

## **MA Student selected as One of 10 McDonald's Champion Kids®**

*12-year-old wins once-in-a-lifetime trip to the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games to represent Huntsville as a hometown correspondent*

A deserving Madison Academy student was surprised by Ronald McDonald today to learn she was selected as one of 10 U.S. McDonald's Champion Kids® (MCK). Erin Young (12) of Huntsville entered the national contest hosted by McDonald's® in October and will attend the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games in February and serve as a youth correspondent back to the Northern Alabama area.

The MCK contest was open to kids across the U.S. between the ages of 11-14 (with parental/guardian approval) from September 30 through October 30, 2009. Erin entered the contest by submitting a personal essay and photo explaining why she should represent Huntsville and what the Olympic Values of friendship, excellence and respect means to her. Her entry, which beat out hundreds of contest entries from other kids from across the U.S., included the statement, "as you reach what some would call perfection you feel there is still room for more and that is when you reach excellence."

As an MCK, Erin will have the opportunity to attend Olympic Winter Games sporting events, meet athletes and other Champion Kids from around the world, explore Vancouver with unique winter sporting and cultural activities, and report her personal experiences back to her hometown.

"We are extremely happy and excited for Erin Young to be honored as a McDonald's Champion Kid," said Steve Johnson, president of the McDonald's Northern Alabama Co-op. "We know she will represent Huntsville with pride and we look forward to experiencing the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games through Erin Young's personal perspective."

The entries were judged by a panel of Olympic athletes including Olympic Gold Medal Gymnast and MCK Ambassador Shawn Johnson, Alpine snowboarder Graham Watanabe, freestyle mogul skier Patrick Deneen, and speed skaters Jennifer Rodriguez and J.R. Celski. Lynn Barry, named the National Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year, by National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) also assisted with the MCK contest judging.

"After reading Erin Young's contest entry, I was very impressed by her understanding of and ability to articulate the Olympic values of excellence, respect and friendship," said MCK program Ambassador and Olympic Gymnast Shawn Johnson. "I was also interested to learn about her success as a Jr. Olympic tennis competitor and look forward to meeting her during the Olympic Winter Games in February."

In 2007 and 2008, Ms. Young won back-to-back gold medals at the Jr. Olympic Skills Rapid Rally Tennis national competition. After a serious knee injury, she battled back to win the silver medal in 2009.

She is a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at Madison Academy where she is a straight-A student and member of the basketball and volleyball teams. She is also goalie for her soccer team that went to the state finals. In addition, Erin plays piano and is, coincidentally, singing a solo in the school Christmas concert this week.

The McDonald's Champion Kids program debuted at the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games as part of the company's ongoing commitment to children's well-being. The program was created to inspire children to become more physically active and to enable kids from across the globe to travel and experience the Games firsthand.