

## NJ TEENS SWEEP REGIONAL COMPETITION



*Arianna S., Northeast Military Youth of the Year and Alexia L., Northeast Youth of the Year at the Northeast Regional Celebration.*

New Jersey teens, Alexia L. from Boys & Girls Club of Vineland and Arianna S. from Dix Youth Center on Joint Base Dix-McGuire-Lakehurst were named regional Youth of the Year at last week's Northeast Youth of the Year Celebration at the Grand Hyatt in New York City. Alexia has been named 2016-17 Northeast Youth of the Year, and Arianna has been named 2016-17 Northeast Military Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA).

The Youth of the Year title is a prestigious honor bestowed upon an extraordinary young person who exemplifies the Boys & Girls Club values of leadership, service, academic excellence and healthy lifestyles. The program honors our nation's most inspiring young people on their path to great futures and encourages all youth to lead, succeed and inspire.

Both Alexia and Arianna were awarded a \$10,000 college scholarship each, renewable for four years up to \$40,000. Six youth, including five regional winners and a military youth winner, will advance to Washington, D.C., in September 2016, to compete for the title of BGCA's National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year will receive an additional scholarship of \$25,000, renewable for four years up to \$100,000, and will have the opportunity to meet with the President of the United States in the White House.

Alexia will be attending Hampton University this fall. She plans to major in political science and her career aspiration is to be Chief Justice of the United States. Arianna will be a high school sophomore next year. Her career aspiration is to be a fighter pilot or an intelligence officer. Both Alexia and Arianna received additional scholarship dollars on their road to becoming regional winners.

"Both Alexia and Arianna are living proof that Boys & Girls Clubs throughout New Jersey are fulfilling our mission of inspiring and enabling young people to achieve great futures," said Susan Haspel, State Director, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. "Being named Youth of the Year is a lifelong honor bestowed upon a Club Member. As the Northeast Regional Youth of the Year and Military Youth of the Year, Alexia and Arianna will serve as amazing spokespeople for youth, sharing their inspiring stories and leading the way to transform communities for the better."

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

## CLUB YOUTH ENGAGE IN SUMMER LEARNING

NJ Clubs are engaging youth in summer learning utilizing Boys & Girls Clubs of America's Summer Brain Gain and Summer Brain Gain: Read! programs. The main goal of the programs is to mitigate summer learning loss. In both programs, youth are engaged in a process of learning through discovery, creative expression and collaborative group work that evolves into a final project or production. The role of Club professionals is to support, facilitate and guide youth through learning and fun.

Summer Brain Gain utilizes project based learning principles and adds engaging, educational activities to the summer camp experience for youth ages 6 to 18. The program includes weekly thematic modules that build to a final, culminating project or event. Members experience four project-based practices: engagement, expression, evaluation and exhibition. All of the sessions' content are aligned with state standards to build connections for club youth.

Summer Brain Gain: Read!, a literacy program, is designed to improve the reading skills of Club youth. Projects range from cooking, to robotics, understanding the weather, and learning about recycling. Read! introduces a new book every week and includes relevant literacy instructional practices and cooperative learning practices to facilitate reading instruction.

An initial evaluation of the Summer Brain Gain program by Metis Associates, found that while the average low-income U.S. student lost at least two months of learning during the summer, on average, Summer Brain Gain participants in most grades showed no significant change in reading or math scores. In some areas, members showed significant gains, including improvements in reading skills for 5th and 8th graders and in math skills for 4th, 5th and 6th graders.

## NJ REALTORS RAISE THOUSANDS FOR BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

In June, over 350 Realtors attended the New Jersey Realtors Young Professionals Network's first statewide event which raised more than \$7,000 to benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. The event was held at the Meadowlands Racetrack, and provided realtors and industry professionals from across the state with an opportunity to network. The event was sponsored by Chase, Plymouth Rock Assurance, Kensington Vanguard, and the Council of Residential Specialists.



"For our first statewide YPN event, we're so pleased with the overwhelming support and backing from Realtors around the state," said 2016 NJ Realtors President Tg Glazer. "YPN is about networking, camaraderie, and learning from colleagues.



Being able to support our own initiatives while also aiding the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey makes this event a success on all levels. We are already looking forward to planning our next event."



