

2024 NEW JERSEY



RECEPTION & AWARD CERMONY

MAY 8, 2024

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AWARD CEREMONY SCHEDULE

Opening Remarks

Nuno Francisco
President, Board of Trustees, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

Master of Ceremonies

Violeta Yas NBC4

Keynote Speaker

Jacquelyn A. Suárez
Acting Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

New Jersey Youth of the Year Introductions

Susan Haspel
State Director, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

2024 New Jersey Military Youth of the Year Announcement

Victor O.
2021 National Military Youth of the Year

2024 New Jersey State Youth of the Year Announcement

Genesis P. 2023 New Jersey Youth of the Year

Message from Acting Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs



STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
PO Box 800
TRENTON, NJ 08625
(609) 292-6420

JACQUELYN A. SUÁREZ
ACTING COMMISSIONER

PHILIP D. MURPHY GOVERNOR

TAHESHA L. WAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

April 12, 2024

Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey 822 Clifton Avenue, 2nd Floor Clifton, NJ 07013

Dear Youth of the Year Program Honorees:

I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to each of you for being named a New Jersey Youth of the Year in 2024 by the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. This prestigious award recognizes your outstanding accomplishments in the areas of leadership, community service, academic achievement, and healthy living.

Your commitment to personal excellence and improving the lives of those around you strengthens our communities and New Jersey as a whole. The State of New Jersey is fortunate to have young leaders with the integrity, tenacity, intelligence, and compassion you personify.

I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. May you continue to excel and inspire people with your positive examples.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn A. Suárez Acting Commissioner

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jacquelyn A. Suárez Acting Commissioner New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

Jacquelyn A. Suárez was nominated as the Acting Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on September 18, 2023, making her the first Hispanic commissioner to lead the DCA. Suárez is committed to the Department's ongoing mission to provide residents, local governments, businesses, and community development organizations with financial support, administrative guidance, and technical assistance to help improve the quality of life for New Jersey families.



As Acting Commissioner of one of the State's largest departments, Suárez is responsible for a \$1.485 billion operational budget and the administration of federal disaster relief grant funding provided through the Community Development Block Grant, COVID American Rescue Plan, and Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. She oversees more than 1000 employees and leads a variety of departmental programs including the divisions of Local Government Services, Housing and Community Resources, Codes and Standards, Fire Safety, Disaster Recovery and Mitigation, and the Offices of Information Privacy and Local Planning Services. Suárez also has oversight of the Department's affiliate agencies including the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, the New Jersey Redevelopment Authority, the Urban Enterprise Zone Authority, the New Jersey Historic Trust, and the Government Records Council.

Suárez continues to serve as the Director of the Division of Local Government Services, a position she has held since 2021, where she provides local governments with technical and financial assistance in several areas, including shared services, purchasing, and management issues. She also oversees the review and approval of all municipal, county, and fire district budgets, works to uphold the financial integrity of local government units, and guides the conduct of local government officials.

As Director of DLGS, Suárez also serves as Chair of the State's Local Finance Board, a position she has held since January 2021.

Prior to serving as the Director of DLGS, Suárez provided legal advice to Governor Murphy on matters affecting his Administration as an associate counsel in the Governor's Office. During her time in the Governor's Office, Suárez advised on pending legislation, statutory responsibilities, litigation, the development of administrative regulations, and various proposals impacting the Governor's public policy agenda. With a focus on issues related to the Departments of Community Affairs, Human Services, Children and Families, and the Administrative Office of the Courts, Suárez was integral to advancing the Governor's agenda in these areas and, in particular, to spearheading many of the State's COVID response policies such as the eviction moratorium. It was Suárez's proven aptitude and successful track record that gave Lieutenant Governor Sheila Y. Oliver the confidence to name her as the director of the DLGS.

Before joining the Governor's Office, Suárez was a legislative liaison at DCA where she acted as the point person for all communication with the State Legislature, drafted bill language, spearheaded the implementation of newly signed legislation, and helped review and advise on various decisions, orders, settlements, and other matters impacting the Department.

