



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**  
OF THE GULF COAST

## Press Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast Joins National Launch of “Great Futures Start Here” PSA Campaign Directed by Ron Howard**

*National Co-Spokespersons Denzel Washington and Jennifer Lopez Lead 21 Celebrity Club Alumni  
in Call to Action on Behalf of America’s Youth*

**Gulfport, MS** -- Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast today celebrated the national launch of a star-studded new Public Service Advertising (PSA) campaign, featuring 21 notable Club alumni, dramatically showcasing the impact of the Club experience in transforming the lives of young people. The PSA made its debut during an event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

“We are very excited about the new PSA campaign because it shows the dramatic impact of the Club on young lives,” said Dr. David Spinks, Executive Director of Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast. “Just like these well-known Club alumni, we see the importance of setting high expectations for every child we serve and believe that investing in them now ensures a better future for all,” said Spinks.

The ad, which was filmed in Los Angeles in June, features 21 notable Boys & Girls Club alumni including Denzel Washington and Jennifer Lopez (co-national spokespersons), Ashanti, General Wesley Clark, Misty Copeland, John Paul DeJoria, Cuba Gooding Jr., Earvin “Magic” Johnson, Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Sugar Ray Leonard, Mario Lopez, Ne-Yo, Edward James Olmos, Lucille O’Neal, Shaquille O’Neal, Smokey Robinson, CC Sabathia, Martin Sheen, Courtney Vance, Kerry Washington, and Shaun White.

#### **Great Futures Start Here ... At Boys & Girls Clubs**

“The purpose of the Great Futures Start Here campaign is to raise awareness about the critical issues that put millions of America’s youth, and the nation’s future, at risk,” said Roxanne Spillett, President and CEO of BGCA. She cited the following statistics:

- 3 out of 10 youth will not graduate high school on time
- 30% of kids are obese and overweight
- Juvenile crime escalates during the hours of 3 – 7 p.m.
- 1 in five children live in poverty

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast believes that every child – whether living in a big city or small town – has the potential to achieve a great future. More importantly, the local Clubs here, first established in 1966 serves over 2800 youth along the Gulf Coast and reflects the findings of a national Harris Interactive survey of Club alumni, in which 57% said, “The Club saved my life.”

#### **National Spokesperson for 19 Years**

"I am a prime example of the need for a community-based safe haven like Boys & Girls Clubs," said Denzel Washington, who joined the Club in Mount Vernon, N.Y., at age six. "Without the support and mentoring of the Club, I'm afraid to think where I would be today. I certainly would not have the life I do now." Washington will celebrate 20 years as BGCA's national spokesperson in 2012.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast provides high-impact, affordable programs, and caring adult mentors, to keep kids on the path to great futures, emphasizing academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles.

The soundtrack for the PSA is the song, "I Was Here," performed by multiple Grammy-winning singer and songwriter Beyonce, and written by multiple Grammy-winning songwriter Diane Warren. The track is featured on Beyonce's latest album, "4," and was donated by Warren and Beyonce for exclusive use in the spot.

"We wanted the most powerful piece of music possible to underscore the dramatic message that what we do today to share the future of our children is very important," said director Ron Howard. "We could not have picked a more moving track. Diane's words and Beyonce's delivery are over the top."

"Boys & Girls Clubs play a critical role in the lives of young people who need them most," said Ron Howard. "We wanted this PSA to serve as a wake up call to encourage people nationwide to support local Boys & Girls Clubs, by volunteering or making a donation."

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

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

In 2010, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Gulf Coast had approximately 2800 registered members and served 1500 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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