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**LOCAL TEEN NAMED NEW MEXICO YOUTH OF THE YEAR
BY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA**

FARMINGTON, NM, March 30, 2009 – **Aubrey Maslen**, a five-year member of Boys & Girls Club of Farmington, has been named the Youth of the Year for the state of New Mexico by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). In addition to winning this prestigious title, Maslen will also receive a \$1,000 scholarship from the Reader's Digest Foundation and another \$1,000 scholarship from the Boys & Girls Club New Mexico Area Council. 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. "For over 60 years, we have had the great honor of saluting amazing teens, like Aubrey Maslen, for their dedication to their families, Club, community, and their academic and career goals."

Maslen's family remains at the top of his list of priorities. As a child of a single parent, he can remember times when he would see friends being supported by their fathers at school functions and could not understand why he was not given the opportunity to be loved by his father. As a result, he tries his hardest to fill the void of an absent father for his two younger siblings. His experiences without a father have driven him to be that positive male role model for his sister and brother.

In his high-school years, Maslen has worked in the library at the Club. The Club library is a branch of the Farmington Public Library and Maslen has worked there for two years. He prides himself on his work with the younger members, tutoring them not just on reading but on life and on community. He helps members work on their manners and interactions with one another just as much as with their reading and homework. Many members have benefited greatly from Maslen's attention.

Outside of the Boys & Girls Club, Maslen has spent a lot of time working with the Mayor's Teen Advisory Council (MTAC). The group organizes programs to teach the dangers of underage drinking;

participates in “Sticker-Shock”, a program where volunteers place stickers in alcohol packaging illustrating the penalties for providing alcohol to minors; attempts to teach about driving under the influence and methamphetamine use. Maslen has also volunteered with the elderly at various facilities. He says he believes it is important for members of the community to give back.

“Education is the cornerstone on which one can build a successful future”, says Maslen. He has been very active in extracurricular throughout his school career as he has always felt that school is more than just grades and tests and students can gain beneficial experiences by increasing their participation. Maslen’s French teacher, Madame Holman, has been a tremendous inspiration and supporter. She helped with his college selection, applications, and has constantly pushed him to take risks and strive for success. Maslen will be going to France on an exchange program this summer and is looking forward to the experiences he will have. He has decided that he will attend a public college to complete his first two years and then complete his undergraduate education at a private institution. The he plans to attend law school which will be a step towards his ultimate goal, to participate in public life and benefit people on a large level.

“Aubrey 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, Maslen will compete against other youth from states located in BGCA’s Southwest Region. If named regional winner, he will be awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship and advance to the national competition in Washington. 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 Club of Farmington

The Boys & Girls Club of Farmington represents more than 48 years of service to youth. The Club provides activities and support to more than 1,800 young people ages 6 – 18. With four locations, the Boys & Girls Club of Farmington is the only organization with year-round comprehensive, facilities-based, and affordable youth development programs that are delivered by trained and experienced youth development professionals. “The Positive Place for Kids” offers programs in Education & Career Development, Character & Leadership Development, Health & Life Skills, the Arts, as well as Sports, Fitness, and Recreation. The mission of the Boys & Girls Club of Farmington is *to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens*. For more information, contact the Boys & Girls Club of Farmington at 327-6396 or visit us on the Web at www.bgcfarmington.org.

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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