

Kids FIRST



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248.473.1400

Growing our Scholarship program

Scholarships for Youth of the Year enable our exemplary high school students to receive financial support to advance their education at colleges, universities or trade schools. B&GCSM Board Chair Tom Hoeg and his wife Renee' made a five-year commitment to fund \$1,000, \$750 and \$500 in scholarship awards each year. We appreciate their generosity, and invite others to follow their lead.

Alayna Bell shines as Youth of the Year

It was a tough call to make with 11 outstanding candidates for the 2008 Youth of the Year, but Alayna Bell shone as brightly as her name when she received the award Jan. 26 at the annual event held at the Sheraton Detroit Novi Hotel. India Smith, of the Romulus Wick Club, was selected as first runner-up and Samuel "Sam" Maddox, of the Bloomer Club, was named second runner-up.

What set Alayna apart were her leadership skills and amazing growth from a shy child to a mature, responsible teen, eager to help others. She gives Boys & Girls Clubs a lot of credit for her achievement.

"I was very quiet and people thought I was stuck up. I needed to branch out and talk to other people," she said. "Making friends at the Club helped me show my true emotions. I learned to say what's on my mind and let people understand who I am."

A six-year member, Alayna belonged to the Sarver Club in Redford until it closed and then she joined the newly built Dick & Sandy Dauch Campus – NFL/YET Boys & Girls Club.



Youth of the Year Winner Alayna Bell, center, is flanked by runners-up Sam Maddox and India Smith.

Clubs give Alayna tools to succeed

The Clubs' programs and activities – arts, fitness, sports, character development and others – helped her overcome personal challenges. They also enhanced her talent as a budding artist and improved her leadership and time management skills.

Among her strengths, she is proud to say that she is "hard working and honest." Her interest in art is one form of self-expression. She created a sculpture – a life-like tombstone that dealt with the Iraq war – which won first place at the Boys & Girls Clubs regional competition and was entered into the national competition.

Club Director Jackie Banks notes that Alayna has become a leader. "She participated in career days, worked at the Club's nutrition center, and learned how to handle money. She has an excellent rapport with kids. She is also the president of the Keystone Club (a leadership and service program for teens). Getting to know people has opened doors for her."

A senior at Henry Ford Academy in Dearborn with a 3.6 GPA, Alayna belongs to the National Honor Society and Combat Underage Drinking Initiative at her charter school. She has taken a lead in organizing drives to collect food, blankets and toys for area nonprofits, including homeless shelters in her community. She plans to attend Oakland University in the fall to study business management and art. Her career goal is to become an art director at a marketing firm.

Among her lifelong goals are the desire to continue learning, doing her best, and being a mentor to others. "I must continue to learn in order to compete in this world. My African-American ancestors were not given the opportunity to be educated and that only motivates me more."

Saving the lives of our children

By Len Krichko, President and CEO



Detroit has garnered its share of bad headlines: highest rate of home foreclosures in the nation, poorest city in the U.S., most violent, and newly named, “the most deplorable.”

Too many youth in Detroit and adjacent inner cities live in neighborhoods rife with street gangs, drugs, crime and violence. We have the highest rate of high school dropouts in the country. Being a kid in these troubled cities is a tough challenge.

A sense of hope emanates from the safe haven of our 13 Boys & Girls Clubs that operate in our four-county region. We have actually saved lives. While we don't perform surgery or make heroic rescues, we extend a lifeline – a safe, supportive, nurturing structure where kids feel welcome, gain new skills and make friends.

We are often the safety net for endangered children who may not know where to turn if they are hungry, neglected or abused. Our beacon of light has consistently guided youth toward becoming responsible adults since 1926.

The Clubs are a buffer and a bolster between home and school. Our professional staff serves as tutors and mentors. We get to know each child on an individual basis. We often work in partnership with the schools. Our hard work pays off with a graduation rate among members that is 20 percent higher than average and an impressive 90 percent among members who attend Detroit Public Schools.

Tough times in Detroit have led to cutbacks to our organization from funding sources that have been the backbone of our budget. To bridge this gap, we are asking new and longtime supporters to consider making an individual, group or corporate donation. We've added an on-line donation link on our website to make this easier. We also ask that you share the stories of success in this newsletter with your business associates and philanthropy-minded friends.

