

Boys & Girls Clubs of Wisconsin: Teen leaders meet and compete to become club Youth of the Year

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Winners Receive \$25,000 in Scholarships, Visit Legislators Tuesday to Voice Their Views

Madison – This Monday, fifteen regional teen finalists will come together to compete for *Boys & Girls Clubs 'State Youth of the Year'*, the highest honor given to a club member. The Packers, Brewers and Bucks will be joined by others to award \$25,000 in Home Team Scholarships, and the finalist will go on to represent 138,500 Wisconsin youth and compete at the Midwest Event.

On Tuesday's "Advocacy Day", these fifteen leaders will meet with the Governor, Secretary of State, and state elected officials at the capitol to share policy aspirations and concerns. They will each speak from the Assembly Chambers Podium starting at 9:00 am, and later hold a 'State of the Youth Roundtable' in the GAR Hearing Room at Noon Lunch. These teen leaders will discuss issues of interest to their generation, which includes improving mental health, reducing violence, stopping sexual assault and preventing substance abuse.

Youth of the Year brings together the state's best and brightest teen members, as the signature effort to foster a new generation of leaders. Wisconsin clubs work with over 138,500 youth at 189 sites across 79 communities, and local competitions recently narrowed the field down to these fifteen winners. They meet Monday with nine esteemed judges at the Park Hotel on Capitol Square, where they will be evaluated on presentation, speeches and interviews. The evening culminates in an Awards Gala at the Premier Park Hotel at 6:00 Monday evening.

The stars of the Gala are the top five finalists chosen earlier that day. They will be joined by Miss Wisconsin Willow Newell, the first history-making Black woman to hold the title, and a champion for “The ART of Belonging”. The MC of the Awards is Lawrence Kirby II of Racine, Vice President Community Manager at JP Morgan Chase. Judges include Bianca Martin, Host of City Cast Madison; Maggie Gau, Chief of Staff for Governor Evers; CC Vang, UW-Madison Office of Financial Aid; and Cheryl Rapp, Finance Officer with the Edvest Plan at DFI.

Wisconsin clubs serve more kids per population than any other state in the country, and more youth than any other organization outside of the public school system. Clubs also serve two million meals and snacks each year at no cost, because it's hard to learn and grow when you're hungry. For more information, visit www.bgcwisconsin.org/youth-of-the-year-award