Family, and all of the Winter Haven businesspeople and concerned citizens who kept this enterprise going during the tough years," said Steve Giordano, President & CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Polk County. "It is a declaration to the thousands of children who will play, learn, and be nourished here that they matter and deserve this. We are so grateful to be the stewards of these great futures in this beautiful facility."

The ribbon cutting ceremony will include remarks from local leaders such as Mayor Birdsong, BGC Polk Board Member Kerry Wilson, and Kampaign for Kids Chairperson Wesley Barnett followed by tours of the new space, and light refreshments. The community is warmly invited to attend and join in celebrating this exciting milestone for the youth of Winter Haven. It will begin at 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2025.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Polk County
Boys & Girls Clubs of Polk County serve thousands of children and teens each day through afterschool and summer programs that focus on academic success, healthy lifestyles, and character and leadership development. With 10 Club sites across the county, the organization is dedicated to ensuring every young person—especially those who need us most—has access to a safe, supportive environment and opportunities for a great future.

To learn more about the organization or how you can support its mission, visit **bgcpolk.org**.

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