



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Local Teen Named Florida Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of America**

**Orlando, FL. (April 30, 2010)** – Tonjanika Smith, a ten-year member of the East Altamonte Branch of Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida (BGCCF) was recently named 2010 Youth of the Year for the state of Florida by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). Along with the prestigious title, Tonjanika Smith also received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Reader's Digest Foundation and a \$5,000 scholarship contribution from the Petro Family Foundation.

This summer, Tonjanika will compete against other youth from states located in BGCA's South East Region. If successful, she will move on to the national competition and garner the chance to visit the White House. Tonjanika is among hundreds of local Youth of the Year winners across the country recognized by BGCA for her sound character, leadership skills and willingness to give back to the community.

Tonjanika's local Youth of the Year process began with the best of the best being selected from 14 local Clubs to compete for the title of BGCCF Kiwanis Club of Orlando Foundation Youth of the Year. After a first round of judging, the final seven were chosen.

Through a distinguished panel of judges, all selected for their professional leadership roles in business and in the community, each of the seven finalists were considered based on their one-on-one interview, grade point average (GPA), written essay and overall personality and presentation skills. It was a challenging competition but Tonjanika came out on top.

This past April, Tonjanika traveled to Sarasota, Florida to experience the state Youth of the Year competition where she represented BGCCF and faced rigid competition. When stacked up with finalists from across the state of Florida, Tonjanika rose to the occasion and impressed the judges with her impressive demeanor and overall drive for success.

In recent years, Tonjanika has demonstrated Youth of the Year qualities through steady hard work and tremendous dedication to her academics, community involvement and even through her work at the Club as a mentor and friend to younger members.

Tonjanika is set to graduate high school this spring with a 4.23 GPA and has been accepted to the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business on a full scholarship. She intends to follow a career path in nonprofit organization management and realize her all-time life goal to build and operate a Boys & Girls Club in years to come.

#### **About Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida:**

The BGCCF mission is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. For more information or to find out how you can support the BGCCF movement, call 407-841-6855 or visit [www.bgccf.org](http://www.bgccf.org).

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