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PRESS RELEASE

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**Contact: Michelle Wilson, Director of Development
Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast
228-896-3770 or 228-348-3204
mwilson@bgcgulfcoast.org**

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE GULF COAST DAY FOR KIDS SET FOR SEPTEMBER 25;
CLUBS PREPARE FOR FUN-FILLED DAY CELEBRATING KIDS**

Pledge to Play Theme Encourages Spending Meaningful Time with Youth Through Active Play

Gulfport, MS – Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast (BGCGC) is teeing up to celebrate “Boys & Girls Clubs Day for Kids,” (BGC Day for Kids) an annual event highlighting the value of meaningful time between caring adults and children on Saturday, September 25. This year’s theme is Pledge to Play and Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) is asking adults to spend meaningful time with a young person by engaging in active play. BGC Day for Kids will be celebrated with hundreds of parents and kids participating in events at all of our locations in Hancock and Harrison Counties.

BGCGC joins hundreds of other organizations with Day for Kids events planned nationwide (all events are open to the public). To find an event in your area, visit our website at www.bgcgulfcoast.org.

BGC Day for Kids Pledge to Play aligns with BGCGC’s overall initiative to help young people make healthy lifestyle choices – ultimately establishing a sound foundation for success now and later. Play is great for young people and fosters creativity, imagination exploration and helps to develop and master various skills. Adults can take the Day for Kids pledge by visiting dayforkids.org.

While many Americans recognize the link between spending meaningful time with their kids and the tough issues facing young people, they say they don’t have the time, skills or resources to do as much for their children as they feel they should. Through Day for Kids, BGCA is encouraging every American to play a part in ensuring a brighter future for our young people by getting involved and becoming more engaged in a young person’s life.

“Boys & Girls Clubs Day for Kids is set aside to foster stronger relationships between adults and children by educating them of the importance of spending meaningful time together,” says Greg Gipson, Director of Operations for BGCGC. “BGC Day for Kids will hopefully help facilitate open communication again between parents, mentors and kids that will reenergize the community about helping our young people reach their full potential – not just today, but all year long.”

It's no secret that America's youth need our help; less positive, meaningful time spent with caring adults can have devastating effects on kids and teens. Consider these National statistics:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, less than one-third of high school youth meet the recommended levels of physical activity.
- The average high school graduation rate is 68.8 percent.
- Duke University's Center for Child and Family Policy noted that 15-19 year-olds account for more than 20 percent of violent crimes in the United States; in 2005, 9.9 percent of youth aged 12-17 were current illicit drug users.

Regardless of background, there are no boundaries to the potential of every child. In the same way, there are no limits to the many ways in which to spend meaningful time with a young person. To assist parents, practitioners and other caring adults, BGCA has created engaging educational resources to help them encourage and develop positive relationships with kids. A year-round web site, www.dayforkids.org, provides tools, resources and tips that support their interactions with young people. The site also features a [Day for Kids Pledge](#) where adults can re-affirm their commitment to helping change a child's life.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America leads the national campaign with support from several non-profit partners, including America's Promise, Association of Children's Museums, Association for Library Services to Children, Communities in Schools, Easter Seals, Kids Sports Network, National AfterSchool Association, National Wildlife Federation, Save the Children, The Home Safety Council and Youth Service America.

BGCGC provides program opportunities for approximately 3000 boys and girls each year. The Club is open afterschool and during the summer. Youngsters interested in joining the Club, learning more about BGC Day for Kids or other youth programs can contact our Program Service Office at 228-896-3770 or visit www.bgcgulfcoast.org.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast

In 2009, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast had approximately 2500 registered members and served 1400 youth through the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast New Hope Program, which is a school based therapeutic behavioral facilitation program. Our mission is to enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

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