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Boys and Girls Clubs honor senior at Hoover

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Officials say Kadashia Madison is a respected role model for younger students and for her peers.

Kadashia Madison, 18, a senior at Hoover High School, has been named the 2010 Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Iowa Youth of the Year.

The annual award is the highest honor a Boys and Girls Club member can receive. Madison was chosen for her leadership abilities and willingness to serve the club and the community.

Her journey with the Boys and Girls Club began in fifth grade at Grace Community Church, where she viewed the opportunity to be involved with the Boys and Girls Club as something to do in her spare time and a positive place to meet new people.

She said it was her "endless passion for working with people" that led her to become a junior staff member at the Ellis I. Levitt Club in 2007. She also is part of the PALS program at the Levitt Club and works specifically with first-grade and kindergarten members.

"The club has taught me a lot, mostly about myself," Madison said. "It has helped me to really develop my character, self-confidence and leadership abilities."

Laura Sampson, early education program director at the Levitt Club, said Madison, whom she supervises on staff, was a perfect choice for Youth of the Year.

"Kadashia is everything and more that you could want in a junior staff member," Sampson said. "We've grown to rely on her qualities as she tends to take on so many roles at the club. She's not only connected with the children, but with the community as well. Kadashia is certainly invaluable to us."

Charles Zanders, site director at the Levitt Club, praised her dependability as well.

"Kadashia is always here, always on time, and great with the kids," he said. "They respond to her and know that she cares about them, and in this line of work that's what makes you successful."

Madison received runner-up for the Youth of the Year at the state competition. She will represent the clubs at the Drake Relays in mid-April, where she will deliver her speech on what the Boys and Girls Club has meant to her.

"I am very honored to receive this award, it's definitely a pleasure," she said. "I never really thought that someone would consider me to be this much of a leader."

Madison also said that the experience has shown her that you can be successful at anything you do and that hard work pays off. Throughout her Youth of the Year process, she has realized that she is a role model not only to the kids, but to her peers and supervisors.

Upon graduation, she plans to study human services and criminal justice.

- Submitted by Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Iowa



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