

## EXCEPTIONAL JOINT BASE MDL-Ft Dix TEEN NAMED NORTHEAST MILITARY YOUTH OF THE YEAR BY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA

*Arianna Skinner from JB MDL-Ft Dix Youth Center set to receive college scholarship and vie for national title this fall*

**New York, Aug. 4, 2016** – Selected among five outstanding finalists from military installations across the region, Arianna Skinner has been named the Northeast Military Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). She will receive a \$10,000 college scholarship from BGCA renewable for up to four years, leading to a total of \$40,000.

The Military Youth of the Year honor is a distinct component of the National Youth of the Year program. It recognizes a Club member served at a BGCA-affiliated youth program who has overcome enormous odds and demonstrated exceptional character and accomplishments. To earn this honor, Club youth advance through local, state and regional competitions. After the Military Youth of the Year is named at an elite ceremony in Washington, D.C. in September, he or she advances to join the five regional Youth of the Year finalists from traditional Clubs to compete for the National Youth of the Year title. The national Military Youth of the Year receives an additional scholarship of \$20,000.

“For all kids, but in particular military families, Boys & Girls Clubs are so important because they give comfort, warmth, relief, hope, support, and a sense of belonging when you move to a new place, and don't have it yet,” said Skinner. “My Club gives me family, friends, and a chance to accomplish all that I hope for myself. The Club has given me a second family.”

The BGCA-affiliated Youth Center provides a home-away-from-home environment and supportive community. Skinner serves as Teen Leader for the Club's community service committee and mentors youth ages 5-12 each week. She's also a very active volunteer lending countless hours to community service projects.

Skinner will advance to compete for the title of BGCA's National Military Youth of the Year this September in Washington, D.C. and potentially National Youth of the Year.

“Arianna and so many of our Boys & Girls Club teens have inspiring stories to share, especially those experiencing the unique challenges associated with military life,” said Jim Clark, president and CEO, BGCA. “We are most appreciative to Disney and our other partners for their support of the Youth of the Year program, which provides a platform for these incredible teens to share their voice and scholarships to help them achieve great futures.”

The Youth of the Year recognition program is presented by The Walt Disney Company, who has supported BGCA for more than 50 years, empowering young people to reach their full potential and providing youth with access to the tools they need to build the great futures they imagine. Toyota, Signature Sponsor of Youth of the Year, is dedicated to inspiring the next generations of engineers, thinkers and leaders who will help drive the American economy. Additional support is provided by University of Phoenix, a committed partner who has worked with BGCA on many Academic Success initiatives, and the Taco Bell Foundation, BGCA's premier partner for teen empowerment.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America is proud to partner with the U.S. Armed Forces to help children of military families face the unique challenges of military life. Every year, some 500 BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide provide more than 460,000 youth with the same high-quality programs and curriculums that traditional Boys & Girls Clubs provide. In addition, one-year, no-cost memberships are provided to children of the approximately 70 percent of families who live outside military installations.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit [youthoftheyear.org](http://youthoftheyear.org).

**About Boys & Girls Clubs of America**

For more than 150 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (<http://www.GreatFutures.org>) has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, more than 4,100 Clubs serve nearly 4 million young people annually through Club membership and community outreach. Clubs are located in cities, towns, public housing and on Native lands throughout the country, and serve military families in BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide. They provide a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun, friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours. Priority programs emphasize academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles. In a Harris Survey of alumni, 54 percent said the Club saved their lives. National headquarters are located in Atlanta. Learn more at <http://www.bgca.org/facebook> and <http://bgca.org/twitter>.

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