



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Betsy Owens**  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida  
407-841-6855 or [bowens@bgccf.org](mailto:bowens@bgccf.org)

### **GREAT FUTURES START HERE: Ja’Keevious Mack Named Youth of the Year**

**Orlando, FL. (March 5, 2018)** – Ja’Keevious Mack, a 17-year-old Senior at Edgewater High School in Orlando, has been named 2018 Kiwanis Club of Orlando Foundation Youth of the Year. He will represent Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida (BGCCF) in the competition to become State Youth of the Year in early April.

The Youth of the Year Competition recognizes members of Boys & Girls Clubs who represent the organization’s three priorities: Academic Success; Good Character & Citizenship; and Healthy Lifestyles. Ja’Keevious was selected through a competitive judging process of 7 finalists, who were themselves selected from among the more than 1,300 teens served by BGCCF.

An eleven-year member of BGCCF’s Joe R. Lee Branch in Eatonville, Ja’Keevious distinguished himself from the competition as a persuasive advocate for the mission of Boys & Girls Clubs and the power of determination. Mack credits the Club, and particularly its Service Director, Austin Long, with helping him through the devastating loss of his older brother to drug violence in 2016. Following the tragedy, the Club provided Mack with the counseling, academic tutoring, and emotional support he needed to overcome the trauma.

Mack has already been accepted to four colleges, and plans to study law. After college, he hopes to return to Eatonville and pursue a career in law and public service. He says that he’s inspired by Long, another Eatonville native, who returned to the historically black community after college to serve its residents through Boys & Girls Clubs.

Long says “Ja’Keevious is an ideal role model for our dozens of young Club members, who know what he has been through, and see him triumphing in spite of his hardship. They want to be just like Key’V.”

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

Since 1944, Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida has provided at-risk children from the local community, between the ages of 6 and 18, with a safe place to learn and grow. Our membership totals more than 15,000 young people at 35 Clubs and middle school sites in 7 counties. The mission of Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida is to inspire and enable all young people, especially those

from disadvantaged circumstances, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. Learn more at 407.841.6855, [www.bgccf.org](http://www.bgccf.org), [facebook.com/bgccf](https://facebook.com/bgccf), or [twitter.com/bgccf](https://twitter.com/bgccf).

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