



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**LOCAL TEEN NAMED TENNESSEE STATE YOUTH OF THE YEAR
BY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA**



L to R: William Crawford (Grandfather); Ernestjean Jones (Grandmother); Allen Patton (Family friend); Timothy Crawford (TN State Youth of the Year, BGCMT Club Member); Bobby Lee Smith (President & CEO, BGCMT); Jeff Darnell (Vine Hill Club Director, BGCMT)

Nashville, TN, April 2, 2009 – Timothy Crawford, a twelve year member of Boys & Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee (BGCMT), has been named the Youth of the Year for the state of Tennessee by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). In addition to winning this prestigious title, Crawford will also receive a \$1,000 scholarship from the Reader's Digest Foundation and a \$5,000 scholarship from the Tennessee Titans Foundation. He is among hundreds of Youth of the Year winners across the country recognized by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) for his sound character, leadership skills and willingness to give back to the community.

Being named Youth of the Year is the highest honor a Boys & Girls Club member can receive. The title recognizes outstanding contributions to a member's family, school, community and Boys & Girls Club, as well as personal challenges and obstacles overcome. This program was founded over 60 years ago through the generosity of the Reader's Digest Foundation.

"The Reader's Digest Foundation has been the proud sponsor of the Youth of the Year program since 1947," said Susan Fraysse Russ, executive director, Reader's Digest Foundation.

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"For over 60 years, we have had the great honor of saluting amazing teens, like Timothy Crawford, for their dedication to their families, Club, community, and their academic and career goals."

Crawford, a senior at Hume Fogg Academic High School, takes pride in his scholastic achievements, his musical aspirations and his service to family and the Boys & Girls Club. Although it hasn't been easy, he has soared in the face of adversity. In addition to the support from he receives from his grandmother, Crawford looks to Boys & Girls Clubs for positive guidance. Crawford manages household responsibilities and is a role model to his younger sister. Involvement in many service clubs, jazz bands and church choirs has helped him stay on the path to success while avoiding negative influences like drugs. Nearing the end of his high school days, Crawford is overjoyed to achieve his dream of attending college. He said, "College is what I've wanted for so long. I've prayed to make it to that day. To realize that I'm so close makes me swell with pride and come to tears because I'm about to achieve the opportunities my family hasn't grabbed yet. We all thought it would never happen, but with the swell of support and perseverance and focus of grabbing the brass ring, I've done it. I can't wait to attend Middle Tennessee State University in the fall of 2009!"

In reference to John Keats' "Ode to a Grecian Urn," ("Beauty is truth, truth beauty, - that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."), Crawford says, "I believe that Boys & Girls Club is a beautiful thing and a beautiful truth that has molded many lives, including my own, and without that truth, I would not be who I am today."

President and CEO, BGCMT, Bobby Lee Smith said, "Timothy is an outstanding example of the character building that occurs within Boys & Girls Club programs. Despite his circumstances, Timothy has achieved his goals, and we know he has a bright future ahead!"

"Timothy Crawford and all Youth of the Year nominees are living proof that Boys & Girls Clubs across the country are fulfilling their mission of inspiring and enabling young people," said Roxanne Spillett, president, BGCA. "We are most appreciative to the Reader's Digest Foundation for their long-time support of our Youth of the Year program and for helping Club members attain their goals."

This summer, Crawford will compete against other youth from states located in BGCA's Southeast Region. If named regional winner, he will be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship and advance to the national competition in Washington, D.C. The National Youth of the Year receives an additional \$15,000 college scholarship and will be installed by President Barack

Obama during a ceremony in the Oval Office.

As the founding sponsor of the Youth of the Year program, the Reader's Digest Foundation has given nearly \$8 million towards BGCA and 62 teens have been selected as the National Youth of the Year. For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit www.bgca.org/yoy.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee

Founded in 1903, Boys & Girls Clubs of Middle Tennessee (BGCMT) is an organization whose purpose is to promote the social, educational, health, leadership and character development of boys and girls during critical periods of their growth. We provide a safe place to learn and grow; ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals; life-enhancing programs and character development experiences; along with hope and opportunity. We have five locations serving nearly 5,000 youth per year. We operate in Davidson and Williamson Counties and are affiliated with the national Boys & Girls Clubs of America. For additional information about BGCMT, visit www.bgcmt.org or call 615.833.2368.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

For more than 100 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (www.bgca.org) has been changing and saving young lives, providing hope and opportunity for kids who need them most. Today, some 4,300 Clubs serve some 4.8 million young people through Club membership and community outreach. Known as The Positive Place for Kids, Boys & Girls Clubs can be found all across the country and on U.S. military bases throughout the world. Clubs provide young people 6-18 years old with guidance-oriented character development programs conducted by trained, professional staff. In communities large and small, Clubs positively impact lives and help young people reach their full potential as productive, caring citizens. Key Boys & Girls Club programs emphasize leadership development; education and career exploration; community service; financial literacy; health and life skills; the arts; sports, fitness and recreation; and family outreach. In a recent Harris Survey of Club alumni, 57 percent said the Club saved their life. National headquarters are located in Atlanta.

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