

2010 Florida State Youth of the Year Announced

Florida Panhandle, April 20, 2011--Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast hosted Florida's State Youth of the Year competition and awards banquet on April 18, 2011. Twelve local area judges interviewed 25 candidates individually and selected the Florida winner on the basis of scholastic achievement, community service, leadership ability, and consideration of any physical, social or emotional obstacles overcome.

Out of 25 excellent young people our 4 finalists were

Mr. Ahkeem Hollimon	Central Florida
Ms. Shanoah Washington	Suncoast
Mr. Alvin Barnes Jr	Lee County
Ms. Clynish Clark	Palm Beach

From these 4 we heard of how the Boys and Girls Club literally saved the life of a young man, who if not for his involvement in the Club, would have been walking along side his brother after school when he was tragically gunned down. This young man is now the picture of Character, Leadership and Service.

We heard from a young lady whose entire young life, her hopes and dreams had been shattered by abuse, absent parents, ridicule and even rape. The Boys and Girls Club restored this young lady who has made it her life's mission to tell everyone about the Club and to openly speak out about childhood physical abuse and sexual assault.

Another young lady spoke of how broken and angry she was when entering the Club and how she hid her pain with a smile and immersed herself in every program that was offered in order to hide the true hurt and pain she was carrying. By doing so, she developed such an appreciation for community service that at age 15 she spearheaded the formation of a not-for-profit whose mission is to feed the hungry in her community. She now serves as its Vice President.

And finally a young man came and spoke about how his entire life was filled with people telling him why he would never be good enough, strong enough, smart enough, or fast enough to ever reach his dreams. He became a member of the Boys & Girls Clubs and was surrounded by caring adults who pushed him and helped him grab his dream. He is now a top notch student who is on his way to playing college football. Dream complete.

Tupperware Brands Corporation, the recognition program's national sponsor, awarded each winner a \$1,000 college scholarship. Boys & Girls Clubs Florida Alliance not only sponsored the event but also congratulated the final 4 contestants with laptop computers and printers.

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Darden Restaurant Group was also a sponsor. We greatly appreciate these sponsors for their dedication to our organization and the youth we serve.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Youth of the Year recognition is the highest honor a Club member can achieve. The Youth of the Year program celebrates youth who have overcome enormous odds and demonstrated exceptional character and accomplishments. These deserving young people are recognized for service to their Club and community, academic performance and contributions to their family. Youth of the Year honorees are shining examples and living proof that great futures start at Boys & Girls Clubs.

Beginning in the Club and continuing through the state, regional and national levels. Five regional winners meet each September in Washington, D.C., to compete for the National Youth of the Year title.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast serves more than 1800 youth ages 5-18 in Escambia, Okaloosa, and Walton Counties. The mission of BGCEC is to inspire and empower all young people and their families in partnership with our community to achieve their potential to BE GREAT. We do this through proven programming that concentrates on academics, healthy living, and good character.

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