



MEDIA ALERT

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PANDA CARES, THE PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATION OF PANDA EXPRESS, AND BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF KERN COUNTY PARTNER TO OPEN PANDA CARES CENTER OF HOPE IN BAKERSFIELD

The Panda Cares Center of Hope is a place for local youth to learn, engage, and grow.

Bakersfield, CA – December 8, 2023 In partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Panda Express will present the ribbon cutting for the newest Panda Cares Center of Hope, taking place at the E.L. Jack and Monica Armstrong Youth Center (801 Niles Street, Bakersfield) on Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. Event speakers: Rob Duchow, BGCKC Board President; Leticia Perez, County of Kern, Supervisor 5th District; Andrae Gonzales, City of Bakersfield, Vice Mayor; Robert Branton, BGCKC 2023 Youth of the Year and Kevin Wu, Panda Express. **The grand opening will also include food, games, activities for the Club members, and tours of the Panda Cares Center Of Hope.**

Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Panda Express are proud to bring a Panda Cares Center of Hope to Bakersfield. The opening of this Center of Hope aligns directly with Panda Express' commitment to foster academic success among Boys & Girls Club members across the country. **Panda Cares Center of Hope is a newly renovated space within a Boys & Girls Club designed to deliver more joy, education, and critical social-emotional development to local youth.**

Project Learn, the platform that unites each Center of Hope, is a holistic strategy intended to reinforce and enhance what youth learn during the school day while creating experiences that invite them to fall in love with learning. Rooted in social-emotional development, this program is based on research showing that students do better in school when they spend their non-school hours engaged in fun and academically beneficial activities.

The local Panda Cares Center of Hope was designed to meet the needs of the Club members and includes module tables for multiple uses, from homework to career readiness to arts and crafts that can be folded out of the way for performing arts and physical fitness activities, along with a quiet zone with soft furniture. The Center also has 30 laptops and a charging cart for the Club members to use as part of the after-school and out-of-school programming.

To learn more about Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County programs, please visit www.bgckc.org or call 661-325-3730.

About BGCKC: For over 55 years, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County have delivered quality, life-changing services to youth. These youth benefit from trained, caring Youth Development Professional staff and volunteers who help young people take control of their lives, envision productive futures, and reach their goals. The Boys & Girls Clubs of Kern County have 3 Clubs and 66 school sites in Arvin, Bakersfield, Frazier Park, Gorman, Lamont, Kernville, McFarland, Lake Isabella, Lebec, and Tehachapi.

About Panda Express: On a mission to inspire better lives, Panda Express® is the largest Asian dining concept in the U.S. Family-owned and operated since 1983 by co-founders and co-CEOs Andrew and Peggy Cherng, Panda Express is best known as a trailblazer for creating a wide variety of industry-first recipes, including its best-seller the Original Orange Chicken® and award-winning Honey Walnut Shrimp™, which have defined the category of authentic American Chinese cuisine. Each dish at Panda Express, including the Wok Smart® selections, is thoughtfully crafted with quality ingredients and inspired by bold Chinese flavors and culinary principles. The restaurant brand has more than 2,400 locations and has introduced American Chinese cuisine to twelve international countries.

Powered by this global family of associates, Panda Cares® the philanthropic arm of Panda Express, has raised more than \$282 million and dedicated countless volunteer hours in bettering the health and education for over 13 million youths, as well as supporting communities in need since 1999. In 2020, the organization established the Panda Cares Scholars Program to provide the necessary funding,- academic support and leadership development to help high school and college students learn, lead and thrive towards a bright future. For more information, visit pandaexpress.com or pandacares.org.

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