



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF THE EMERALD COAST

**EXCEPTIONAL FORT WALTON BEACH TEEN WINS YOUTH OF THE YEAR AND
KENWOOD ELEMENTARY STUDENT WINS JUNIOR YOUTH OF THE YEAR
FROM BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF THE EMERALD COAST**

***Lucy Loiocano to Now Vie for State Title and Scholarship
Avery Torres wins Junior Youth of the Year***

Fort Walton Beach, FL, 3/15/2018– On March 15th the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast hosted its Annual Dinner at the Emerald Grande @ Harbor Walk Village; an annual event dedicated to recognizing the successes of exemplary youth and staff. The organization is pleased to announce Lucy Loiocano, member of the Boys & Girls Clubs Fort Walton Beach Teen Center and student at Choctawhatchee High School is named the Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast. Lucy was Selected among many outstanding youth within our organization.

This is Loiocano’s second year competing at the organizational level for the Youth of the Year title. Her accomplishments include three years as member of the Keystone Club (a teen group dedicated to leadership and community service) and former President, during which time she attended two Boys & Girls Clubs of America National Keystone Conferences and served many community service hours in environmental clean ups, projects benefitting local foster children and her Boys & Girls Club community. She is currently a cadet in Junior ROTC at Choctawhatchee Senior High School, having just completed a year serving as the High School’s Girls Basketball Team Manager. Now, Lucy is serving in her second year on the planning committee for the 5th Annual YOUTH LEADership Conference, a teen leadership development conference hosted in partnership with United for A Good Cause, taking place at the Fort Walton Beach Youth Club on April 21st. She will spend the remainder of the year serving as a Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast ambassador, sharing her experience as a member who benefitted from not one, but a network of mentors who made it their business to make her realize her full potential as a leader; a productive, caring and responsible citizen.

“We are excited and proud that Lucy Loiocano is our 2018 Youth of the Year for the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast. Her commitment to be a true leader in her community is evident in all that she does. She has lead by example and is continuously looking for opportunities to better herself and her peers. We wish Lucy all the best of luck as she represents our organization in the State of Florida Youth of the Year competition and look forward to her representing us for the next year,” said Shervin Rassa, CEO of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast also celebrates its 2018 Junior Youth of the Year winner, Avery Torres, member of the Boys & Girls Clubs Kenwood Club and student at Kenwood Elementary School. Torres too will serve as an ambassador to the Clubs through speaking engagements furthering our mission.

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 live a healthy lifestyle. Now in its 71st year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation's most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures and encourages all kids to lead, succeed and inspire. Lucy will go on to vie for the Florida Youth of the Year title and a \$5,000 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year recognition program is presented by Disney, who has supported the youth advocacy organization 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 dedicated to inspiring the next generations of engineers, thinkers and leaders who will help drive the American economy. Additional support is provided by University of Phoenix, a committed partner who has worked with Boys & Girls Clubs of America on many Academic Success initiatives, and the Taco Bell Foundation, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier partner for teen empowerment.

In April, Loiocano travels to Sarasota for the Florida State Youth of the Year competition and a chance to compete for the title of Southeast Region Youth of the Year and an additional \$10,000 college scholarship, renewable for four years up to \$40,000. Five regional winners will advance to Washington, D.C. in September 2018, to compete for the title of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year will receive an additional scholarship of \$25,000, renewable each year up to \$100,000 and will have the opportunity to meet with the President of the United States in the White House.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit www.youthoftheyear.org.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast is the premier youth development organization that began in 1968. Currently, The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Emerald Coast maintains eight Clubs covering three counties: Walton, Okaloosa and Escambia, serving over 3,200 youth annually.

Our Mission is, "To enable all young people, especially those that need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens."

About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

For more than 150 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (<http://www.bgca.org>) has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, 4,300 Clubs serve 4 million young people annually 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. They provide a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun, friendship, and high-impact youth development programs on a daily basis during critical non-school hours. Priority programs emphasize academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles. In a Harris Survey of alumni, 54 percent said the Club saved their lives. National headquarters are located in Atlanta. Learn more at [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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