Suárez is a New Jersey native who earned her Juris Doctor from Rutgers School of Law in Camden and her bachelor's degree in communications, legal institutions, economics, and government from American University in Washington D.C. She is a member of both the New Jersey and New York bar associations. She is also a member of the Hispanic Bar Association of New Jersey.

Message from the president



Welcome friends and supporters of Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. It is wonderful to be celebrating our sixteen New Jersey Youth of the Year finalists from Clubs across the state. We are incredibly proud of all these dynamic Club teen leaders for their extraordinary achievements. I know you will enjoy hearing their inspiring stories and join me in congratulating our 2024 New Jersey Youth of the Year honorees.

The New Jersey Youth of the Year program celebrates and empowers Club teens for their tremendous accomplishments in leadership, service, academic excellence, and a commitment to living healthy lifestyles. Being named the New Jersey Youth of the Year is a lifelong honor. Tonight, we will name the New Jersey State and Military Youth of the Year who will advance to a Northeast region competition in June. These distinguished young people will represent New Jersey, serving as exemplary ambassadors for Boys ${\cal B}$ Girls Club youth as well as a strong voice for all young people.

On behalf of the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey Board of Trustees, thank you to all of tonight's sponsors and supporters. It is because of your participation in this statewide premier recognition program, that we can ensure these amazing Club teen leaders have whatever it takes to build great futures.

Best.

Nuno Francisco

President, Board of Trustees

Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

Message from the state director



Welcome to the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey's 2024 Youth of the Year Reception and Award Ceremony and thank you for joining us. Tonight, we are especially proud to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of sixteen New Jersey Club teens for their achievements in leadership, service, academics excellence and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle.

The New Jersey Youth of the Year is our premier leadership program honoring exceptional young people who represent the voice and spirit of hope and are shining examples of what it means to be a Club kid. Through the New Jersey Youth of the Year journey, Club teens build critical leadership skills and empowering experiences that celebrate their outstanding accomplishments. Over the past decade, through the Youth of the Year program, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey has awarded nearly \$800,000 in college scholarships to further the education of hundreds of outstanding Club teens.

We have a special evening planned with the highlight of showcasing these inspiring New Jersey Youth of the Year finalists, as well as the very exciting announcement of the 2024 New Jersey State Youth of the Year and Military Youth of the Year winners.

Tremendous thanks to the New Jersey Youth of the Year Presenting Sponsors – Amazon, Comcast NBCUniversal and Kohl's. I would also like to extend our gratitude to BGCNJ's dedicated Corporate Advisory Board members whose hard work helped to make the NJ Youth of the Year program a great success. It is also because of all of our program sponsors and friends, that we are able to continue to support these extraordinary Club teens and create better futures for them.

On behalf of the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey Board of Trustees, and the 22 New Jersey Boys & Girls Clubs, thank you for your participation in the New Jersey Youth of the Year program which helps our Clubs teens to continue to lead, succeed, and inspire. Enjoy the celebration!

With appreciation,

Lesan Hampel

Susan Haspel

State Director

Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Violeta Yas Storm Team 4 Meteorologist

Emmy® Award-winning meteorologist Violeta Yas is a member of NBC 4 New York's Storm Team 4 weather team.

Prior to joining WNBC in March 2022, Yas was part of Telemundo62, where she served as chief meteorologist, and NBClO in Philadelphia for nearly nine years. She was part of the team that launched Noticiero Telemundo62 at 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. in 2014. Her weather career began in 2010, when she joined AccuWeather as a bilingual broadcaster.



Violeta has appeared on Fox News, Fox Business, ABC World News Now, The Big Ten Network, Fox Sports, several Telemundo and Univision affiliates, ZBM-TV (Bermuda), and various other Spanish networks across Latin America. Throughout her career she has been nominated for four regional Emmys as 'Best Weather Anchor' and has also won five Emmy awards for her severe weather and climate coverage.

