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**DARDEN RESTAURANTS, AND THE DARDEN FOUNDATION, PARTNER WITH FEEDING AMERICA
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER WITH \$1.7 MILLION DONATION**

Financial Support Builds on Company's Legacy of Battling Food Insecurity

ORLANDO, Fla. (July 3, 2017) – The Darden Foundation, the charitable arm of Darden Restaurants, Inc., announced today a \$1.7 million donation to Feeding America® on behalf of Darden's U.S.-based restaurants. The funds will directly benefit nearly all of the 200 food banks in the Feeding America nationwide network, helping to provide 18.7 million meals to families and individuals in need.¹

"As a restaurant company that serves 380 million guests annually, Darden and our brands are uniquely positioned to help make a difference in the fight against hunger," said Susan Connelly, senior vice president of Communications and Public Affairs for Darden. "Providing great food and service is fundamental to our business, and our definition of service extends beyond the four walls of our restaurants and into the communities we serve. We're pleased to build on our company's legacy of fighting food insecurity through our financial support of Feeding America and their food bank affiliates across the country."

This donation by the Darden Foundation builds on Darden's long-standing commitment to supporting hunger-relief efforts. Since 2003, the company has been donating unserved food from its restaurants to local food banks and other non-profits through its Harvest program. Every day, every Darden restaurant takes surplus, wholesome food that isn't served to guests and, rather than discarding it, safely prepares it for donation. Recently, the Harvest program achieved a significant milestone when it reached a total of 100 million pounds of food donated over the life of program. That's the equivalent of 83.3 million meals² provided to people in need across the communities served by Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, Yard House, The Capital Grille, Seasons 52, Bahama Breeze and Eddie V's.

Combined, financial and in-kind donations are the equivalent of more than 102 million meals³ donated to domestic hunger-relief organizations across the country, of which many are food banks in the Feeding America network.

¹ \$1 helps provide 11 meals secured by Feeding America® on behalf of local member food banks.

² USDA ARS Analysis of "What We Eat in America," NHANES 2011-2012.

³ Combined donation total of 83.3 million meals (in-kind) and 18.7 million meals (financial).

“The Darden Foundation’s significant investment in Feeding America creates a tangible impact for our network of food banks nationwide,” said Diana Aviv, CEO at Feeding America. “We are thankful to Darden for its generous support of programs and initiatives that help provide nourishing food to children and families in need.”

Across the United States, 42 million people face food insecurity, including 13 million children. In fact, according to *Map the Meal Gap*, a Feeding America study that assesses food insecurity across the nation, every county in the country is affected by hunger. In the greater Orlando service area, Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida faces a higher child food-insecurity rate than the national average, totaling nearly 200,000 children in need.⁴

“The support we receive from Darden, both financially and through their food donations, is a tremendous blessing,” said Dave Krepcho, president of Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, a Feeding America member food bank. “It’s critical to the work we do to help our community and children on a daily basis.”

About Darden Restaurants

Darden is a restaurant company featuring a portfolio of differentiated brands that include Olive Garden, LongHorn Steakhouse, Cheddar’s Scratch Kitchen, Yard House, The Capital Grille, Seasons 52, Bahama Breeze and Eddie V’s. Our people equal our success, and we are proud to employ more than 175,000 team members in nearly 1,700 restaurants. Together, we create memorable experiences for 380 million guests each year in communities across North America. For more information, please visit www.darden.com.

About Feeding America

Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs, we provide meals to more than 46 million people each year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry.

About Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida

SHFBCF is a member of Feeding America – the largest charitable domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States. SHFBCF secures and distributes food and grocery products to approximately 550 local nonprofit feeding programs throughout Central Florida. Last year, with the help of food and financial donors, volunteers and a caring, committed community, the food bank distributed 52 million meals to partner programs such as food pantries, soup kitchens, women’s shelters, senior centers, day care centers and Kids Cafes. In addition, Second Harvest’s 14-week culinary program teaches foodservice-based technical, life and employability skills to economically hard-pressed adults. Our community turns to Second Harvest’s partner agencies more than 71,000 times per week. To learn more about SHFBCF, visit www.FeedHopeNow.org.

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⁴ Gundersen, C., A. Dewey, A. Crumbaugh, M. Kato & E. Engelhard. *Map the Meal Gap 2017: A Report on County and Congressional District Food Insecurity and County Food Cost in the United States in 2015*. Feeding America, 2017.