



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXCEPTIONAL TEEN NAMED ALABAMA YOUTH OF THE YEAR BY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA

Diamond Watkins set to receive college scholarship and vie for regional title this summer

Birmingham, AL, March 9, 2018 – Selected among 16 outstanding youth, Diamond has been named the Alabama Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The Youth of the Year title is a prestigious honor bestowed upon an exemplary young person in recognition of leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to live a healthy lifestyle. Now in its 71st year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation's most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures and encourages all kids to lead, succeed and inspire. As the Alabama Youth of the Year, Diamond will serve as an ambassador for all teens in the state, will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America, \$10,000 from the Beverly Burton Memorial Scholarship fund, and will go on to vie for the regional Youth of the Year and ultimately the national title.

"In Brookside we have always known Diamond was special", say Todd Love, Area Director – BGCCA. "I was the Unit Director at the Brookside BGC when I first nominated Diamond for Brookside Youth of the Year in 2015. She has been Brookside's Youth of the Year representative every year since. It has been amazing to watch her grow and mature into an outstanding citizen. She has worked hard to become a leader at the club and in her community. Academically she has always strived for perfection. Her hard work and dedication has led to success and now her confidence is through the roof. The club and community is so proud of her!"

Diamond is a senior at Gardendale High School, where she maintains a 3.82 GPA. She was inducted into the National Honor Society as a junior. Diamond has been a member of the Brookside BGC for 10 years. Diamond is heavily involved at the club with SMART Moves, a small-group health, fitness, prevention/education and self-esteem program, Power Hour an educational program and the Triple Play Healthy Habits program. Diamond currently serves as the President of the Keystone Club, a group of teenagers who work to serve their community. She also is the staff advisor for the Torch Club, a small-group leadership and service club for ages 11-13. She has especially excelled in this role by teaching these members work ethic, decision making and goal setting. She has worked as a part-time counselor for the last three years, working with younger members in the education center where she tutors and helps with homework. Diamond says, "Volunteering is close to my heart, when I help others it not only changes their life, it also changes mine". Diamond wants to attend Auburn University in the fall of 2018.

Diamond was named Red Diamond – Youth of the Year at BGCCA's Youth of the Year Luncheon last month. As BGCCA – Red Diamond – Youth of the Year she received a \$3,000 scholarship from BGCCA to the college of her choice, a laptop or tablet and matching scholarship funds from the George V. Daniels, Jr. Memorial Scholarship.



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"Watkins and all Youth of the Year nominees are living proof that Boys & Girls Clubs across the country are inspiring and enabling young people to achieve great futures," said Jim Clark, president and CEO, BGCA. "Being named Youth of the Year is a lifelong honor. As the Alabama Youth of the Year, Diamond will serve as a spokesperson for our young people, sharing her inspiring story and leading the way to transform communities for the better."

Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year recognition program is presented by Disney, who has supported the youth advocacy organization for more than 50 years, empowering young people to reach their full potential and providing youth with access to the tools they need to build the great futures they imagine. Toyota, the Signature Sponsor of Youth of the Year, is dedicated to inspiring the next generations of engineers, thinkers and leaders who will help drive the American economy.

This summer, Diamond will join other state winners to vie for the Southeast regional title. If named the regional winner, she will be awarded an additional \$10,000 college scholarship, renewable for four years up to \$40,000. Six youth, including five regional winners and a military youth winner, will advance to Washington, D.C. in September 2018, to compete for the title of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year will receive an additional scholarship of \$25,000, renewable for four years up to \$100,000 and will have the opportunity to meet with the President of the United States in the White House.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit www.youthoftheyear.org.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Alabama

(BGCCA) exists to provide boys and girls ages 6 to 18 with a place to learn, grow, and succeed. The oldest Boys & Girls Club in the Southeast, BGCCA has been serving the children in the Birmingham and surrounding communities for 117 years. The Club currently has 9 clubs in 4 counties providing a safe, positive environment promoting Education, Character and Leadership Training, and Healthy Lifestyle Habits. Visit our website at www.bgcca.org and learn more about BGCCA at facebook.com/BeGreatBGCCA, twitter.com/bgcca and instagram.com/bgcca.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

For more than 150 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (<http://www.bgca.org>) has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, 4,300 Clubs serve 4 million young people annually through Club membership and community outreach. Clubs are located in cities, towns, public housing and on Native lands throughout the country, and serve military families in BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide. They provide a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun, friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours. Priority programs emphasize academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles. In a Harris Survey of alumni, 54 percent said the Club saved their lives. National headquarters are located in Atlanta. Learn more at [Facebook](https://facebook.com/bgca) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/bgca).

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