



## **BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF VENICE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Erikk Aldridge, Boys & Girls Club of Venice (310) 390-4477 or [erikk@bgcv.org](mailto:erikk@bgcv.org).

### ***CECE CUZA-HOWARD NAMED YOUTH OF THE YEAR***

**Ánimo Venice Charter High School Junior is honored by the Boys & Girls Club of Venice**

**LOS ANGELES (March 2, 2008)** – The Boys & Girls Club of Venice announced CeCe Cuza-Howard as it's 2008 Youth of the Year winner during a special ceremony on Thursday, February 28 presented by Microsoft and held at Nike's Western Region Headquarters in Culver City. Cuza-Howard is a junior at Ánimo Venice Charter High School and has been a club member for eight years. Her goal is to either attend Stanford or Spelman College in Atlanta. In addition to the honor, she will receive a \$2,000 college scholarship on behalf of the club and event sponsors.

"I am very thankful to everyone at the club for being there for me through the years," said Cuza-Howard. "The club is an amazing place for a young person to get support for their education and dreams."

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 the Boys & Girls Club. This program was founded over 60 years ago through the generosity of the Reader's Digest Foundation.

"CeCe is an outstanding representative of the club," said executive director Erikk Aldridge. "She demonstrates that you don't have to always have everything placed on a tee for you to be successful, and that there is no better measure of a person's character than their internal desire."

Eight judges presided over the selection process, which included hearing each candidate give a speech, review of school transcripts and letters of recommendations, and grading essays. The judges were Alec Bigelson of Bank of America, Robert Ludzinski of Nike, Sibyl Buchanan of Playa Vista, Kay Christy of the Argonaut, Madison Offenhauser of Keller Williams Realty, board member Julie Henley, Alex Rosales of Venice Marina Rotary and 2006 Youth of the Year Oscar Duncan.

Cuza-Howard beat out two outstanding finalists, Cesar Muñoz a 17-year old senior at Venice High School, and Miracle Evans a 15 year-old sophomore at Palisades Charter High School. Both runner-ups will receive a \$500 college scholarship.

Cuza-Howard moves on to the state competition against other Boys & Girls Club members for the California Youth of the Year title and a \$1,000 college scholarship. The winner from California will go on to compete for the title of Pacific Regional Youth of the Year and a \$10,000 college scholarship.

The five regional winners will travel to Washington, D.C., in September 2007 to compete for the title of BGCA's National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year receives an additional \$15,000 college scholarship and is installed by the President in an Oval Office ceremony.

The Boys & Girls Club of Venice, founded in 1969, is a non-profit, privately-funded 501{c}{3} organization and depends on private donations and volunteers to accomplish its mission. The Club annually serves some 4,000 youth. To make a donation or to volunteer, contact the Boys & Girls Club office at (310) 390-4477 or visit the Web site at [www.bgcv.org](http://www.bgcv.org).

# # #