

2025 NEW JERSEY

Youth of Year

RECEPTION & AWARD CEREMONY

May 13, 2025

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

Conference Center Ballroom University Hall, 7th Floor



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
IN NEW JERSEY



BRAM GROUP





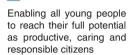
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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS



Congratulations to the 2025 Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey finalists for their extraordinary achievements in Leadership, Service, Academic Excellence and Dedication to living a Healthy Lifestyle.



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Message from the New Jersey Board President and State Director

Welcome friends and supporters of Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey! We are thrilled to have you join us for the 2025 Youth of the Year Reception and Award Ceremony—a night dedicated to celebrating the extraordinary achievements of sixteen outstanding Club teens from across the state.





Each of these remarkable young leaders has

earned recognition for their leadership, service, academic excellence, and commitment to living a healthy lifestyle. They are shining examples of what it means to be a Club kid, embodying the spirit, strength, and promise of Boys & Girls Clubs. Through this premier leadership initiative, our NJ Youth of the Year finalists amplify their voices, sharpen their leadership skills, and connect with their communities—all while earning scholarships to support their bright futures.

Tonight, we also honor a longstanding tradition of impact. Over the past decade, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey has awarded more than \$850,000 in college scholarships through the Youth of the Year program, helping hundreds of Club teens pursue higher education and lifelong success.

As we introduce this year's inspiring finalists, we look forward to announcing the 2025 New Jersey State Youth of the Year and Military Youth of the Year—two exceptional teens who will go on to represent New Jersey at the Northeast regional competition on June 17. These youth will serve as ambassadors not only for their Clubs but for young people across the nation.

We are deeply grateful to all of our sponsors, whose generosity makes this program possible. A special thank you to our Presenting Sponsors—Amazon, Comcast, and the BRAM Auto Group—as well as our dedicated Corporate Advisory Board, whose passion and leadership have been instrumental in shaping this event's success. We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to DCA Commissioner Suárez and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for their continued support and commitment to youth empowerment.

A sincere thank you to NBC4's Violeta Yas, a proud Boys $\mathscr E$ Girls Club alum, for serving as our Master of Ceremonies for the third year in a row. Her passion and connection to our mission continue to inspire.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and the 21 Boys & Girls Clubs serving youth across New Jersey, thank you for investing in the next generation of leaders. Together, we are empowering these exceptional teens to lead, succeed, and inspire—giving them the confidence and tools to pursue the great futures they deserve.

With appreciation,

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

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



Award Ceremony Schedule 7-8PM

Opening Remarks

Susan Haspel

State Director, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

Master of Ceremonies

Violeta Yas NBC4

Keynote Speaker

Jacquelyn A. Suárez

Commissioner

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

New Jersey Youth of the Year Introductions

Violeta Yas, Master of Ceremonies

2025 New Jersey Military Youth of the Year Announcement Sade O.

2024 New Jersey Military Youth of the Year

2025 New Jersey State Youth of the Year Announcement

Alexandra P.

2024 New Jersey Youth of the Year

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 NBC10 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.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

JACQUELYN A. SUÁREZ COMMISSIONER NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Jacquelyn A. Suárez was named Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) on September 18, 2023, making her the first Hispanic commissioner to lead the DCA. Commissioner 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 Commissioner of one of the State's largest departments, she 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 spearheads a variety of departmental initiatives, including ending veteran homelessness in NJ, expanding shared services, developing homeownership opportunities, and creating a pipeline for public sector employment. Before her appointment as Commissioner, Suárez served as the Director of the Division of Local Government Services since 2021.

Commissioner Suárez leads the Department with a focus on three core pillars: Data-Driven Decision Making, Stakeholder Engagement and Partnerships, and Solutions-Focused Approaches to Managing Challenges. These guiding principles have empowered the Department to address policy challenges more effectively, resulting in improved outcomes. Under her leadership, DCA has allocated over \$100 million through the Affordable Housing Trust Fund to develop affordable housing statewide. She has positioned the Department as a leader in providing innovative data tools that empower stakeholders to leverage data for insights, decision-making, and research. Commissioner Suárez has also prioritized addressing wealth disparities by expanding programs to build generational wealth through homeownership.