*NJ Realtors network at the first young professionals event while raising funds for BGCNJ.*

In addition to the Young Professionals Networking event, New Jersey Realtors held a donation drive for supplies for the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. Hundreds of new items including sunscreen, flip flops, towels, bathing suits, and more were collected for youth at Clubs with pools. BGCNJ is greatly appreciative of the NJ Realtors support and looks forward to a continued partnership.

## PARTNERSHIP PROFILE: PNC

Building great futures for America's youth starts with a vision, a shared commitment to success and an unwavering focus on helping the leaders of tomorrow realize and achieve their dreams. Working from a shared value of community commitment and investments in education, PNC has supported the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey for a number of years.

"We have established a strong relationship with the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey because it is simply the right thing to do," said New Jersey regional president Linda Bowden. "What could be more important than supporting an organization with a history of nurturing the future business and community leaders who will one day guide our state?"

If, as Nelson Mandela stated, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world," then the children participating in Boys & Clubs programs are well on their way to making their mark. From the Youth of the Year Leadership Program to the Day for Kids initiative, the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey work to provide our state's youth with a strong foundation for achieving success and giving back to the community.

The dedication to supporting the community and education is one that mirrors PNC's own corporate values. PNC's corporate values emphasize community commitment and the bank's signature philanthropic initiative, PNC Grow Up Great, focuses on early education for children ages 0-5 years old. So, it should come as no surprise that PNC has provided funding for early childhood support at the state level, along with funding for the New Jersey State Youth of the Year and the Concert for Kids and other programs at various local Clubs. Trenton and Paterson in particular have been special areas of PNC support.

PNC's community focus stands out especially in the New Jersey region where employees have come together through PNC Grow Up Great to contribute more volunteer hours at early childhood learning centers than in any other PNC regional market since the program began in 2004.

According to Bowden, "Across PNC and certainly here in New Jersey, a commitment to supporting the communities where we live and work is a part of our corporate DNA. It's a commitment that reflects who we are, and we can think of few better organizations to join in celebrating that community focus than Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey."



*Club youth from 3 to 5 years old in Clifton, West Orange, Wayne and Hawthorne participate in the Early Childhood Education Technology grant supported by PNC Foundation.*

## YOUTH RECOGNIZE ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH

In May, the Boys & Girls Clubs in NJ, The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Clubs in Newark-Ironbound and the Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County helped to spread asthma awareness to its Club members and local communities. In celebration of World Asthma Day and Asthma Awareness Month, two asthma awareness events were held on May 3<sup>rd</sup> in Newark Ironbound and on May 5<sup>th</sup> in Mercer County. Several hundred youth, families, community partners and Club Executives were able to join in the festivities. Both asthma events offered asthma screenings; interactive activities showing youth how lungs work and the impact of an asthma attack; a 4 foot tall image of a lung that youth signed as a pledge to support asthma awareness and make choices to keep their lungs healthy; and a mural project.

BGCNJ partnered with American Lung Association in New Jersey, Newark Beth Israel Medical Center, and the AIM program from the Henry J. Austin Health Center for the events. BGCNJ was honored to have Jonathan Pearson, Executive Director, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey; Dr. Joshua Ardise, Medical Director, Quality Management, Horizon BCBSNJ; Joan Hollendonner, Senior Program Officer, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey; Filomena Machleder, Program Officer, The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and; Steve Weatherford, Former NFL punter and Health & Fitness Ambassador for the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. The events received coverage on Fios1 as well as great social media attention.

These events were a component of the BEAM grant which kicked off the second year of programming in December 2015, in 16 Boys & Girls Clubs, in over 40 sites and in 12 counties across the state. With continued funding from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey, the BEAM program will serve an additional 2,500 new youth, ages 5-18, by November 2016. The Foundation created BEAM in 2014 to raise awareness about asthma and to educate youth and their parents or caregivers about the disease and how best to manage it.



**Asthma attacks  
can be prevented  
and managed.**

By managing asthma symptoms, children can live a normal, healthy life.