The cost of providing a membership for each child is around \$500 per year, yet members are only charged \$50. The balance must be made up in donations and fundraising. To help prevent the city's inequities from limiting the future of our kids, please support Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan.

Gearing up for new funding efforts

The Friendship Club Breakfast on April 4 launched the official start of the 2008 Annual Giving Campaign. Table hosts were asked to invite business associates and friends who would help support the organization. The audience learned that 20 percent of members can't afford the annual membership of \$50, yet no child is turned away. The case for support was strengthened as 2008 Youth of the Year winners told their personal stories about how the Clubs impacted their lives.

Among the 240 guests who attended, nearly \$95,000 was raised. The successful event was spearheaded by B&GCSM Resource Development Chair Tom Goss, chairman of Goss, LLC, and B&GCSM Board Chair Tom Hoeg, executive VP and COO of Amerisure Insurance Companies, and sponsored by National City.

Past supporters are also being invited to contribute to the Annual Giving Campaign through a spring mailing. With an annual operating budget of \$6.6 million, a

solid \$2 million must come from individual donors this year.

“It's a tall order, yet with the help of supporters and board members, we can meet that goal,” said B&GCSM President and CEO Len Krichko.

“We need to become less reliant on grants and programs that have been shrinking over the past several years and gain more support among individual donors,” said Heather Rindels, senior vice president of development.

Several new fundraising efforts are in the works to help cover cutbacks from funding sources due to the region's economic downturn. Among them are:

- **A phone-a-thon** to 1,000 individuals is being conducted by a contracted call center.
- **Gain support from area businesses** in neighborhoods with Clubs.
- **A new on-line giving option.** Donations can be securely made on our website: www.bgcsm.org.



The Friendship Club Breakfast was a hit.

- **Obtain greater support** from private foundations.
- **Use the envelope** in this newsletter to make a gift. Donations of all sizes are welcome.

However you choose to give, the kids thank you for your support!

Microsoft donation supports Youth of the Year awards

The kids of Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan will gain needed support to advance their educational pursuits when they participate in the Youth of the Year contest, thanks to a generous corporate contribution from Microsoft Corp.

Microsoft's Heartland division contributed \$45,000 to help cover the cost of conducting the 2008 awards competition.

This gift was facilitated by John Fikany, Microsoft vice president and B&GCSM board member. "The commitment to community and display of talent among these young people is truly inspiring," he noted. "We are thrilled to be assisting these students in realizing their full potential through the Youth of the Year awards program."

Support of the program aligns with Microsoft's corporate community giving mission, which "recognizes that today's youth need greater technical skills to compete in a technology-driven world." In a national partnership that began in

2000 with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Microsoft has granted free software for chartered Clubs. This effort was expanded with other corporate sponsors to provide essential hardware so Club members could gain needed computer skills.

"The Youth of the Year awards program supports the educational aspirations of our most talented and promising youth. Microsoft understands the value of this, which gives these accomplished young men and women hope and opportunity. We are very grateful to Microsoft for investing in the future of our Youth of the Year winners," said B&GCSM President and CEO Len Krichko.

Microsoft's support will also help increase awareness among youth at the Centers about the need for more computer programmers as a career.

"One of our initiatives is education evangelism," noted Nicole Summitt, of Microsoft's Heartland division. "We show



From left, winners Alayna Bell, Samuel Maddox and India Smith share in the excitement of the Friendship Club event with Mike Brevard, of Microsoft, a program sponsor of the Youth of the Year awards.

students that computer programmers do not just sit behind a computer developing code. They also develop games for the X box, and work with business to improve their infrastructure. The need for skilled IT workers in the United States is huge and the pool is small."

Avid interest in the arts & helping others motivates India

India Smith, 17, said Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan has helped her overcome personal difficulty, develop an interest in French, and become more outgoing.

As runner-up of the Youth of the Year, India has varied interests and a desire to take on leadership roles. When she graduates from Romulus High School in June, she plans to study dance and writing at Columbia College of Chicago.

Of her interest in the arts, she noted, "Dancing gives me the power to express my feelings and emotions to my audience. Poetry gives me the power to speak my mind on paper for my readers to enjoy."

