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## **EPISCOPAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES RECEIVES \$25K GRANT FROM THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP**

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla.**, February 14, 2022 – THE PLAYERS Championship has awarded Episcopal Children's Services (ECS) a substantial grant to support the organization's Outdoor Play and Learning Project. This grant of \$25,000 will fund the outdoor project at one of the organization's Early Head Start centers in Northwest Jacksonville.

The center is located in the heart of one of the most challenging areas of Northwest Jacksonville, where over 40% of the population earns less than the federal poverty level and the crime rate is among the highest in the city. Despite these disadvantages, children and families deserve the high-quality early education offered by Episcopal Children's Services so they can enter school ready to learn and succeed.

Outdoor play is just as important as indoor learning and activities, as both are an integral part of early learning and development. This donation allows the center to have an Infant/Toddler Play area specifically designed to encourage the physical, emotional, creative, and mental development of infants and toddlers as well as integrating art, music and nature experiences that build gross and fine motor skills. Because the children who attend ECS often live in unsafe neighborhoods, many only experience the joy of outdoor play when they are at the Early Head Start center.

This partnership with THE PLAYERS allows ECS to continue the important work of providing essential resources for our youngest citizens. "We are delighted to partner with THE PLAYERS, an organization that has been supportive of our mission for many years," said Connie Stophel, Chief Executive Officer of Episcopal Children's Services. "This generous grant and investment in our community will no doubt improve the lives of the vulnerable young children and families we work so hard to serve. We could not be more thankful."

"THE PLAYERS is so honored to support the development of this play area," said Jared Rice, Executive Director of THE PLAYERS. "Everything we do as a championship goes back to using our platform to strengthen and improve lives, especially those in underserved areas, particularly our youth. When we heard about this need to give more kids in our community the chance to experience the joy and peace that come from free play, it was obvious we needed to get on board to support this important project. We have a special place in our heart for supporting youth and giving them the tools and resources to succeed, and we can't wait to see this area come to life."

Episcopal Children's Services looks forward to the continued partnership with THE PLAYERS for many more years to come.

### **About Episcopal Children's Services**

Episcopal Children's Services serves more than 25,000 children and their families in 14 counties in Florida. ECS offers School Readiness, Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Nassau, Putnam, St. Johns, Marion, Dixie, Gilchrist, Lake, Levy, Citrus and Alachua counties.

ECS uses research and best practices to help families ensure their children enter school ready to learn. Talented, dedicated teachers and staff work proactively with children from birth to age five and their families to build a strong educational foundation.

**About THE PLAYERS Championship**

THE PLAYERS Championship annually combines the strongest field in golf with the world-class venue that is THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass. Optum®, Morgan Stanley and Grant Thornton LLP are the exclusive Proud Partners of THE PLAYERS. Proceeds from THE PLAYERS benefit Northeast Florida charities and have totaled more than \$100 million since it began in 1974 and moved to Ponte Vedra Beach in 1977. For more on THE PLAYERS, visit [THEPLAYERS.com](http://THEPLAYERS.com). For more on the surrounding areas, visit [floridashistoriccoast.com](http://floridashistoriccoast.com) or [visitjacksonville.com](http://visitjacksonville.com).

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