*Youth at Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club of Newark-Ironbound participated in a BEAM Asthma Awareness event on May 3<sup>rd</sup> with BGCNJ's Health and Fitness Ambassador and former NY Giant, Steve Weatherford.*

## CLUB PROFILE: BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF VINELAND



*Vineland Club teens work to create art for the new Teen Center.*

The Boys & Girls Club of Vineland became a chartered member of Boys & Girls Clubs of America in 2004. The Club started off in the back of an Episcopal Church in Vineland, NJ with a small group of youth and three ongoing programs. Since then, the organization has grown to over 520 registered members attending programs at two sites in Vineland. The City of Vineland, the largest city in square miles in the State, is mostly rural and boasts a large Hispanic population (52%). Vineland has many challenges facing its young people, including having the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the State, and high unemployment and poverty rates.

The Club offers programs that empower youth and help to rebuild their integrity and self-esteem. At the same time, it helps to reduce the community juvenile delinquency problem. In essence, the Club shapes and saves children's lives every day by providing a safe place to go after school and keeping youth involved in educational, healthy lifestyle, cultural, community service and fitness/recreational activities.

The Vineland Club is open to all greater Vineland, NJ (and Cumberland County) area youth, first grade through high school. Programs are offered at two sites in Vineland: The Youth for Change Center and The Carl Arthur Recreation Center. The Club also offers programs at several area schools throughout the county in collaboration with the Cumberland Empowerment Zone (21st Century Learning Center) and community centers/family success centers as part of the Youth for Success Initiative, a countywide coalition effort that is funded by the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General.



*Inspirational mural at new Vineland Club Teen Center.*

The organization recently celebrated its 12th Anniversary of serving youth and has provided life-changing programs to thousands of young people in the last decade. Its new 4,500 square foot teen center recently opened and features a colorful mural which depicts diversity and boasts inspirational messages. Chris Volker, Chief Professional Officer states: "The building may be small, but good things come in small packages, and we intend to make the new teen center a viable place for teens to come and enjoy interesting programs, events and activities."



This year marked an extraordinary honor for the Club when Vineland Club member, Alexia L., was named the 2016 NJ State Youth of the Year. This represents back to back State winners from the Vineland Club with Jennifer N. named as the 2015 NJ State Youth of the Year. The Club is most dedicated to making a difference in young people's lives and will continue to provide life-changing programs to thousands of youth in the next decade and beyond!

## CLUB NOTABLES

### Clifton

Beginning in September, the Clifton Club will expand their before and after School Programs to the Beatrice Gilmore and Charles Olbon elementary schools, as well as Memorial Middle School in Woodland Park.

### Garfield

Donations were received from Kristina Gatto, the 2016 ANTSO New Jersey Jr. Sweetheart, in connection with America's National Teenager Scholarship Organization. Kristina collected money and donations including gym supplies, board games, and arts and crafts items for the Club.

### Gloucester

BGCA and Lowe's presented the Gloucester Club with a Renovation Across the Nation grant, a project to fund physical renovations and construction at the Club.

### Hudson County

With support from Mack-Cali Realty Corporation and The Macallan Group, the Jersey City and Hoboken Clubs launched Innovation Squad. The STEM program is run in eight-week sessions and teaches engineering concepts through hands-on learning. 8 to 12 year-olds from both Clubs are learning about unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and youth create a movie highlighting their experiences during each session.

### Lodi/Hackensack

In August, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Lodi/Hackensack will host their Annual Youth Summer Olympic Games and ceremonial Torch Running with Club youth and volunteers from Fairleigh Dickinson University.

### Monmouth

A group of local runners raised over \$33,000 for Monmouth Club. Team Boys & Girls Clubs of Monmouth County trained together for months leading up to the shore-area races. Each team runner raised at least \$1,300 to cover the cost of one annual membership for a local Club youth.

### Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

In June, Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst leaders, North Hanover Board of Education members, and school age children participated in a groundbreaking ceremony at the site where a new pre-k through 4th grade school will be built in the Falcon Court North area.

### Northwest NJ



The Pequannock Unit recently received a Tower Garden donation from the Juice Plus+ Foundation. The tower uses aeroponics (the process of growing plants in an air or mist environment without the use of soil) technology and is producing colorful vegetables and herbs right in their hallway. Summer Camp Members love the Tower Garden, planting the seeds and testing the PH balance on a regular basis. They are developing first-hand knowledge and experience in growing their own nutritious food and bonding over a special kind of project.

## NJ CONNECTION

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