



Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds Gift \$2M to fund Social Justice Initiatives with the NAACP LDF and the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

(September 04, 2019) – The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF), and the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights announced today that both received gifts of \$1 million from Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds. Their donation will be used to support the NAACP LDF's ongoing and expanded efforts to strengthen our democracy and advance racial justice; their gift to the Young Center will help to establish the Waymaker Fund for Immigrant Children, which will protect the rights of immigrant children separated from their families.

LDF is the nation's first and foremost civil rights law firm devoted to achieving racial justice and equality. For nearly 80 years, LDF has employed litigation, advocacy, and education to bring about structural, permanent change. It has won seminal cases in the Supreme Court that have transformed the very fabric of this country. LDF will use the gift from Blake and Ryan for general organizational support, in addition to expanding its work on criminal justice reform and deepening efforts to protect against voter suppression in the south.

The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights is the only nonprofit in the nation providing independent Child Advocates to unaccompanied and separated immigrant children in detention. The Waymaker Fund, created with this gift from Lively and Reynolds, will provide essential financial support to the Young Center's Child Advocate program and ensure that attorneys, social workers, and volunteers defend the rights and best interests of immigrant children who migrate to the United States by themselves or have been forcibly taken from their parents. The Fund will also help to fight the administration's continued attacks on immigrant children's rights and advocate for an immigration system that recognizes children's unique needs.

"We're blown away by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the Young Center's commitment to not only justice and democracy, but humanity," said Lively and Reynolds. "Over the last few years, our perspective has grown and we've realized we have to do everything possible to foster more compassion and empathy in this world. History's being written right now. We're grateful to give back to organizations who give voice to so many."

LDF President and Director-Counsel [Sherrilyn Ifill](#) added, "LDF is thrilled to receive this generous gift from Blake and Ryan. We have been impressed by the strength of their commitment and support, and by their sincere and deep concern about the issues that lie at the core of LDF's work. They are among an increasing circle of artists and everyday people who recognize that each of us must play a role in protecting and strengthening our democracy, and who understand that racial justice is central to the integrity of our nation. We extend our gratitude to Blake and Ryan and encourage others to follow their lead."

"We are so deeply grateful for this extraordinary gift from Blake and Ryan," said Maria Woltjen, Executive Director of the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights. "Their donation will help ensure that the most vulnerable immigrant children – who are in detention facing deportation –

will have an advocate to protect their rights and their best interests." Woltjen continued. "Children are escaping rampant violence and persecution to seek safe haven in the U.S. The Waymaker Fund for Immigrant Children, created with this gift, is needed now more than ever. We are so moved by Blake and Ryan's kindness and their generosity."

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About the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.

Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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About the Young Center

The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights is a human rights organization that protects and advances the rights and best interests of immigrant children and advocates for an immigration system that treats children as children first. It is the only organization in the nation that provides independent child advocates to unaccompanied and separated immigrant children. The Young Center has offices in New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Phoenix, Los Angeles, Houston, San Antonio and Harlingen, Texas, which is on the U.S.-Mexico border. For more information about the Young Center, visit theyoungcenter.org.

For more updates, follow the Young Center on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

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