She has been a member of the Romulus Club, based at Wick school, for eight years. She participated in the Career Launch program and worked as a junior staff member. She was selected to attend a three-day leadership workshop hosted at Schoolcraft College by Rotary Youth Leadership Awards.

"Being a part of Boys & Girls Clubs has given me fresh, new experiences that'll last me a lifetime," she said. "I've become more positive and interactive. The staff is like a second family to me. They helped mold me into a responsible person."

Involved in many activities, India was a color guard member for her high school marching band. She readily demonstrates self-confidence, poise and healthy self esteem. She was chosen by her high school principal to speak to the school board about the "Romulus Way."

India lives in a home headed by a single mom, who works midnights. Her brother died an untimely death at age 12, about six years ago. "The staff was there for me when I needed them. I am proud to be part of such a caring group of people," she said.

She believes in philanthropy: donating used clothing to the Salvation Army, helping out at Gleaners Food Bank and getting involved in community events.

Many members state:

"The staff has become like family."

Hard times hone leadership skills

Sam Maddox is only 15, yet has experienced so many highs and lows during his short life that he could pass as an adult. Rather than become embittered by many of the troubled times of his life, the Youth of the Year runner-up has chosen to become a leader.

A member of the Bloomer Club for six years, his quick and easy smile can light up a room. He maintains a 3.1 GPA at Western International High School, makes friends easily and uses his considerable computer skills for his advancement and to assist others.

He has been raised by his grandparents since he was 10, when it became too much for his mother to support four children on her own. Sam's father had left the family years earlier. Sam's grandfather was his mentor. He taught Sam how to work hard, study and help out in the household. Sadly, his grandfather developed pancreatic cancer and died in May 2007. While devastating for Sam, he soon took on the role of the man of the household.

"My birth family and Club family have meshed together and continue to be a very important part of my life," Sam said.

The Club has helped him focus on leadership roles and assume responsibilities that will serve him well in life. He has received two leadership awards from the Bloomer Club. He was president of the Torch Club and is now a member of the Keystone Club, which focuses on mentoring younger members and doing community service. His favorite activities at the Club are playing team sports, doing animations, and helping others with computers.

Sam attends DAPCEP courses, a pre-engineering program with classes held at Michigan State University as an expanded part of his high school science and math curriculum. Upon graduating from high school, Sam plans to attend Wayne State University and get degrees in computer science and archeology. His dream is to excavate at sites in Rome and Greece.

In memory of ...

Robert L. Nugent, 83, died March 16, 2008. He is survived by his wife, Jane Kay Nugent, of Grosse Pointe Farms. He served in the U.S. Navy and was assigned to a submarine tender in the Pacific during WW II. He earned a B.A. degree in mechanical engineering from Cornell University and an MBA degree from the University of Michigan. He worked at Detroit Edison, now DTE, and advanced to assistant vice president and manager of engineering construction. He also taught at UDM evening College of Business Administration. After he retired, he counseled students in career planning. He was a councilman in Grosse Pointe from 1968 to 1988. He was an avid community leader and philanthropist, and served as board chair for St. John Senior Community. Nugent was active in B&GCSM as a member of the board of directors, serving on the investment committee, properties committee and as a director emeritus.

Alvie Smith, 85, died March 19, 2008, after a long illness. Husband of the late Jigger Smith, to whom he was married 59 years, he is survived by three children and four grandchildren. Smith served in WW II with the Eighth Air Force as a B-17 bombardier, and was awarded the Air Medal with silver cluster and five European Theater battle stars. During more than 20 years of active and reserve service, he advanced to the rank of Major. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, he worked at Michigan State University as news director and director of its centennial program, and later at General Motors, where he became director of corporate communications. After retiring, he wrote three books, one of which became a leading textbook. A long-time volunteer of B&GCSM, Smith was a member of the board of directors.

(Continued on back page)



Five Holden Club members who attended the 2007 Badges for Baseball program were thrilled with the experience.

Baseball fantasy camp strikes out violence

Attending a major league baseball game, playing baseball on lush fields and camping in the pristine Chesapeake Bay area are among the adventures that await a handful of members of the Vic & Lucille Wertz Club this summer.

