

# Disney Awards \$1.5 Million to Support Central Florida Kids

**LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla., March 27, 2013** – Showered in red and gold confetti and sharing the stage with Mickey Mouse, Goofy and Disney Cast Members, representatives from 59 Central Florida organizations and school districts received more than \$1.5 million today as part of the Disney *Helping Kids Shine* grants program.

Disney's signature program is expected to impact approximately 70,000 local children through organizations in Central Florida that inspire creativity and innovation in children, encourage a sense of compassion for others and promote the health and well-being of families. This year's grant recipients were selected for their unique programs and services that provide kids access to school readiness programs, summer camps, music education, theatre groups, food, shelter and counseling.

"Disney's Helping Kids Shine grant recipients share our vision to inspire youth in reaching their full potential," said George A. Kalogridis, president of Walt Disney World Resort. "We are thrilled to recognize and support the tireless efforts of these organizations and hope our investment in them helps build a better future for children and families in Central Florida."

This year's grant recipients were chosen by a 17-member committee that included Cast Members, community leaders, government officials, educators and entrepreneurs. The panel noted the work of six organizations in particular for their impact on the community's most vulnerable families:

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Florida (\$100,000)
- A Gift for Teaching/A Gift for Music (\$100,000)
- Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida (\$75,000)
- School District of Osceola County (\$57,500)
- Orange County Public Schools (\$57,500)
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida (\$50,000)

"Disney continues to be a generous and involved community partner," said Gary Cain, president and chief professional officer for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida. "This grant will help us continue to operate a state-of-the-art technology program and enhance a growing performing arts initiative at our Walt Disney World Clubhouse."

During the event at the Orlando Repertory Theatre, Walt Disney World Resort President George Kalogridis presented the Orange County Public Library System with the Bob Allen Outstanding Community Service Award. This grant is given each year to recognize a local social service, environmental or humanitarian organization for outstanding work in Central Florida. The Orange County Public Library System will use the grant to fund the Summer Reading Program, an initiative that encourages and rewards youth to read and learn while school is out.

Walt Disney World focuses its philanthropic efforts on youth development, education and helping families meet basic needs. Since 1972, Walt Disney World has awarded more than \$15 million to benefit local nonprofit organizations.

To watch the video from the event, click [here](#).

To view the 2013 Disney Helping Kids Shine Grant Recipients, click [here](#).