Commissioner 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 Acting Commissioner, Department of Community Affairs



State of New Jersey

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY Lieutenant Governor DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS 101 SOUTH BROAD STREET PO Box 800 TRENTON, NJ 08625-0800

JACQUELYN A. SUÁREZ
Commissioner

April 3, 2025

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

Dear Youth of the Year Program Honorees:

Congratulations to each and every one of you for being named a New Jersey Youth of the Year in 2025 by the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey! This recognition is a credit to you, your loved ones, and all the many people who have supported you in your endeavors.

While you are just starting out on your journeys to achieve big dreams, the lessons in academic achievement, community service, health and well-being, and leadership that you've learned at the Boys & Girls Club will serve you well as you pursue higher education.

Remember that you are inspiring people in your communities everyday by the examples you set. Continue to aspire to great things and continue to positively impact the people around you.

We are incredibly proud of you and look forward to watching you grow and reach your full potential as productive, compassionate, and responsible citizens of our state and our country.

Sincerely,

Jacquelyn A. Suárez

segulyn a Diránz

Commissioner





2025 NEW JERSEY Youth of Year



The New Jersey State Youth of the Year program is the premier leadership and recognition initiative of Boys & Girls Clubs, celebrating the outstanding achievements of Club teens who exemplify leadership, service, academic excellence, and healthy living. These remarkable young individuals reflect the transformative impact Boys & Girls Clubs have on the lives of youth across the state.

Each year, local Boys & Girls Clubs nominate an exceptional young person between the ages of 14 and 18 to represent their Club in this inspiring journey of personal growth and leadership. With the guidance of dedicated Club staff, nominees work toward the distinguished titles of New Jersey State Youth of the Year and Military Youth of the Year. Throughout the process, candidates receive comprehensive mentorship and training to strengthen their public speaking, interview skills, and essay writing in preparation for the state competition.

This prestigious program highlights the most exemplary teen leaders from Boys & Girls Clubs throughout New Jersey, ultimately selecting two individuals to represent the state at the regional and national levels. These Youth of the Year finalists serve as powerful ambassadors for their peers, using their voices to advocate for young people across the country.

Finalists are evaluated through a rigorous process that includes formal interviews with a panel of esteemed judges, essay submissions, and overall application quality. The winners of the New Jersey State Youth of the Year and Military Youth of the Year titles will be announced at the Youth of the Year Reception and Award Ceremony on May 13, 2025, at Montclair State University.

Thanks to the generous support of Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey and Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the New Jersey State Youth of the Year will receive a \$12,500 scholarship, and the State Military Youth of the Year will receive a \$6,000 scholarship. The top three runners-up will each be awarded \$3,500 scholarships, while all other finalists will receive \$2,000 scholarships.

As part of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's national Youth of the Year initiative—proudly supported by Signature Sponsor Kohl's—New Jersey's winners will move on to compete at the regional level in June. The Northeast Regional winner will receive a renewable \$5,000 scholarship (up to \$20,000) and advance to the national competition in September, where six finalists (five regional winners and one military representative) will compete for the title of National Youth of the Year and a renewable \$12,500 scholarship (up to \$50,000).

The Youth of the Year experience is truly transformative, shining a spotlight on leadership, resilience, and the limitless potential of today's youth. These inspiring young leaders prove that GREAT FUTURES START HERE—at Boys & Girls Clubs.



2025 NEW JERSEY

Youth of Year Finalists



Nadayser W.
Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City

Member for 2 years

Career Aspiration: Therapist

"I know who I am, so I know where I am going."



Valerie M.Boys & Girls Club of Camden County

Member for 9 years

Career Aspiration: Criminal Attorney

"I am setting the precedent to show what it means to be resilient, empowered and passionate. Quiero ser la fuerza para mi comunidad. (I want to be the strength of my community.)"



Gian U.Boys & Girls Club of Clifton

Member for 9 years

Career Aspiration: Aerospace/Mechanical Engineer

"The Boys & Girls Club of Clifton has been my second family--a family that has watched me grow, learn, and believed in me."



2025 NEW JERSEY

Youth of Year Finalists



Andranae` S.Boys & Girls Clubs of Cumberland County

Member for 2 years

Career Aspiration: Psychiatrist

"The Club taught me that the future starts with the person and that motivation is needed to thrive and get further in life."



Kiara G.Boys & Girls Club of Garfield

Member for 8 years

Career Aspiration: Attorney

"When I first joined the Boys & Girls Club, I was just looking for a place to belong. What I found was a community that helped me grow, build confidence, and discover the leader within me."



