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## **Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Aaron's Foundation Announce \$1 Million National Partnership to Empower Teen Activation for Positive Community Change**

*Aaron's supports Keystone, BGCA's 50-year-old teen leadership and character program*

**ATLANTA (May 5, 2014)** – Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) today announced a national partnership with Aaron's Foundation (Aaron's NYSE: AAN). Aaron's \$1 million sponsorship of BGCA will support Keystone, its premier national teen leadership and character program. The partnership will empower teens to effect positive change in their Club and community through service projects and leadership. This marks Aaron's first national philanthropic partnership and a commitment to developing leadership among the nation's teen population.

"Developing strong character and leadership skills in teens is a key component to enabling today's generation to achieve great futures tomorrow. We're grateful for Aaron's support of this vital program that reaches a critical segment of young people: teens," said Jim Clark, president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America. "Keystone offers young people the chance to contribute something of value to others and have a voice in how the contribution is made. This develops leadership skills and empowers teens to take action to make change."

"Aaron's has a long tradition of giving back to the communities in which we live and serve," said Ron Allen, Aaron's CEO. "While our stores have been dedicated to supporting local programs in communities across the country, we wanted to do more to positively impact a broad audience who in large part, are our future leaders. We believe that by working together, Boys & Girls Clubs can reach thousands of teens nationwide to develop their leadership skills for the greater good."

Keystone is a BGCA program available to members ages 14-18 at Clubs nationwide and on BGCA-affiliated youth centers on U.S. military installations here and abroad. The program creates opportunities for teens to participate in a variety of developmental activities in education, career preparation and civic engagement. The program is an essential element of BGCA's strategy to engage and develop teens into productive citizens and leaders.

"Aaron's Foundation looks forward to our partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of America to support Keystone, a dynamic and well-established teen leadership program, and we will be excited to see the Keystone program continue to have a positive influence on the lives of young people and in their communities," says Jim Cates, president of Aaron's Foundation. "Together, we can open doors for teens to achieve their dreams and reach their full potential."

Celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, Keystone follows a small-group model where members elect officers to serve as group leaders. Under the guidance of an adult advisor, Club teens plan and implement activities in six key areas: service to Club and community; leadership development; education and career exploration; unity; free enterprise; and social recreation. In 2013, Keystone Clubs collectively contributed more than 305,500 hours of community service, conducted more than 4,300 projects, reached out to 50,000 teens in their communities and brought more than 5,000 new teen members to Boys & Girls Clubs.

The partnership with Aaron's also includes sponsorship of BGCA's National Keystone Conference, which brings teens representing Keystone Clubs from around the globe together for character and leadership development. The 2014 conference recently concluded in April, where more than 1,500 teens convened in Anaheim, Calif. to participate in workshops, exchange ideas, lead service projects and socialize with peers from various parts of the world. Teens also helped plan and coordinate the conference. A committee of Keystone Club members drove the development of the conference topics, conducted debates, ran breakout sessions, and presided over the opening and closing sessions.

Aaron's, the leading lease-to-own specialty retailer that offers flexible payment options for credit-challenged individuals, has been dedicated to giving back to the community throughout the 48 states and in Canada where its stores are operated through the Aaron's Foundation and with the Aaron's Community Outreach Program.

To download footage from the live partnership announcement at "Aaron's Dream Weekend" at Talladega Superspeedway on Sunday, May 4, 2014, please visit <http://bit.ly/AANBGCA>

### **About Boys & Girls Clubs of America**

For more than 100 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America ([GreatFutures.org](http://GreatFutures.org)) has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, more than 4,000 Clubs serve nearly 4 million young people through Club membership and community outreach. Clubs are located in cities, towns, public housing and on Native lands throughout the country, and serve military families in BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide. They provide a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun and friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours. Club programs promote academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles. In a Harris Survey of alumni, 57 percent said the Club saved their lives. National headquarters are located in Atlanta. Learn more at <http://bgca.org/facebook> and <http://bgca.org/twitter>.

### **About Aaron's, Inc.**

Aaron's, Inc. (NYSE: AAN), a leader in the sales and lease ownership and specialty retailing of residential furniture, consumer electronics, home appliances and accessories, has more than 2,130 Company-operated and franchised stores in 48 states and Canada. Founded in 1955 by entrepreneur and Chairman Emeritus R. Charles Loudermilk, Sr. and headquartered in Atlanta, Aaron's has been publicly traded since 1982. For more information, visit [www.aarons.com](http://www.aarons.com). Aaron's, Inc. includes the Aarons.com and ShopHomeSmart.com brands.

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