



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

Tatiana Cruz set to receive college scholarship and vie for regional title this September

Clifton, NJ, August 6, 2020 – Selected among 15 outstanding youth, Tatiana has been named the New Jersey 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 73rd year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation’s most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures. As the New Jersey Youth of the Year, Tatiana will serve as an ambassador for all teens in the state. She will receive a \$12,500 college scholarship – \$10,000 from Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey and \$2,500 from Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Tatiana will go on to contend for the regional Youth of the Year and ultimately the national title.

Tatiana has been a member of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hudson County for 8 years. She participated in many programs including Career Launch and Diplomas to Degrees. In addition, Tatiana held positions for her Club’s teen group dedicated to leadership and community service serving as Keystone Club President and Secretary. Other community service activities include her work with Brunswick Community Garden and Soul Studios Art Residency. Tatiana has received a number of honors including the Horatio Alger Scholarship semi-finalist, QuestBridge National College Match Finalist and the NJ Scholastic Art awards. Tatiana has also been a member of Junior ROTC, a volunteer at the Jersey City Medical Center, and a participant in the Boys & Girls Club’s workforce development program, resulting in a paid internship at Best Buy. As a member of the Club for over 8 years, she has joined a myriad of activities from college tours to art projects to attending the Youth Summit in Boston representing our Teen Tech Center. A few examples of Tatiana’s commitment to community and the world include being part of the Jersey City March for Our Lives Steering Committee and contributing illustrations to a reading primer created for a school in Rwanda. Tatiana recently graduated from Ronald E. Academic High School with 3.7 GPA. She will be attending Rutgers University majoring in Neuroscience, and her career aspiration is to be a Physician.

“We are incredibly proud of Tatiana and all the Youth of the Year nominees,” said Jim Clark, president and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of America. “Being named Youth of the Year is a lifelong honor. As the New Jersey Youth of the Year, Tatiana will serve as a spokesperson for Boys & Girls Club kids across the state who need more role models that they can admire and emulate.”

Founded in 1947 as Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier youth recognition program, Youth of the Year recognizes outstanding contributions to a member's family, school, community and Boys & Girls Club. The Youth of the Year program is supported by Toyota. As a Signature Sponsor of Youth of the Year, Toyota is committed to partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs of America to ensure local Clubs provide life-enhancing opportunities for kids and teens to explore, develop and apply the essential skills they need to be successful in life and work. Youth of the Year representatives are the workforce leaders, innovators and problem-solvers of tomorrow.

This September, Tatiana will join other state winners to vie for the Northeast regional title. If named the regional winner, she will be awarded an additional \$20,000 college scholarship. Six youth, including five regional winners and a military youth winner, will advance 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 \$50,000.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit www.youthoftheyear.org

About Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey is an alliance of 22 Boys & Girls Club organizations serving nearly 70,000 youth ages 5-18 throughout the Garden State. Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey is a collaborative effort representing all 22 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 NJ Clubs. Learn more at www.bgcnj.org

About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

For more than 150 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (<http://www.bgca.org>) has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today 4,600 Clubs serve 4.7 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 [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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