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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE GULF COAST RECEIVES \$7500 GRANT FROM JCPENNEY**  
*Gulf Coast Youth Provided Opportunity to Join Positive Afterschool Programs*

**Gulfport, MS** - Studies show that one out of every four children in America is left unattended between 3 and 6 p.m. each school day. Thanks to the supportive partnership with jcpenny and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, more Gulf Coast youth will now have the opportunity to attend an afterschool program. Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast was selected for a \$7500 access grant to provide parents with the opportunity to engage their children with caring, adult professionals in a safe place filled with life-enhancing programs. In addition to this grant, jcpenny Edgewater Mall Biloxi raised over \$8000 in the 2011 Pennies from Heaven Campaign and provided for a \$1000 Lights On Afterschool Grant. The total amount will be presented to Club members and staff at the jcpenny Edgewater Mall Biloxi location at 4:30p.m. on Monday, January 9.

According to the *America After 3PM* report released by the Afterschool Alliance in conjunction with jcpenny, a vast majority of parents seek the resources to engage their kids with adult role models who help foster their social, physical and academic development. By providing grants to organizations such as Boys & Girls of the Gulf Coast, jcpenny is assisting families with children who are currently not enrolled in afterschool services or are on the verge of withdrawing due to financial hardship. This local grant is part of a larger multi million-dollar distribution from jcpenny benefitting Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA), the YMCA of the USA, National 4-H and FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology).

"The availability of affordable afterschool programs continues to be an important community objective in order to meet the needs of working parents and provide endless opportunities to our local youth," said Dr. David Spinks, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast. "Participating in an afterschool program not only keeps kids safe, it engages them in a positive learning environment that helps them reach their full potential in life."

Since 1999, jcpenny has continued a long-standing relationship with BGCA in working to provide young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, with access to safe, positive afterschool environments and proven programs. jcpenny has donated more than \$30-million to help bring high quality afterschool programs to those youth who need it most. Together, jcpenny and BGCA are having a significant and positive impact on young people and families across the nation. While much work remains to be done to address the growing needs of America's youth who have no place to go after school, this long-term partnership is a powerful model for ensuring that great futures begin at Boys & Girls Club.

For additional information about the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast please contact 228-896-3770 or visit our website at [www.bgcgulfcoast.org](http://www.bgcgulfcoast.org).

**About Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast**

In 2011, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast had approximately 2800 registered members and served over 1600 youth through 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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