

Parc Center for Disabilities Enters New Era with Groundbreaking for Innovative Children's Services Center

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- [Parc Center for Disabilities](#), a national leader in supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, is set to build an innovative facility for its esteemed children's services program in Pinellas County. The groundbreaking celebration on July 30, was attended by more than 120 enthusiastic supporters and featured speeches from philanthropists Tom and Mary James, St. Petersburg City Council Vice-Chair Copley Gerdes, Parc Board Chair Michael Bice, and Parc President & CEO Michelle Detweiler.



Groundbreaking Ceremony for Parc's Children's Services Center

"This is a transformational time for Parc Center for Disabilities, and therefore for our community and our region," according to Detweiler. "The new [Children's Services Center](#) will be a premier learning center showcasing Parc's commitment to program excellence, cutting edge technology, and maximizing children's cognitive and emotional capabilities and wellbeing."

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Tom James

Parc Center for Disabilities stands as the sole organization in the region offering a complete continuum of services, supporting individuals and families through their lifetime,

from preschool to senior living. Notably, Parc is the only provider of early intervention services for children with developmental disabilities in Pinellas County.

Design for the new 14,000 square-foot building, located on Parc's current campus in St. Petersburg, is based on the most effective practices in early childhood intervention education and therapeutic services, as well as safety and security, the overall facility flow, and nutritional

food service. Larger classrooms and therapy spaces along with three specially designed playgrounds will be featured.

Parc Center for Disabilities Board Chair Bice thanked the City of St. Petersburg for its support of the Children's Services Center. He also thanked State Representative Linda Chaney "for her support and advocating for the \$1.5 million contribution the state is making to this project." Rep. Chaney was not able to attend the celebration but has been a strong proponent of a public-private partnership with Parc.

St. Petersburg City Council Vice-Chair Copley Gerdes attended the celebration and remarked. "St. Pete is so excited to have Parc Center for Disabilities doing the work that you're doing every day and to expand that work to an amazing space that children deserve to have. On behalf of the City and the Mayor, we are very excited for Parc to begin this new chapter with the new children's services center."

Detweiler shared "Our Raise the Roof! capital campaign will build a new Children's Services Center that will elevate the capacity and quality of our crucial core programs to help children with intellectual disabilities. The Campaign goal is \$10 million to fund the construction of the Center and we have raised just over \$6 million so far. She reported that the organization's Board of Directors is responsible for contributing one million dollars of the total raised thus far. "The early support for this effort validates its importance to the families we serve and the region. We are still in the preliminary stages of fundraising, working with our closest supporters as we continue on the path of bringing our vision to life." Former St. Petersburg College President Dr. William D. Law, a member of Parc Center for Disabilities' Board of Directors, is leading the capital campaign steering committee.

Philanthropist Tom James, Chairman Emeritus of [Raymond James Financial](#), and his wife Mary were among the first to commit to the new facility and, with a \$2 million contribution, made the largest gift ever received by Parc from private individuals since its founding in 1953. Additionally, Raymond James Financial has invested \$750,000.

"Parc has always fulfilled a need that often gets neglected in our community, so it was obvious for me to make a personal gift and for Raymond James to make a capital gift. We're behind this project because there are a lot of needy charities in our communities and there is nothing more important than helping those with developmental disabilities," stated Mr. James during the groundbreaking ceremony.



Tom and Mary James at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for Parc's Children's Services Center

Chairman Bice offered that Tom and Mary James have supported Parc Center for Disabilities for decades. "Their commitment to changing lives and enriching the community has been a major force in making Parc the leader it is in serving people with developmental disabilities. They know our need is urgent and made this leadership gift early in our campaign to have major financial impact, to show their commitment to our mission, and to demonstrate their confidence in Parc."

"With the new Center, the limitations of our current building will be gone, and our team of experts will be able to fully use their skills and talents to deepen their impact on the lives of the children they serve every day using our proven person-centered approach," Detweiler said.

More information about Parc Center for Disabilities is available at <https://www.parc-fl.org/>. For more information about the Children's Services Center, contact Chief Philanthropy Officer Phillip Deal at (727) 341-6905.

****About Parc Center for Disabilities****

Parc Center for Disabilities is a nonprofit organization that has been serving children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1953. Renowned for its "person-centered" approach, Parc has established itself as a progressive leader in its field and within the community. Parc Center for Disabilities is driven by a powerful belief that everyone should have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and showcase their unique capabilities. Committed to ensuring that every individual they serve is valued, respected, and embraced for their uniqueness, Parc continues to make a significant impact on the lives of those they support.

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