Violeta is a lead broadcast ambassador for the American Meteorological Society's (AMS) Committee for Hispanic and Latinx Advancement. Through this role, she leads a team of broadcast meteorologists from across the country in identifying, planning, and generating tangible weather resources for the Spanish-speaking community.

In 2023, Violeta's longtime dedication to her community earned her AMS's prestigious Award for Early Career Professional Achievement, voted on by a committee of her peers. This award recognizes early-career individuals who have demonstrated excellence in their profession, and those whose work and dedication have had a profound impact on the weather, water, and climate science community.

Also, a strong advocate of The Boys & Girls Club organization, Violeta was inducted into the Boys & Girls Clubs' Wall of Fame in 2022. She was recognized for her passion for mentorship, and for serving as a role model to local youth and encouraging them to pursue their dreams. She also regularly visits local classrooms to explain weather to young children and read her bilingual children's book, The Meteorologist in Me, published in Spanish in 2019.

In 2018, Yas was selected as one of PhillyMan Magazine's Women of the Year for her philanthropic efforts. The honor culminated in a charity gala, where she supported the Boys & Girls Club of Kensington—one of the most underfunded areas of Philadelphia.

As a Rutgers University graduate, she also serves as a Media Mentor at Rutgers, through the Institute for Women's Leadership. She regularly lends her time to Rutgers Future Scholars—a program that identifies and gives academically promising low-income high school students the opportunity for a college education.

Yas was born in Mar del Plata, Argentina and raised in North Jersey. She attended Rutgers University, New Brunswick, where she received a bachelor's degree in Journalism & Media Studies, with a minor in Spanish. She later earned her Certificate of Broadcast Meteorology with Mississippi State University.

2024 NEW JERSEY





The New Jersey State Youth of the Year is the premier youth leadership program which honors and recognizes the extraordinary achievements of Club teens. Youth of the Year finalists embody the values of leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle; they exemplify the critical and lifesaving impact Boys & Girls Clubs make in transforming and saving kids' lives.

Each year, local Boys & Girls Clubs select an exceptional young person, ranging in age from 14 - 18, to represent his/her Club in an exciting and inspiring journey. With hard work, dedication and support from Club staff, nominees progress towards their goal of being selected as the New Jersey State Youth of the Year or Military Youth of the Year. Throughout the process, candidates work with mentors and attend trainings to improve and develop public speaking, interviewing skills, and writing skills to prepare them for the state competition and beyond. The New Jersey Youth of the Year program celebrates the most outstanding Boys & Girls Club teen leaders from across the state, and selects two outstanding individuals to represent New Jersey in the regional and national competitions. These amazing young people will serve as ambassadors for Boys & Girls Club youth, as well as a voice for all young people.

Youth of the Year finalists participate in a formal interview in front of a distinguished panel of judges. Each youth is evaluated on their public speaking, essays, interview, and overall application quality. Based on these criteria, the judges select the New Jersey State and Military Youth of the Year to be announced at the New Jersey Youth of the Year Reception and Award Ceremony on May 8, 2024 at Montclair State University. With support from Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the State Youth of the Year winner receives a \$12,500 scholarship and the State Military Youth of the Year receives an \$6,000 scholarship. The top three runners-up each receive \$3,500 scholarships and succeeding finalists each receive a \$2,000 scholarship from the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey.

The Youth of the Year program honors America's most inspiring young people on their path to a great future and encourages all kids to lead, succeed and inspire. Toyota and Kohl's are the Signature Sponsors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year program sharing a dedication to America's youth.

The journey to being named National Youth of the Year begins locally and progresses to state, regional and national competitions, with an additional military phase. In June, the New Jersey State Youth of the Year will vie for the title of Northeast Regional Youth of the Year, alongside eleven other State Youth of the Year winners. The Northeast Regional winner will receive an additional \$5,000 college scholarship, renewable for four years up to \$20,000 from Boys & Girls Clubs of America. In September, six teens, including five regional winners and a national 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 \$12,500, renewable each year up to \$50,000.

