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THE RITZ-CARLTON ORLANDO, GRANDE LAKES LAUNCHES INSPIRING RITZ KIDS EXPERIENCE

Orlando, Fla. – APRIL 13, 2016 – The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, Grande Lakes announces the debut of a new Ritz Kids interactive experience for its youngest guests. The first Ritz-Carlton to offer a physical space to bring the hotel’s scenography to life, the property is part of the 500-acre Grande Lakes Orlando resort, which also includes a JW Marriott hotel, a Ritz-Carlton Spa and an 18-hole golf course amongst a variety of other experiences. The refreshed Ritz Kids space and programming offers children the opportunity to become fully immersed in Florida’s rich history and biodiversity.

The new Ritz Kids further aligns with the brand’s partnership with Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Ocean Futures Society, which invites little ones to discover adventure and exploration through four pillars: water, land, environmental responsibility and culture. The journey starts at check-in, when kids embark on their adventure to learn more about the unexpected history of central Florida and the footprints it has left on the region through a variety of experiences against the backdrop of a reimagined trading outpost, characteristic of early Orlando pioneer life.

- The focal point of the Ritz Kids space is the re-creation of a “Frontier Farmhouse,” as inspired by the traditional Florida frontier house, once the residence of ranchers who flocked to central Florida to explore the state’s vast, barren land for roaming cattle, ample water supply and sunshine. Elements of these structures have been incorporated into the design, whose defining characteristic was a breezeway passing through the center of the house, serving as a natural air conditioner.
- Positioned at the headwaters of the Florida Everglades, the resort offers families the chance to experience a taste of Old Florida. Orlando may have evolved into a bustling metropolis, but the Everglades remain an unparalleled landscape and the “largest subtropical wilderness” in the United States. Underscoring the commitment to the two pillars of water and environmental responsibility, the main play area features a special carpet made from recycled fishing nets whose pattern mimics a bird’s-eye view of The Everglades. Ritz Kids teaches children more about this natural region of tropical wetlands located right in the hotel’s backyard.

- “The Swamp” isn’t as scary as it sounds! This is where many of the friendly Ritz Kids critters call home. A number of educational and interactive opportunities await from the moment children enter the space, including discovering the resort’s very own Cypress Tree, a hallmark of the swamplands and type of tree that has been growing in the state for over 6,500 years.
- Kids can get up close and personal with a variety of new additions to the Ritz Kids menagerie as part of the upgrade. In addition to meeting sirens and anoles, children have the opportunity to observe baby alligators and red-eared slider turtles and learn about the impact these creatures have on the Florida ecosystem.
- “The Green Thumbs Garden” pays homage to Central Florida’s agricultural history and invites budding botanists to plant their own Grande Lakes roots. Kids can immerse themselves in nature here, using planters made from repurposed pallets to examine the world of edible seeds and nuts and learn how humans, animals and plants all benefit from them.
- Grande Lakes Orlando has launched a collaboration with a local non-profit organization striving to educate others about Florida’s wildlife and habitats and promote conservation and the great outdoors while providing for animals in need. As part of the partnership, Grande Lakes is providing a safe haven for animals that have been rehabilitated after sustaining injuries by releasing them back to their natural habitat on the resort grounds.

In addition to the new Ritz Kids program, guests of The Ritz-Carlton and JW Marriott hotels can take advantage of the many other family activities offered at Grande Lakes Orlando including fishing opportunities from the shore and guided excursions to the private waters of Shingle Pond. There is also an interactive catch and release program as part of a collaboration with the Florida Wildlife Commission which transforms a typical day of fishing into a research adventure to determine why certain types of largemouth bass grow faster than others. Other outdoor excursions include two-hour guided Eco-Tours through Shingle Creek and birdhouse building while bird watching.

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About Grande Lakes Orlando

The 500-acre Grande Lakes Orlando estate features a 582-room Ritz-Carlton and 1,000-room JW Marriott hotel situated at the headwaters of the Florida Everglades. Guests at both hotels can enjoy all the facilities and services at Grande Lakes Orlando, including an 18-hole Greg Norman-designed championship golf course and the 40,000-square-foot Ritz-Carlton Spa as well as three pools including the winding lazy river at JW Marriott. Dining options feature the culinary mastery of award-winning chefs Norman Van Aken with Norman’s at The Ritz-Carlton and Melissa Kelly with PRIMO at JW Marriott, a leader in the city’s farm-to-fork movement. The resort’s renowned culinary program is further showcased at The Kitchen at JW Marriott Orlando and Highball & Harvest at The Ritz-Carlton Orlando, as well as The Brewery, an on-property nano-brewery and Chef’s Table. Furthering this farm-to-fork commitment are the on-site apiaries and 18,000-square-foot Whisper Creek Farm.

On-property activities include Grande Lakes Adventures Experiences offering kayaking, eco-tours on Shingle Creek, and a fishing school. Conference and meeting attendees have their pick

of a selection of meeting space options located across 150,000 square feet that connects the two properties plus more than 100,000 square feet of outdoor space.

Grande Lakes is located 15 minutes from the Orlando International Airport, five minutes from the Orange County Convention Center and minutes from the major theme parks. For more information about Grande Lakes Orlando, visit www.grandelakes.com. Follow Grande Lakes Orlando on Twitter at @RC_Orlando and @JW_Orlando.

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About The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, LLC

The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C., of Chevy Chase, Md., currently operates 88 hotels in the Americas, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the Caribbean. More than 30 hotel and residential projects are under development around the globe. For more information or reservations, visit the company web site at www.ritzcarlton.com, and for the latest company updates, visitnews.ritzcarlton.com. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Marriott International, Inc. (NASDAQ:MAR).

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