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For More Information, Contact:

Shani St. John

Shani.StJohn@porternovelli.com

404-345-8834

C5 GEORGIA YOUTH FOUNDATION HONORS TEENS WHO BEAT THE ODDS

Evening with the Graduates Gala Raises More Than \$150K to Support Atlanta Students in Need

Atlanta, Ga. – **C5 Georgia Youth Foundation** (C5 Georgia)— a nonprofit dedicated to transforming the lives of high-risk, high-potential teens in the state of Georgia—hosted its **2nd Annual Evening with Graduates** fundraising gala at the World of Coca-Cola on Monday, May 12. Demarco Morgan, WXIA-TV anchor, served as emcee for the Gala along with C5 Georgia graduates, Chase Layton and Niyah Riggins.

The evening recognized the accomplishments of 50 outstanding metro-Atlanta teens who will graduate from high school this year. All from low-income homes and challenging circumstances, the students have beaten the odds to earn outstanding grades and secure college scholarships. Many are the first in their families to have the opportunity to attend university.

The event – which coincided with the 10-year anniversary of the organization’s founding – also commemorated C5 Georgia’s partnership with Coca-Cola. With \$35 million in seed-funding from the Coca-Cola system, the nonprofit began as a summer camp for at risk, economically disadvantaged kids in 2004. It has since expanded into an integrated, year-round, hands-on program that cultivates leadership skills and ensures teens graduate from high school.

“For a decade, C5 Georgia has touched and made a difference in the lives of countless youth across our state,” said Chandra Stephens-Albright, executive director, C5 Georgia. A 22-year veteran of The Coca-Cola Company, Chandra recently joined C5 Georgia’s ranks. “Our friends at Coca-Cola have been chief among our organization’s most steadfast champions. Since the beginning, they’ve fueled our efforts to enable students’ dreams.”

Ron Lewis, chief procurement officer for The Coca-Cola Company was on hand to receive recognition on behalf of the Company. Lewis also presented the Coca-Cola “Big Dream” award to high school senior, Filba Ajak.

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A Sudanese refugee, Ajak is graduating from Clarkston High School and exemplifies a C5 Georgia student through her academic and community involvement. She is a member of the National Honor Society, Beta Club, Vice Future Health Professions, Future Business Leaders of America and volunteers countless hours at her community center. She has also received the John Hopkins University Summer Program Scholarship and hopes to become a pediatrician.

Said Ajak, "I was brought here [to the US] to go to school, make a difference and go back to the Sudan to make a change. I will work as hard as I can for as long as I can to take care of the sick children in America and the Sudan. I refuse to watch the children of this country or the Sudan suffer. I will not fail!"

The event raised a total of \$150,970, which exceeded the organization's fundraising goal by more than seven percent. Funds raised through the gala will support the organization's mission to make high school graduation a reality for Georgia students from challenging circumstances. While only 63.4 percent of economically disadvantaged teens in Georgia graduated last year, C5 Georgia boasts a 100 percent high school graduation rate.

2014 Graduating Class

- Alba Ajak, Clarkston High School
- Jordan Aker, Pebblebrook High School
- Jameia Alexander, Benjamin Banneker High School
- Sumurye Awani, Henry W. Grady High School
- Asha Banks, Henry W. Grady High School
- Abel Belete, Carver Academy
- Alisia Bullock, South Cobb High School
- David Flores, Centennial High School
- Abigail Gonzalez Hernandez, Campbell High School
- Malik Hatcher, Holy Innocents Episcopal School
- Clavon Johnson, Hapeville Charter Career Academy
- Gregory Lagerdere, New Manchester High School
- Chase Layton, West Forsyth High School
- Shariff Lee-Brown, Carver Early College
- Quiliana Mann, Sprayberry High School
- Kristopher Manson, Benjamin E. Mays High School
- Vincent Morales, Norcross High School
- Naajia Muhammad, Booker T. Washington High School – Early College
- Jennifer Onuoha, DM Therrell High School of Health Sciences and Research
- Victor Padilla, North Atlanta High School
- Jahnessa Payne, The Galloway School
- Jaylon Person, Newnam High School
- Angelique Phifer, Mill Creek High School
- Niyah Riggins, Sterling Heights High School
- Filipe Rowland, North Atlanta High School
- Noe Ruiz, Spalding High School
- Alma Saldana, Campbell High School
- Aldo Sanchez, Lithia Springs High School
- Evelyn Shankle, North Atlanta High School
- Micah Shapiro, Berkmar High School
- Nicole Sheets, Homestead High School
- Jasmine Smith, South Atlanta High Law and Social Justice
- Julianna Thompson, Campbell High School
- Victoria Vo, Forest Park High School
- Brenten Wilcher, Rockdale County High School
- Briana Williams, Campbell High School
- Courtney Woodard, Douglas County High School
- Tanisha Woods, Campbell High School

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About C5 Georgia Youth Foundation

C5 Georgia Youth Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that is part of a nationwide system of organizations including C5 New England, C5 LA and C5 Texas. The organization changes lives, families and communities through intensive five-year leadership and college-readiness programs targeted to high-potential teens from challenging situations.

The organization was founded by former Coca-Cola Enterprises CEO John Alm and was launched with an initial \$35 million investment from Coca-Cola as Camp Coca-Cola. Today, as an independent nonprofit, C5 continues to dedicate its efforts to fostering unique, hands-on leadership experiences for underserved teens.

For more information, visit www.c5georgia.org or find C5 Georgia on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#).

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