The Youth of the Year Program is a truly memorable and rewarding experience. Youth of the Year honorees are shining examples and living proof that GREAT FUTURES START HERE - at Boys & Girls Clubs.

Jouth THE Jean Finalists



Antwon S.Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City

Member for 11 years

Career Aspiration: Social Worker

"It is okay to not be okay, as long as you get support."



Michael H.Boys & Girls Club of Camden County

Member for 11 years

Career Aspiration: Oncologist

"Without the Club, my life would have turned out very differently. I have had many mentors who have encouraged me to the point where I am today."



Deijah K.Boys & Girls Club of Clifton

Member for 11 years

Career Aspiration: Actress

"Never be afraid to do what you love. Whether it be voicing your opinions on certain issues or advocating for more youth representation."

2024 NEW JERSEY





Keron H.Boys & Girls Clubs of Cumberland County

Member for 7 years

Career Aspiration: Lawyer/Pastor

"You are never alone at the Boys & Girls Club because they make you feel like you're at a second home."



Samantha D.Boys & Girls Club of Garfield

Member for 5 years

Career Aspiration: Lawyer

"We are all on this earth for a reason. Don't ever believe that you are worthless because each of us are stars."



Natalie D.Boys & Girls Club of Hawthorne

Member for 11 years

Career Aspiration: Nurse

"By collaborating with others and keeping an open mind, anyone can make an impact on our world."

Jouth THE Year Finalists



Mourea T.Boys & Girls Clubs of Hudson County

Member for 4 years

Career Aspiration: Video Producer

"The Boys & Girls Club allows me to truly be myself by finding my voice and expressing who I really am."



Alexandra P.
Boys & Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen County

Member for 3 years

Career Aspiration: Children's Social Worker

"The Club introduced me to numerous great opportunities that helped me become a better person, leader and more confident in myself."



Daniel S.Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County

Member for 10 years

Career Aspiration: Biologist

"Ultimately, you have a finite amount of time in this world; spend it doing the things you love, being a part of something bigger than yourself."

2024 NEW JERSEY South THE Sear Finalists



Kai S.Boys & Girls Clubs of Monmouth County

Member for 7 years

Career Aspiration: Children's Social Worker

"The Club is the reason I was able to find the confidence to participate in programs like Youth of the Year. They encouraged me to find my voice."



Precious A.Boys & Girls Club of Newark

Member for 7 years

Career Aspiration: Data Scientist

"Everyone has potential in them - their own personal fire. You just have to be dedicated enough to find your spark."



Amir A.Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest New Jersey

Member for 7 year

Career Aspiration: Software Engineer

"Productive communication is the key to unlocking the minds of the youth and the growth of tomorrow."

2024 NEW JERSEY





Nadir J.Boys & Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic

Member for 5 years

Career Aspiration: Actor

"The Club is like a second home to me."



Samantha T.Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County

Member for 7 years

Career Aspiration: Lawyer

"Regardless of one's ethnicity or orientation, spread love and harmony amongst all. Together, one step at a time, we can work towards a better community."



Ifesade O.Fort Dix Youth Centers

Member for 1 year

Career Aspiration: Author

"Military Youth of the Year is not only an opportunity to develop my voice, hone my talents and financially support my academic ambitions, but also allows me to be of service."

2024 NEW JERSEY

South THE Jean Finalists



Xavier D.McGuire Youth Centers

Member for 5 years

Career Aspiration: Financial Manager

"My Club gave me the foundation of self-discovery, self-expression and the power to value myself."

