

## **South Florida Student Leader Clint John Jr. Honored with 2026 Youth Advocate Award**

*John Jr. recognized for his advocacy and leadership*

**FLORIDA – February 17, 2026** – Children’s Week Florida proudly announces Miami Norland Senior High School student, Clint A. John Jr., as the recipient of the 2026 Youth Advocate Award for his efforts to shape local policy and expand civic engagement opportunities for the students in his community. This distinguished award celebrates young leaders who have made a significant impact on the lives of children, particularly through educational initiatives and advocacy.

John Jr. embodies the belief that youth aren’t the leaders of tomorrow; they’re the leaders of now. After witnessing his mother’s experience immigrating to the U.S from Jamaica, John Jr. has been motivated to help children in the community understand how policy changes can impact lives.

Most recently, John Jr. turned what was once a student project into a youth-led registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. As the Executive Director of Virtutem Populo, Inc., he has reached hundreds of students through civic engagement, public forums and three podcasts with over 4,000 viewers. He is also the founder of Catalyst Rising, a youth-driven consulting project that helps organizations communicate more effectively with young audiences and gives them a seat at the table.

John Jr.’s dedication to creating civic engagement, communication, and public policy opportunities has also opened doors to implement policy in his community. Collaborating with local governments, John Jr. launched the Safe Street Initiative to advocate for speed control devices in school zones, an idea that turned into real policy in Miami Gardens.

“The Youth Advocate Award honors young leaders who make a measurable difference for children, and Clint’s work does exactly that,” said Erin Smeltzer, President and CEO of the Children’s Forum. “Through his efforts, Clint reminds us just how important gumption and hard work are when it comes to strengthening communities.”

The 2026 Youth Advocate Award will be presented at the Annual Children’s Week Florida Advocacy Dinner and Awards Ceremony on Monday, February 23, where state leaders, policymakers and child advocates gather to celebrate those shaping the future for Florida’s youth. The Advocacy Dinner and Awards Ceremony is sponsored by Walmart for the second year in a row.

For more information about Children’s Week Florida, please visit [childrensweek.org](https://www.childrensweek.org) or call 850-487-6300.

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**About Children's Week Florida**

Children's Week Florida is the largest annual event held in the state that celebrates its commitment to children, youth, and advocates. The event, held each year in Tallahassee during the legislative session, unites young children, teens, legislators, educators, families, advocates, and community leaders to celebrate Florida's children and ensure every child is healthy, ready to learn, and able to reach their full potential.