



## **EXCEPTIONAL TEEN NAMED NEW JERSEY YOUTH OF THE YEAR BY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA**

### ***Carlos Polanco set to receive college scholarship and vie for regional title this month***

**Clifton, NJ, June 2017** – Selected among 17 outstanding youth, Carlos has been named the New Jersey State Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of America. The Youth of the Year title is a prestigious honor bestowed upon an exemplary young person in recognition of leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to live a healthy lifestyle. Now in its 70<sup>th</sup> year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation’s most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures and encourages all kids to lead, succeed and inspire. As the New Jersey Youth of the Year, **Carlos** will serve as an ambassador for all teens in the state, will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and will go on to vie for the regional Youth of the Year and ultimately the national title.

Carlos is a senior at Clifton High School and is in the top two percent of his class. He is the president of the Clifton Student Union and student representative of the Clifton Board of Education. He is also captain of the varsity track & field team. Carlos has been a member of the Boys & Girls Club of Clifton for six years and is the first male to volunteer at the Club’s early childhood department. In 2016, he participated in the Bank of America Student Leaders program as an intern at the Club. Carlos is also the first Latino to be elected governor of the American Legion Jersey Boys State. His community service initiatives include volunteering at soup kitchens and high school open houses. He will attend Dartmouth College in the fall to study government and public policy. His career aspiration is to be Supreme Court Justice.

Carlos and all Youth of the Year nominees are living proof that Boys & Girls Clubs across the country are inspiring and enabling young people to achieve great futures,” said Jim Clark, president and CEO, BGCA. “Being named Youth of the Year is a lifelong honor. As the New Jersey Youth of the Year, Carlos will serve as a spokesperson for our young people, sharing his inspiring story and leading the way to transform communities for the better.”

Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s National Youth of the Year recognition program is presented by Disney, who has supported the youth advocacy organization 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, the 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 Boys & Girls Clubs of America on many Academic Success initiatives, and the Taco Bell Foundation, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier partner for teen empowerment.

This month, Carlos will join other state winners to vie for the Northeast regional title. If named the regional winner, he will be awarded an additional \$10,000 college scholarship, 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 2017, to compete for the title of Boys & Girls Clubs of America'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.

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

#### **About Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey**

Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey is an alliance of 23 Boys & Girls Club organizations serving over 70,000 youth ages 5-18 throughout the Garden State. Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey is a collaborative effort representing all 23 Clubs with the purpose of building local Club capacity; raising public awareness; and securing resources and financial support to increase the impact and reach of local Clubs. Learn more at [www.bgcnj.org](http://www.bgcnj.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 4,200 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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