BGCA’s Premier Program for Teens

Since 1947, Youth of the Year has been Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s premier youth recognition program, honoring extraordinary young people for their achievements in leadership, service, academics, and health and wellness. Each year, one exceptional Club member is selected to be the National Youth of the Year. It is the most prestigious honor bestowed upon a Club member.

Youth of the Year Journey

A mainstay of the Boys & Girls Club Experience, Youth of the Year is a year-round program that helps young people develop the necessary leadership tools and character traits to be successful now and productive, caring, responsible adults in the future. Becoming National Youth of the Year is an exciting and inspiring journey. Starting at the local level, Club members of all ages are encouraged to participate in the leadership program and in a rigorous application process. Local judges select one teen to serve as each Club organization’s Youth of the Year. Each Club Youth of the Year goes on to participate in the state event. Military and non-military state Youth of the Year move on to regional events. Six teens, including five regional Youth of the Year and the military Youth of the Year, advance to Washington, D.C., for the National Youth of the Year Gala and Celebration Dinner, where one outstanding young person is named Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s national teen spokesperson.

National Youth of the Year Role

The National Youth of the Year serves as the voice of nearly four million Club youth and Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s teen spokesperson, educating millions of Americans about the power of the Club Experience, and elevating key issues facing kids and teens. The National Youth of the Year’s duties can include appearing at regional and national events, serving as a media spokesperson and teen thought leader, and meeting with political, corporate and community leaders. Continuing decades of tradi-tion, the National Youth of the Year and regional finalists also meet with the President of the United States in the Oval Office.

Partner Support

The Youth of the Year recognition program is presented by Disney, which has supported BGCA for more than 50 years, empowering young people to reach their full potential and providing youth with access to the tools they need to build the great futures they imagine. Toyota, the Signature Sponsor of Youth of the Year, is committed to helping improve the quality of life in our communities, and has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring youth have access to a quality education. Through the generous support of the Youth of the Year sponsors, participants are awarded scholarships to help them further their educations.

• State Youth of the Year and State Military Youth of the Year receive $5,000

• Regional Youth of the Year are awarded an additional $10,000, renewable for four years up to $40,000

• The National Military Youth of the Year receives an additional $20,000

• The National Youth of the Year receives an additional scholarship of $25,000, renewable for four years up to $100,000

Through the Youth of the Year program, young people showcase their talents and achievements, share their hopes and dreams, and work toward a bright and positive future. Youth of the Year honorees at any level – local, state, regional and national – are shining examples and living proof that GREAT FUTURES START HERE – at Boys & Girls Clubs.