

Vineland Student is State Youth of the Year at Boys & Girls Clubs of NJ Gala at Stockton

Burlington County Student Named NJ Military Youth of the Year

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Galloway Township, NJ - Jennifer Negron, an 18-year-old senior at Vineland High School, tonight was named the state Youth of the Year by the Boys & Girls Clubs of New Jersey at a Gala held at Stockton University.

Negron, a member of the Vineland club, received a \$10,000 scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of NJ, as well as a \$5,000 scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America. She said she plans to attend Cumberland County College in the fall and eventually to study bilingual education.

"The Boys and Girls Club has helped me out a lot with goals and being able to accomplish them," Negron said. She added that she enjoys helping children complete their homework and getting help from her own mentors at the Vineland club.

Marcel Tyson, 17, of McGuire Youth Programs, was named NJ Military Youth of the Year and also received a \$10,000 scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of NJ, and a \$5,000 scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America. Tyson is a senior at Northern Burlington High School, and plans to study industrial engineering at Elizabeth State University in the fall.

Over 250 members, families and friends from Boys & Girls Clubs throughout New Jersey watched as 19 finalists competed at the awards ceremony, which was held for the first time in South Jersey at Stockton's Campus Center. New Jersey's Boys & Girls Clubs serve 73,000 youths. The finalists each received a \$2,000 scholarship, and the top three runners-up received \$3,500 each.

"Every young man and woman here tonight exemplifies what hard work, perseverance and active participation can do for oneself," said Stockton Acting President Harvey Kesselman. "You

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embody the values of leadership while demonstrating exceptional character.”

“Be proud of what you have accomplished, and continue using your drive, energy and talents to forge your path forward to success,” he said.

Dr. Kesselman went on to say that Stockton has been a strong supporter of the Atlantic City Boys & Girls Club for the past nine years, including the Champions of Youth program, “which provides a ‘road map’ for student success.”

Over the last seven years, four Stockton Champions of Youth members from Atlantic City have gone on to win the state Youth of the Year title, including 2014 winner Sparkle Prevard, a Stockton student who became Northeast Regional winner and met President Obama, Dr. Kesselman noted.

Deon Davis, of the Boys & Girls Club of Atlantic City and a member of the Stockton Champions of Youth, was one of four top finalists, along with Amauris Peralta of the Clifton, NJ club, Melanie Oliveira of the Newark Ironbound club and Negron, who ultimately won.

Davis, who has been accepted to enter Stockton in the fall, said the Boys & Girls Club and Champions of Youth partnership “is a collaborative experience that helps mold and shape youth.”

Nuno Francisco, president of the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs in New Jersey (BGCNJ), said “\$50,000 in scholarships was being distributed tonight alone.” He thanked Stockton and other community partners, including the NJ Education Association, ShopRite stores, the Horizon Foundation, PNC Bank and Cablevision.

Amy Freeze, an Emmy Award-winning meteorologist for WABC-TV’s Eyewitness News, served as the emcee for the program.

State finalists also spent two days touring Stockton’s Galloway campus, meeting with faculty and deans, and visiting the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, owned by Stockton alumnus Anthony Catanoso.

The New Jersey winner will go on to compete with nine other State Youths of the Year for the Northeast Regional title.

Each Regional winner will receive a \$10,000 scholarship, renewable for four years, from Boys & Girls Clubs of America and continue on to compete for the title of National Youth of the Year and a \$25,000 scholarship which is renewable for four years.

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