



# PRESS RELEASE

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF THE REDWOODS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **It Takes a Village to Raise a Child, and Great Leaders to Guide the Village**

Eureka, CA - On October 2, 2015, Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods' Executive Director, Liz Smith, celebrated her 20 year anniversary with the Club. Liz was given a surprise honoring at the Club's 18<sup>th</sup> Annual "Bids for Kids" Dinner & Auction, with presentations by Boys & Girls Clubs of America Director of Organizational Development, Steve Ratto, Boys & Girls Clubs of America National President, Jim Clark, Eureka Police Chief Andrew Mills, Humboldt Area Foundation Executive Director, Patrick Cleary and Liz's parents, Pisila and Nathan Smith.

Liz started her career with the Boys & Girls Club when the Teen Center opened its doors in 1995. Liz was a senior at Eureka High School and responded to a bulletin announcement advertising a focus group with pizza to get ideas of how to bring in more teens. Liz participated and was asked to apply for the Front Counter position. Despite opposition from her parents in applying, Liz submitted her application, was hired and thus began her tenure with the Club. Liz has had the opportunity to work with thousands of children and youth during her 20 year tenure and has grown alongside these young people. Thanks to incredible support from Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Liz has graduated from two Executive Leadership programs, from the University of Michigan and Clemson University. Liz has also been awarded two coveted fellowships: The McCabe Fellowship which afforded Liz training and support to become an Executive Director and the Robert Woodruff Fellowship, which helped pay for part of Liz's Masters Degree. In 2012, Liz was one of five Executives in the nation to be chosen to participate in the Global Institute for Leadership Development. A new partnership between the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Harvard School of Business has commenced to further enhance Executive level leadership. Liz hopes to be selected as one of the initial cohort participants.

Liz is delighted to maintain relationships with several Club alumni, including Chris Miller, a current Board Member. When asked about the impact Liz had on his life as an adolescent, he said the following, "I have known Liz Smith for 16 out of the 20 years she has been with Boys & Girls Club. In that time she has not only been my friend and supporter to me but also a great professional mentor. Liz was the first staff I met at the Club when I started and she was one who earned my trust and respect, those two things that I value very much and she has kept it all this time, as I sit reflecting on our friendship and our professional relationship, I know that if it were not for her being who she is and the faith and support she gave me that I would not be who I am today. I had the privilege and great fortune to find The Boys & Girls Club and being a member and I have the great honor of serving on its Board of Directors now. It

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*The Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods exists to empower youth (ages 6 through 18) to reach their full potential as responsible, caring individuals through professionally led programs and activities that are fun, positive and relevant in a safe, supportive and healthy environment.*

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is something I am serious and passionate about and it all started with Liz Smith. For my past and current experiences, I am grateful and for her continued commitment to the youth of our community I am more grateful still. I am pleased to work with Liz and to continue to share a vision with her that I know drives us both.”

Despite the length of Liz’s tenure, she shows no inkling of slowing down. In her own words, she says, “It has been an honor and blessing to serve the youth of our community through a venue as incredible as the Boys & Girls Club. We have made great strides and served thousands of youth in our 77 year history faithfully, however there is still much work to do. There are no societal ills that can be solved without placing more human, monetary and in-kind resources towards youth. Imagine what our community and world would look like if as youth, all of us felt loved, nurtured, encouraged and held accountable for our actions? I fully believe in the African proverb, it takes a village to raise a child. The Boys & Girls Club is one part of that village and takes the responsibility of providing leadership, training, guidance and support very seriously. There could be no greater anniversary gift than to have more resources to better enliven our mission, vision and values and to ensure that our Club will endure into perpetuity.”

For more information on Boys & Girls Club of the Redwoods, staff can be contacted through their website at [www.BGCRedwoods.org](http://www.BGCRedwoods.org) or by phone at 707-441-1030. The Club can also be followed on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/bgcredwoods](http://www.facebook.com/bgcredwoods)

*Pictured: Liz Smith at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual “Bids for Kids” Dinner and Auction, Night of 4,000 Stars, on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015.*

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