Five members of the Club will be selected from those enrolled in the *Badges for Baseball* program sponsored by The Cal Ripken Sr. Foundation in collaboration with Office of Justice Programs. The initiative strengthens and creates partnerships among youth, law enforcement, and community agencies to help prevent criminal behavior in youth at risk.

Rod Gillum steers GM in the right direction

People often wonder what becomes of the alumni from Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan. Are they standouts in their field? Do they go on to accept prestigious awards? Do they become CEOs, presidents, community leaders, elected officials, doctors, lawyers and judges?

The answer to the above is often yes. However, most simply work hard at their jobs and do their best to create strong, nurturing families. Many alumni have fond memories of how the Clubs helped them grow into productive, caring adults.

Rod Gillum is an esteemed "graduate" of B&GCSM. He attended the Wenger Club in Detroit, which no longer physically exists yet the principles and values that he learned are still with him today. He and his wife Linda were honored at the "In Celebration" dinner event held in November 2007. Honoring "one of our own" is the best example to show how Boys & Girls Clubs

are empowering today's youth to become tomorrow's leaders.

Gillum grew up in a household headed by a single, divorced mother, who knew that he needed some male role models and structure in his life. He found both at the Club.

"The Clubs made an impact on my life," Gillum said. "They provided a safe harbor and allowed me to explore new ideas and meet new friends. I benefited from the presence of adult males at the Clubs and from those who took an interest in me."

Gillum is now vice president of corporate responsibility and diversity at General Motors. Linda, a University of Michigan professor, noted, "This is an extraordinary place and has the highest model of programs that work."

The Gillums have pledged to provide scholarships to 100 kids for three years to help underwrite Club membership fees.



Rod and Linda Gillum

"Giving back to the community and the Clubs reflects what we value as a family," said Rod. "We want to encourage others to help these kids who simply need a chance to make it. We believe that Boys & Girls Clubs provide the stability to help kids grow up strong."

Space program opens world of science to Club members

Two members from the Dick & Sandy Dauch Campus – NFL/YET Boys & Girls Club got an up-close look at the fascinating space shuttle program when NFL/YET Learn Across America program took a trip to the Kennedy Space Center from Feb. 17 to 19. Thirty young members from each of the 15 Youth Education Town (YET) centers around the country traveled to Florida with their sponsors.

Learn Across America is an academic, after-school program that focuses on a specific theme to promote math and science; this year, it was space exploration. Members attend fact-filled sessions and perform subject-related activities at the NFL/YET centers and test their knowledge through a final project presentation. Evaluations of these presentations lead to the selection of two winners from each center who are invited to attend the all-expenses-paid trip. Participants from the Dauch Campus were Aaliyah Hardy, 10, and Lauren Parks, 11, along with Club Director Jackie Banks.

The group toured the Astronaut Hall of Fame as well as the extensive grounds, with history-making rockets, and the shuttle launch site. A highlight of the trip was having lunch with astronaut John Blaha.

The group also saw an Imax movie that focused on the space shuttle launch with 3-D effects.

Club members felt like astronauts during the Shuttle Launch Experience, a ride that took them on thrilling twists and turns in a simulated shuttle. They also took part in the astronaut training experience: a simulated launch from inside a mock shuttle. The mission was to climb a 10-foot wall and put up a solar panel to give the crew feedback about the weather.

“It was awesome,” said Aaliyah, who took on the role of a mission specialist doing experiments on the space shuttle, while Lauren played a field flight agent, making sure the shuttle was ready for launch. Each of the kids had scripts and headphones to make it realistic. “We learned a lot about astronauts and how they work in the space shuttle,” Aaliyah added.

Lauren was delighted by the trip. “The whole experience was fun. I thought we were going to sit down and learn about the space program, but we got to experience what astronauts actually do – even what they eat. There was also a demonstration that showed how gravity affects you.”



Club members Aaliyah Hardy (in pink), Lauren Parks and Club Director Jackie Banks met astronaut John Blaha during their trip to the Kennedy Space Center.

Aaliyah made a new friend – another YET Club member – from Arizona. When it was time to leave, she gave her a necklace that she had purchased from the gift shop. “It was so touching to see her give Stephanie a gift to remember her by,” said Banks.

