

## YOUTH OF THE YEAR

# Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell honors teen

By Aaron Curtis

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**LOWELL** » Lowell High student Kemigisa Adyeri remembers being nervous when she first started going to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell approximately six years ago, unsure of what to expect at the local club.

The now 15-year-old Adyeri said as time passed, the nervousness she felt faded and was replaced with appreciation for the opportunities presented by the club, including the robotics program.

“Being in robotics helped me talk more and communicate better,” Adyeri said. “I’ve always liked math and robotics. I like the hands-on portion of it. ... There’s always constant learning in it.”

Her interest in robotics has resulted in her future aspirations to attend college and study mechanical engineering and mathematics. Helping with that goal was the recent news that Adyeri was crowned the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell’s 2021 Youth of the Year.

“My goal is to make an impact and help as much as possible,” Adyeri said. “This is a re-

ally good platform, I think; the ability to cause change for the better.”

According to a statement about the award from the local club, each year, one “exceptional club member is selected to be the National Youth of the Year, serving as an ambassador for Boys & Girls Club youth as well as a voice for all of our nation’s young people. Over the decades, these individuals have exemplified the Boys & Girls Club mission and are proof to the impact Clubs make in transforming and saving kids’ lives.”

As the winner of the local Youth of the Year award, Adyeri receives a \$1,000 scholarship and will now compete for the state title. If Adyeri wins the state competition, she would advance to the National Youth of the Year competition.

According to the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell statement, six teens — including five regional winners and a national military youth winner — advance to the National Youth of the Year celebration, where one youth is named Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s national teen spokesperson.

“The National Youth of the Year is a role

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Kemigisa Adyeri, 15, of Lowell, who was selected as the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell's Youth of the Year, enjoys robotics at the club.

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model, leader and advocate for over 4.6 million youth served by Boys & Girls Clubs each year, and all of America's young people," the club statement said.

Also, the national winner would be granted full tuition to attend college.

Adyeri's parents, Pachu and Kabagambe Adyeri, came to the U.S. from Africa when Adyeri was 4 years old.

She and one of her brothers was born in Uganda, while her other four siblings were born in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Adyeri described her parents as her role models.

"It must have been very difficult for them," she

said about their move to the U.S. "When they talk about it, their lives were really difficult."

Adyeri is grateful for the opportunities presented by the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell, which led to friendships and helped create a better vision for her future.

"By doing different programs it helped me talk to other people and project my voice, because before it was really hard for me to do that," Adyeri said. "But I've learned how to do that throughout my time here."

Runner-ups for the local Youth of the Year award — Lowell residents Senarica So, 17, and Sorida Hou, 16, — also received college scholarships.

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Kemigisa Adyeri is thinking about majoring in mechanical engineering in college.