



EXCEPTIONAL TEEN NAMED 2026 NEW JERSEY “MILITARY YOUTH OF THE YEAR” BY BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS IN NEW JERSEY

Emryn W. to Receive College Scholarship and Compete for Northeast Regional Title This June

Clifton, NJ, May 15, 2026 – Emryn W. from the McGuire Youth Programs has been named the 2026 New Jersey Military Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey and Boys & Girls Clubs of America for her leadership, service, academic excellence, dedication to living a healthy lifestyle, and commitment to life and workforce readiness.

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 healthy living. Now in its 79th year, the program celebrates some of our nation’s most inspiring young people on their path to great futures.

As the 2026 New Jersey Military Youth of the Year, Emryn will serve as an ambassador for Boys & Girls Clubs and military-connected youth across the state. She will also receive a \$6,000 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey and Boys & Girls Clubs of America and advance to compete for the Northeast Military Youth of the Year title, followed by the National Military Youth of the Year and ultimately the National Youth of the Year title.

Emryn has been an outstanding member of the Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst McGuire Youth Programs for the past seven years. She has actively participated in and volunteered for several Club initiatives, including serving as President of Keystone Club, Smart Girls Club, Art Club, and Graphic Design Club. Through Keystone Club, a premier teen leadership and service program, Emryn has helped organize community holiday family dinners, membership drive events, pre-teen dances, STEM workshops, and the installation-wide Purple Up Month of the Military Child Extravaganza, which welcomed more than 600 youth and family members. In addition, Emryn advocates for younger Club members through Torch Club, a pre-teen leadership and service program where she helps gather ideas and feedback from youth for future programming. Through SMART Girls, a prevention and self-esteem enhancement program for girls ages 9–12, she serves as a mentor and positive role model. Emryn is also passionate about art and bullying prevention. One of her goals is to develop anti-bullying workshops that help youth better understand the social-emotional and social media impacts of

bullying. She also hopes to expand arts programming and promote the positive impact art can have on mental health and wellness. Emryn credits art with helping her overcome depression and hopes to inspire others to use creativity as a form of healing and self-expression. She says Keystone Club has had the greatest impact on her life by giving her opportunities to engage, learn, build meaningful friendships, and connect with fellow military teens. These experiences have helped shape her passion for teaching and youth advocacy. Emryn exemplifies leadership, resilience, compassion, and a deep commitment to serving others.

Emryn is currently a high school sophomore from Burlington County, New Jersey, who maintains a 3.3 GPA. Her long-term goal is to pursue a career in graphic design.

“We are incredibly proud of Emryn and each of this year’s New Jersey Youth of the Year honorees,” said Susan Haspel, State Director of Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. “These remarkable young leaders embody resilience, compassion, leadership, and a commitment to making a difference in their communities. Being named New Jersey Youth of the Year is an extraordinary achievement and lifelong honor. As the 2026 New Jersey Military Youth of the Year, Emryn will serve as a spokesperson for kids and teens across the state who face the many unique challenges associated with military life.”

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. Raymond James is the Presenting Partner of Youth of the Year, sharing a dedication to America’s youth. Raymond James is committed to supporting Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s academic success programs and empowering the next generation with the tools, resources, and mentorship they need to thrive in and out of the classroom.

In June, Emryn This summer, will vie for the title of Northeast Military Youth of the Year and an additional \$20,000 college scholarship. Each region’s military Youth of the Year will advance to the National Military Youth of the Year event for an additional \$20,000 scholarship. The National Military Youth of the Year will then advance to the final stage of the journey, National Youth of the Year, which presents the opportunity to receive an additional scholarship of \$50,000 and a brand-new Toyota Corolla.

For more information about the New Jersey Youth of the Year program, visit [BGCNJ’s YOY Annual Event – 2026 | Boy and Girls Clubs in New Jersey](#)

About Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey

Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey is a statewide alliance of 21 Boys & Girls Club organizations serving more than 59,000 youth ages 5–18 across the Garden State. Together, New Jersey Clubs provide young people with safe spaces, caring mentors, and life-changing opportunities that empower them to reach their full potential. Through advocacy, public awareness, capacity building, and strategic partnerships, Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey helps strengthen and expand the impact of Club programs statewide. Learn more at [BGCNJ.org](#).

About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

For more than 160 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America ([BGCA.org](#)) has provided a safe place for kids and teens to learn and grow. Clubs offer caring adult mentors, fun and friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours. Boys & Girls Clubs programming promotes academic success, good character and leadership, and healthy lifestyles. Over 5,500 Clubs serve more than 4 million young people 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. The national headquarters is located in Atlanta. Learn more about Boys & Girls Clubs of America on [Facebook](#) and [X](#).

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