



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Aimee Minnerath
Phone: 320/252/7616

Boys & Girls Club members compete for Youth of the Year title

As the Youth of the Year competition for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota draws near, three amazing young people prepare to share their story of how the Club has helped shape their character and guided their paths to a better future.

Join us for an inspiring morning on Saturday, January 27, 2018, starting at 9 a.m. at the Eastside Boys & Girls Club unit, 320 Raymond Avenue NE, St. Cloud. Guests will hear from Roosevelt Youth of the Year Kennethia Riley, Southside Youth of the Year Marque Morris and Eastside Youth of the Year Travis Johnson. Youth will give their speeches starting at 9:30 a.m. Then, they will be interviewed individually by the judges before the judges convene to determine who will receive the title of 2018 Youth of the Year for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota. The 2018 Youth of the Year will be announced by noon on Saturday.

Kennethia Riley started attending the Roosevelt Boys & Girls Club eight years ago. She is one of 11 kids, and her parents taught her and her siblings to be persistent and to follow her dreams, even when through difficult times. Her membership at the Boys & Girls Club has instilled in Kennethia the value of setting and achieving goals. According to her brother, Cortez Riley, "Kennethia epitomizes a leader of tomorrow!" She developed a strong work ethic as a junior volunteer and youth leader at the Club. She believes in the power of helping others, and she gives the gift of time volunteering at Place of Hope and other organizations throughout the community. She received her Certified Nursing Assistant license and works at a care facility in St. Cloud. She is taking PSEO classes at SCSU. Upon graduation from Apollo High School this spring, Kennethia plans to go into the nursing field to ultimately become a Physician's Assistant.

Travis Johnson began attending the Eastside Boys & Girls Club when he was nine years old. The Boys & Girls Club has taught Travis the importance of respect and responsibility, and the staff have given him a sense of confidence to get involved in programs at the Club and the community. He is now a sophomore at Sauk Rapids High School and participates in a number of extracurricular activities, including football, D.E.C.A., choir, band, and Diggin' Diversity. Travis volunteers at the Tri-County Humane Society and participates in numerous service activities through his church as well. He works as a kitchen aid at the Club and at Good Shepard Retirement Community. Travis wants to become a mechanical engineer, and he says the fashion design program at the Club taught him valuable skills in design and construction to help him achieve his dream.

Southside Youth of the Year Marque Morris found the Boys & Girls Club in 2008. He and his family have gone through tumultuous times, but the Club was a place that he could count on for consistency. The staff at the Club showed him how to reach his goals and how to be successful in school and in life. They taught him about respect, responsibility, and confidence. The staff gave him a quiet place to do homework and kept him on track in school. In addition, the Club provided Marque with incredible opportunities through the Youth Arts Initiative that he would not have had elsewhere. Marque's dream is to perform, and the Club gives him a chance to shine on stage throughout the community. Upon graduation from Tech High School in May, Marque plans to attend post-secondary education for music production and singing.

A panel of three judges, including: Amy Trombley, Communication and Continuous Improvement Manager for Partner for Student Success; Phil Schroeder, College and Career Ready Facilitator for Partner for Student Success; and, Dr. Sylvia Huff, Director of Research Assessment and Grants for Dist. 742 Community Schools; will interview each of the youth after reviewing their packets and listen to their speeches. The youth selected as Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota's Youth of the Year will go on to compete at the state level in the Twin Cities on March 27, 2018.

The Youth of the Year finalist will receive a \$1,000 scholarship from the Windfeldt Family Scholarship Fund. The winner of the Central Minnesota Youth of the Year title for 2018 will receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the Windfeldt Family Scholarship Fund.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year embodies the organization's three priority outcome areas of leadership, character and service; academic excellence; and healthy lifestyles. The Youth of the Year is selected based on the following criteria: academic achievement; communication and relationship skills; leadership and teamwork; character, honesty and integrity. Local Clubs recognize Youths of the Month and select a Youth of the Year, who then participates in the state competition. The state Youth of the Year will receive a \$10,000 Home Team scholarship from the professional sports organizations in the state of Minnesota. State winners participate in regional competition. Five regional winners receive a \$5,000 scholarship and compete on the national level. The National Youth of the Year receives an additional \$10,000 scholarship and is installed by the President of the United States.

For more information on the important programs the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Minnesota provides, please visit our website: www.bgcmn.org.