



**Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey Proudly Announces
2026 New Jersey Youth of the Year Finalists**

Fifteen exceptional Boys & Girls Club teen leaders to compete for the prestigious New Jersey State and Military Youth of the Year titles on May 12

Honorees are creating meaningful change in their communities while preparing for careers in fields such as law, engineering, education, healthcare, technology, and more

Clifton, New Jersey, May 5, 2026 – Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey (BGCNJ) proudly announces the 2026 New Jersey Youth of the Year finalists, representing 15 local Clubs and Youth Centers across the state. This prestigious recognition celebrates outstanding teens for their inspiring leadership, dedication to service, academic achievement, and commitment to healthy lifestyles. These exceptional young people exemplify the mission of Boys & Girls Clubs—demonstrating the transformative impact of Clubs in empowering youth, strengthening communities, and preparing the next generation of leaders.

Each year, two extraordinary teens are selected as the New Jersey State Youth of the Year and New Jersey Military Youth of the Year—the highest honor a Boys & Girls Club member can achieve. These honorees serve as ambassadors for Boys & Girls Club youth and role models for young people throughout the state and nation.

2026 New Jersey Youth of the Year Finalists

Local Boys & Girls Clubs	Youth Finalist	Years of Club membership	Career Interest
Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City	Aryiane H.	12	Criminal Defense Attorney
Boys & Girls Club of Camden County	Ethan F.	9	Automotive Mechanic
Boys & Girls Club of Clifton	Avi S.	11	Financial Engineer
Boys & Girls Clubs of Cumberland County	Andrae S.	3	Psychologist
Boys & Girls Club of Garfield	Jacqueline O.	2	Civil Engineer
Boys & Girls Club of Hawthorne	Aniyah W	7	Nurse
Boys & Girls Clubs of Hudson County	Sariyah F.	12	Sound Engineer
Boys & Girls Clubs of Lower Bergen County	Alexandra P.	5	Social Worker
Boys & Girls Clubs of Mercer County	Serenity B.	3	Lawyer

Boys & Girls Clubs of Monmouth County	Cheyenne P.	12	Social Worker/Early Childhood Educator
Boys & Girls Club of Newark	Precious A.	10	Creative Technologist
Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest NJ	Michael D.	13	Teacher
Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County	Jordan B.	10	Accountant
Fort Dix Youth Programs	Isaiah C.	7	Professional Athlete
McGuire Youth Programs	Emryn W.	2	Graphic Design/Art Teacher

“We are immensely proud of all the New Jersey Youth of the Year finalists—these remarkable young leaders truly deserve to be celebrated,” said Susan Haspel, State Director of Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey. “Earning the title of New Jersey Youth of the Year is a lifelong honor and achievement. Our State and Military Youth of the Year winners will serve as powerful voices for Boys & Girls Club youth and inspiring role models for young people everywhere.”

With Legacy Sponsorship support from the DPR Foundation and Presenting Sponsorship support from Amazon and the BRAM Auto Group, the 2026 New Jersey Youth of the Year Celebration will take place on Tuesday, May 12, at Montclair State University’s Conference Center Ballroom in Montclair, New Jersey. This inspiring evening will honor the 15 outstanding teen leaders and culminate in the announcement of the 2026 New Jersey State and Military Youth of the Year winners.

Violeta Yas, Emmy Award-winning meteorologist and member of NBC4 New York’s Storm Team 4, will once again serve as Master of Ceremonies. Growing up, Yas was a member of the Boys & Girls Club of Garfield and remains a passionate advocate for the Boys & Girls Club Movement. She was inducted into the Boys & Girls Clubs’ Wall of Fame in 2022.

For more than 75 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s Youth of the Year program has recognized young people for their outstanding leadership, service, academic excellence, and dedication to health and wellbeing. Thanks to the generous support of Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey, dedicated sponsors, 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, while all other finalists will receive \$2,000 scholarships in recognition of their outstanding achievements.

As part of Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s national Youth of the Year initiative—proudly supported by Signature Sponsor Raymond James—New Jersey’s winners will advance to the Northeast Regional Youth of the Year competition on June 9. The regional winner will receive a renewable \$5,000 scholarship (up to \$20,000) and advance to the national competition later in the year, where six finalists—five regional winners and one National Military Youth of the Year—will compete for the title of National Youth of the Year and a renewable \$12,500 scholarship (up to \$50,000).

For more information about the New Jersey Youth of the Year program, event, or sponsorship opportunities, 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 local Boys & Girls Club organizations serving nearly 60,000 youth ages 5–18 across the Garden State. This collaborative network works to strengthen local Clubs, raise public awareness, and secure resources to expand opportunities for young people and help them achieve great futures. To learn more, visit www.bgcnj.org.