

TOM MOSELEY

*hail from
the chief*

IT'S NOT EVERYONE WHO CAN SAY THEY'VE VOLUNTEERED MORE THAN 4,000 HOURS TO A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, but Bradenton attorney Tom Moseley has the letter from President George W. Bush to prove it.

Moseley received the President's Service Award—a personally signed letter, a plaque and a pin—last fall to recognize his 25 years of service to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Manatee County. A volunteer there since he graduated from Stetson Law School in 1982 (he started as a baseball coach and “that’s what got me hooked,” he says), he now chairs the Florida Area Council of Boys & Girls Clubs of America, which represents 42 organizations across the state that together serve 185,000 children.

A sole practitioner who is board certified in wills, trusts and estates, and who also practices real estate law, Moseley took over the state reins in 2007 and led the group through its first-ever strategic plan. He's re-upped his chairmanship through 2009 in order to follow through on some ambitious initiatives, the biggest of which is forming a statewide 501(c)3 charity to attract funding from corporations and foundations that prefer to donate on a statewide basis rather than club by club. So far, Tennessee is the only other state to make this move.

Awards are nice, especially from the top, but Moseley says his biggest reward is “being able to see the difference [Boys & Girls Clubs] makes in kids' lives.” A recent study that compares club members to their peers across Florida shows they have much higher graduation rates, fewer disciplinary problems in school and fewer problems with law enforcement. “That's objective proof of what we've known all along,” Moseley says, “that it makes a difference not only for the kids but for the whole community.

“A lot of the kids we serve don't have the same opportunities my three children had,” he says. “Boys & Girls Clubs gives them the support and encouragement they might not be getting at home. I really think it changes lives.” ■