Congratulations 2024 NEW JERSEY YOUTH OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



2024 NEW JERSEY YOUTH OF THE YEAR JUDGES

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DPR Construction

Julie E. Holland

Executive Director
Columbia Bank Foundation

Liz Murray

Vice President, Regulatory Affairs
Comcast

Christopher Rairden

District Manager New Jersey Kohl's

Christopher Tropiano

Executive Vice President BRAM Auto Group



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CLUB LOCATIONS

Atlantic City - www.acbgc.org

Established 1970

Chelsea Club

215 North Sovereign Avenue Atlantic City, NJ 08401 (609) 437-2697

Drexel Club

1010 Drexel Ave Atlantic City, NJ 08401 609-342-5219

Teen Center

317 N. Pennsylvania Ave Atlantic City, NJ 08401 609-342-5220

Camden - www.begreatCamden.org

Established 2000

Marjorie & Lewis Katz East Camden Club

2 S. Dudlev St. Camden, NJ 08105 856.963.6490

Clifton - www.bgcclifton.org

Established 1947

Clifton Club

181 Colfax Avenue Clifton, NJ 07013 973.773.0966

Cumberland County - www.bgccumberland.org

Established 2004

Carl Arthur Recreation Center

304 West Plum Street Vineland, NJ 08360 856.896.0244

Youth for Change Teen Center

560 Crystal Avenue Vineland, NJ 08360 856.696.4190

Garfield - www.bgcgarfield.org

Established 1959 490 Midland Avenue Garfield, NJ 07026 973.478.7662

Gloucester County - www.gcbgc.org

Established 2002

Glassboro Club

801 Ellis Street Glassboro, NJ 08028 856.863.2040

Paulsboro Club

916 Penn Line Road Paulsboro, NJ 08066 856,423,9322

Hawthorne - www.bgchawthorne.org

Established 1942 1 Downes Way Hawthorne, NJ 07506 973.427.7777

Hudson County - www.bgchc.org

Established 1893

Hoboken Clubhouse

123 Jefferson Street Hoboken, NJ 07030 201.963.6443

Jersev City Clubhouse

225 Morris Boulevard Jersey City, NJ 07302 201.333.4100

Lower Bergen County - www.bgclbergen.org

Established 1949 Serving Lodi, Hackensack, Wallington, and the South Bergen Jointure Commission

Hackensack Club

170B Sussex Street Hackensack, NJ 07604 201.880.7244

Lodi Club

460 Passaic Avenue Lodi. NJ 07644 973.473.7410

Mercer County - www.bgcmercer.org

Established 1937

Trenton Club

212 Centre Street Trenton, NJ 08611 609.392.3191

Mercer County - www.bgcmercer.org

Established 1937

Trenton Club

212 Centre Street Trenton, NJ 08611 609.392.3191

Lawrence Club

1040 Spruce Street Lawrence, NJ 08648 609.695.6060

CLUB LOCATIONS

Monmouth County - www.bgcmonmouth.org

Established 1938

Asbury Park Club

1201 Monroe Avenue Asbury Park, NJ 07712 732,775,7862

Red Bank Club

138 Dr. James Parker Boulevard Red Bank, NJ 07701 732.530.0065

Long Branch Club

231 Wilbur Ray Avenue Long Branch, NJ 07740

Neptune Club

3455 West Bangs Avenue Neptune, NJ 07753

Newark - www. bgcn.org

Established 1938 1 Avon Avenue Newark, NJ 07108 973.242.1200

Northwest New Jersey - www.bgcnwnj.org

Established 1970

Peguannock Club

19 Oak Avenue Pequannock, NJ 07440 973.633.9007

Wayne Club

153 Garside Avenue Wayne, NJ 07470 973.956.0033

Paterson & Passaic - www.bgcppnj.org

Established 1961 & 1906

Passaic Club

14-20 Hudson Street Passaic, NJ 07055 973.777.7235

Paterson Club

264 21st Avenue Paterson, NJ 07501 973.279.3055

Salvation Army Ironbound (Newark) easternusa.salvationarmy.org/new-jersey/newark/ newark-ironbound-boys-and-girls-club/

