



**EXCEPTIONAL NEW JERSEY TEENS RECEIVE MOST PRESTIGIOUS HONOR;  
NAMED REGIONAL YOUTH OF THE YEAR BY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA**

***Alexia Lewis from Boys & Girls Clubs of Vineland and Arianna Skinner from JB MDL-Ft Dix Youth Program each receive a \$10,000 college scholarship, renewable for four years up to \$40,000***

**[NEW YORK, NY], [August 5, 2016]** – New Jersey teens, Alexia Lewis and Arianna Skinner were named regional Youth of the Year titles at this week’s Northeast Youth of the Year Celebration at the Grant Hyatt in New York City. Lewis has been named 2016-17 Northeast Youth of the Year, and Skinner 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 Lewis and Skinner 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.

Lewis 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. Skinner will be a high school sophomore next year. Her career aspiration is to be a fighter pilot or an intelligence officer. Both Lewis and Skinner 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 partner for teen empowerment.

**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).

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