A bonus of this year’s program: Aaliyah and Lauren not only learned about the space program, they also got a break from one of the worst Michigan winters in recent history.

Women’s Association hosts award luncheon

Members of the Women’s Association and guests came together to support Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan at the group’s annual springtime luncheon on April 9 at the Reserve in Birmingham.

The 2008 Matilda R. Wilson Award was presented to Sylvia Hagenlocker to honor her commitment to youth in need, both at our Clubs and in the community at large. She received a crystal prism donated by Tiffany & Co.

An award was given in memory of Marilyn “Jigger” Smith, a long-time supporter of B&GCSM and a former Chair of the Women’s Association. She was dedicated to helping youth maximize their potential. An engraved clock was accepted by her daughter, Amy Smith, who attended the event along with her sister, Diane.

The 32nd annual spring luncheon grossed \$12,800, which will be applied toward scholarships for kids and operational expenses of the Clubs.

Entertainment was provided by Anita Dauch, wife of David Dauch and daughter-in-law of Dick and Sandy Dauch, and Robert Dempster. For the gardeners in the group, English Gardens made a presentation on backyard gardening.



From left, Anita Dauch, event co-chair; Alexandra Esslinger, 2008 Youth of the Year winner from the Orion/Oxford Club; Sue Nine, event chair; and Pat Steffes, Women’s Association chair.

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Thursday, June 12

**Michigan Youth Appreciation Foundation
Scholarship Reception
The Roostertail, Detroit**

*For details on this event, please call the Michigan
Food & Beverage Association at 586-393-8800.*

Wednesday, July 9

**Metro Detroit Youth Day
Belle Isle – Athletic Field**

8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Friday, July 25

**Women's Association Summer Social
Orchard Lake Country Club
7 p.m.**

Wednesday, Nov. 19

**Women's Association "In Celebration" Dinner
Orchard Lake Country Club
Reception 6:30 p.m., dinner 7:30 p.m.**

**To register for any of these events,
please call Meghan Hanley at
(248) 522-4412.**

Bank of America gives major gift

Shows support for promoting good "neighborhoods"

Bank of America, corporate parent of the former LaSalle Bank, made a generous gift of \$100,000 to Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan this year as part of its *Celebrate the Season of Giving* program. In addition, bank customers made contributions at LaSalle branches in southeast Michigan, raising an additional \$3,700.

"Bank of America is a national leader in charitable giving, with an emphasis on supporting the arts/culture, community development, health and human services and education," said Tiffany Douglas, Market Development manager at Bank of America. Nearly all of these areas of focus are aspects of the Clubs' programs.

Bank of America also has a strong commitment to investing in neighborhoods and helping young people. One of the main reasons that it donated to B&GCSM is because the Clubs provide a safe place for children and teens to go after school, during summer break and on Saturdays.

"We are very proud of giving to organizations that work and make a difference in the community," said Douglas. "We like to engage different groups of people and support joint ownership and partnership of neighborhood leaders."

While this is the first time the bank has allocated a portion of its Season of Giving collection to B&GCSM, it has been an ongoing supporter of the organization.



Bank of America executives presented a \$100,000 oversized check to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southeastern Michigan on April 10. The check was accepted by members of the B&GCSM Board and Wilson Club Advisory Council.

In memory of ... continued from page 4

Bernard J. Kursa died March 29, 2008. He is survived by two brothers, Eugene and Stanley, and sister Irene Przybyla; and predeceased by two other brothers, Edward Sr. and Henry. He joined the Boys Club of Detroit in 1935 at the cigar factory at Michigan and 35th Street. He enjoyed the weekly movies and learned to play sports. Kursa was an award-winning member and alumnus. While earning his high school diploma from Chadsey High School, he played football and basketball, and received nine letters in sports. He coached Bloomer Club's t-ball and baseball league teams for more than 20 years, in addition to working full-time. He was actively involved as a volunteer and B&GCSM Alumni Association member for more than 70 years, and is well known to Club members, alumni and associates.

**"If I weren't here today, I'd probably be
someplace getting into trouble."**

Telano, 17

**"Nothing bad can happen here. At home,
I would just sit and watch TV."**

Dominique, 13

**"I come here because I love to, not
because I have to."**

Tyler, 11

To give on-line, go to www.bgcsm.org

