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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Deep Center Names Savannah's Best Young Author**

SAVANNAH, Georgia—Deep Center has named Khalil Bush, an eighth grader from Isle of Hope K–8 School, as Deep Laureate for spring 2019. This honor recognizes Khalil as Savannah's "deepest" young author, whose creative writing is among the most skilled, original, and fearless in the county. Khalil's powerful letter, "Consider Me," won him the honor.

"Winning Deep Laureate makes me feel excited, happy, a little bit of everything!" said Khalil. "Before Deep, I wasn't really writing and I would conceal all my feelings. Deep's writing mentors helped me develop as a writer by telling me to keep going, to not give up. Deep helped me be creative, step out of my comfort zone, and just be me."

Khalil was one of the 163 youths who completed Deep Center's Young Author Project in the spring of 2019, and he was voted to receive the honor by a combination of his program peers, the general public through a social-media campaign, and Deep's staff. Works by all participating students have been published in four anthologies, which are on sale for \$12 at [deepcenter.org](http://deepcenter.org) and in circulation within the Live Oak Public Library system. Artist Meredith Laxton illustrated the covers. All book-sale proceeds support Deep's nonprofit creative-writing workshops.

"Khalil's writing is courageous, honest, and dynamic," explains Dare Dukes, executive director of Deep Center. "He exemplifies the creativity, expressiveness, and fearless leadership we foster at Deep Center. I know that Savannah is as proud of him as we are at Deep Center."

Deep has grown significantly in its first ten years, and its Young Author Project is now serving 15 public K-8 schools and middle schools. All 163 Deep young authors, selected by their teachers, participated throughout the spring 2019 semester in a rigorous series of after-school writing workshops that were taught by volunteers, who are themselves creative writers.

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Deep Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that empowers Savannah's young people to thrive as learners, community leaders, and agents of change. Through creative writing, cultural production, and art, Deep creates platforms for the city's youth and the village of support around them, including their families and adult allies, to share stories, engage in debates, and make Savannah a more just and equitable place.

Deep Center is funded in part by the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, Chatham Foundation, the Live Oak Public Library System, the City of Savannah, the Downtown Neighborhood Association, the Ford Foundation, the Courtney Knight Gaines Foundation, the Georgia Council for the Arts, Georgia Power, Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, the Hodge Foundation, International Paper, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Writing Project, Publix Super Markets Charities, the Savannah Community Foundation, the Surdna Foundation, the Weil Family Donor Advised Fund, the United Way of the Coastal Empire, and many other generous institutions and individuals. Learn more at <http://deepcenter.org>.

Photos of Khalil and examples of his writing can be found here: <http://www.deepcenter.org/press-resources/>.

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