Established 1941 11 Providence Street Newark, NJ 07105 973.344.2698

Union County - www.bgcuc.org

Established 1955

Elizabeth Club

513-515 Richmond Street Elizabeth, NJ 07202 908.351.3344

Plainfield Club

145 Park Avenue Plainfield, NJ 07060 908.822.8672

Union Club

1050 Jeanette Avenue Union, NJ 07083 908.687.2697

West Orange Community House - www.bgcwo.org

Established 1997 242 Main Street West Orange, NJ 07052 973.736.1282

Military Club locations

Earle Navy Youth Center

Established 2004 201 Hwy 34 Building C-62 Colts Neck, NJ 07722 732.866.2148

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

Dix Youth Programs

Established 1999 Building 1279 Locust Street Fort Dix, NJ 08640 609.562.5061

Lakehurst Youth Programs

Established 2000 Building 487 Walsh Road Lakehurst, NJ 08733 732.323.4043

McGuire Youth Programs

Established 1996 Building 3830 East Scott Street JB MDL, NJ 08641 609.754.5437

Picatinny Arsenal Youth Services

Established 1999 Building 3228, Blacksmith Road Picatinny, NJ 07806 973.724.7183

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Enabling all young people to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens

Congratulations to the 2024
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finalists for their extraordinary
achievements in Leadership,
Service, Academic Excellence
and Dedication to living a
Healthy Lifestyle.



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Route 22 Toyota

109 Route 22 West Hillside, NJ 07205 Route22Toyota.com



6608 John F Kennedy Blvd West New York, NJ 07093 HudsonHonda.com



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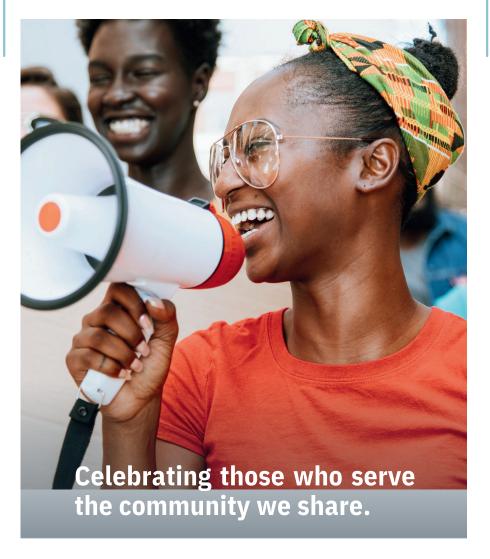
We Exist to Build Great Things.®

Who we build is as important as what we build.

DPR proudly supports the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey.







We're proud to honor all of the New Jersey Youth of the Year finalists for the work you do to make our community a better place.

pnc.com



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NJEA & its members

proudly salute all of the

Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

2024 Youth of the Year Honorees



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TAKES GREAT TO CHANGE

We support the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey and their Youth of the Year Program that honors and acknowledges the amazing accomplishments of teen leaders.

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Proud to do our part to help bright minds achieve bright futures.

The Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey are dedicated to empowering students and giving them a chance at a brighter future.

An idea we can all get behind.

At Citi, we commend the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey on their efforts and are pleased to support their invaluable work.



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SOBEL FAMILY FOUNDATION

We are proud to support the New Jersey Youth of the Year program.

Congratulations to the 2024 Youth of the Year finalists for their extraordinary achievements.

Wishing the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey continued success in serving Club youth across the state.





Valley is proud to support the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey.

Congratulations to all this year's New Jersey State and Military Youth honorees.



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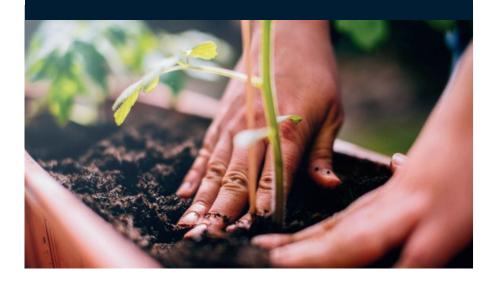
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Congratulations to the sixteen 2024 Youth of the Year Finalists from across the state.



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