Destiny D.Boys & Girls Club of Hawthorne

Member for 12 years

Career Aspiration: Financial Planner

"The Club isn't just about meetings and events; it's about the friendships, lessons and memories that stay with you long after. "





Cianni E.Boys & Girls Clubs of Hudson County

Member for 3 years

Career Aspiration: Animator/Graphic Designer

"The Club has helped me open my wings and fly like a butterfly. I learned to leave my comfort zone and expand and explore my world."



Faith M.Boys & Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen County

Member for 9 years

Career Aspiration: Forensic Scientist

"The Boys & Girls Club is a place full of chances and opportunities."



Johnnie E.Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County

Member for 6 years

Career Aspiration: Broadcaster

"The Boys and Girls Club of Mercer County has been essential to my growth and development."



2025 NEW JERSEY

Youth #Year Finalists



Rebecca L.Boys & Girls Clubs of Monmouth County

Member for 4 years

Career Aspiration: Nurse

"I don't fit into boxes. I create my own world and invite the bold to join me."



Precious A.Boys & Girls Club of Newark

Member for 8 years

Career Aspiration: Data Scientist

"I've been at my Club for over 8 years now and I still feel so drawn to come back. This is my safe place!"



Jake D.Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest New Jersey

Member for 10 years

Career Aspiration: Chiropractor

"Leadership isn't just about being commanding. It is about the strength and character it takes to stand your ground in the face of adversity."



2025 NEW JERSEY

Youth #Year Finalists



Jessica N.Boys & Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic

Member for 4 years

Career Aspiration: Congresswoman

"The Boys & Girls Club of Paterson and Passaic works hard every day to bring light to our community that is often clouded with darkness; I am grateful that I can be part of these efforts to engage with my town."



Jeremiah D.Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County

Member for 3 years

Career Aspiration: Children & Family Therapist

"Leadership is not about being perfect. It is about growth, resilience and lifting others up."



Symirerah P.Fort Dix Youth Programs

Member for 2 years

Career Aspiration: Airman in Air Force

"Make a good mark wherever you go."



Briahnee C.McGuire Youth Programs

Member for 2 years

Career Aspiration: Lawyer

"The first step to helping yourself is improving your environment."

Congratulations

2025 NEW JERSEY YOUTH OF THE YEAR FINALISTS



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Supervisor, Leave Administration Wakefern Food Corp.

Ryan Gates

Client & Community Relations Director PNC

Michelle Montgomery

Regional Area Group Manager, US Personal Banking Citi

Lisa Ruano

Regional Communications Lead – Northeast DPR Construction

Brendan Zanetti

Vice President, Public Affairs Market Manager - NJ Citizens

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. Dudley 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

Jersey 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

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

Pequannock 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

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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We are proud to support the New Jersey Youth of the Year Program

Congratulations to the 2025 Youth of the Year finalists on their outstanding achievements in leading, succeeding and serving as a voice for the next generation

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





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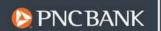
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器Citizens

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Citizens is proud to support Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey and the 2025 Youth of the Year Program.

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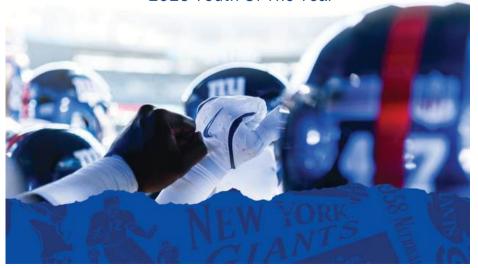
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NJEA & its members

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2025 NJ Youth of the Year honorees



Congratulations to this year's New Jersey Youth of the Year Honorees

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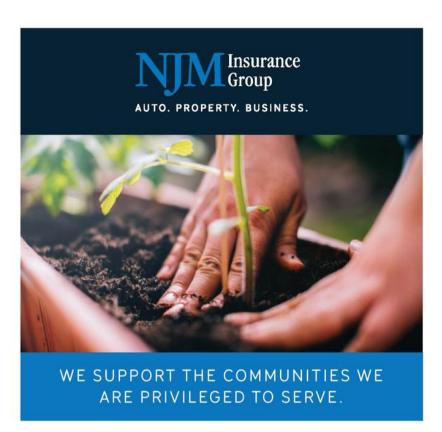


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YOUTH OF YEAR?



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
IN NEW JERSEY



Youth #Year Finalists



amazon











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