



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
OF MERCER COUNTY

2020 Youth of the Year Program **(October – February)**

What is Youth of the Year?

The Youth of the Year program is a high school writing, public speaking, and career guidance program for teens who are involved in the Boys & Girls Club. It culminates with a competition in February where a high school junior or senior will be recognized as the Mercer County's Boys & Girls Club's Youth of the Year. The winner represents our Club in the Boys & Girls Club of New Jersey's Youth of the Year competition, and receives a \$2,000 from BGCNJ for being our local Club winner. The runner up winner receives a \$500 scholarship from our Club towards continuing their education or career advancement.

High School students are matched with a mentor and Club Advisor to help them complete all their Youth of the Year Projects.

What happens at the Youth of the Year Event?

The event takes place in February. It begins at 5:30p.m. with a networking social for guests, nominees, and their families. The formal event starts at 6:30 pm with each Youth of the Year finalist making a two-minute presentation. By the end of the evening, the winner is announced.

Who attends the Youth of the Year Event?

Trustees and their guests, volunteer mentors, Boys & Girls Club staff members, Club supporters, teens, and parents attend the Youth of the Year event. All are welcome.

May I bring guests?

Yes. Please attend and feel free to invite anyone who is interested in learning more about the Boys & Girls Club. Reply by February 5 to danderson!@bgcmrcer.org or call 609-392-3191 x112. There is no cost to attend.

What is Expected of Youth of the Year Teens?

To be a “**Youth of the Year**”, a student must be a junior or senior and complete the following:

- Youth of the Year application
- Copy of high school transcript
- Three personal essays and at least one reference letter:
 - My Club Experience
 - My Vision (personal mission statement, career, service to others, etc.)
 - College Common App Essay Question
- Prepare a two minute speech on How The Club has Helped Prepare me for my Future. This speech will be presented at the February YOY event.
- Prepare for the judges panel interview at the February YOY event.

Freshmen and sophomores compete in the “**Rising Star**” category. This is “warm up” for them to participate as “**Formal Contestants**” in their junior and senior years. Requirements are:

- Youth of the Year application
- Copy of high school transcript
- One reference letter from a teacher, counselor, Club staff, clergy, employer, etc.
- Essay on their Personal Vision (Career, education, service to others, leadership, etc.)
- Prepare for a panel or 1:1 interview at the February YOY event.



Who Can be a YOY Mentor?

Anyone not personally connected with any of the students can be a mentor. Mentors should have good writing and speaking skills to assist their mentee. Mentors need to pass a background check, and be commitment to meeting the mentor requirements.

What is expected of YOY Mentors?

- Attend the Mentor Orientation session to understand your roles & responsibilities, resources available to you, timelines and Club policies. Our mentoring orientation session is scheduled for October 29th, 6:00-6:30 pm at our Spruce Street Clubhouse in Lawrence. This is immediately followed by the YOY Speed Matching event with students from 6:30 to 7:30 pm.
- Meet with your mentee to understand their goals and objectives and what support they need to succeed in the YOY program.
- Meet in person a minimum of four times during the program period. Be in touch by phone or email weekly to connect with mentee and to discuss progress with assignments. You MUST COPY OUR TEEN STAFF CONTACT ON ALL EMAILS.
- Develop a work plan around the due dates the Club has established around the various YOY deliverables.
- Encourage your mentee to attend the Essay Writing & Public Speaking workshops sponsored by the Club.
- Encourage your mentee to utilize the Club's SAT prep, tutoring, and career center programs. Also to take advantage of attending colleges, trade schools, and businesses tours.
- Provide input to your mentee on how to strengthen their essays
- Work with your mentee to practice their speech prior to the Youth of the Year event.
- If available to do so, follow up with your mentee after the Youth of the Year event and into the next school year.

Who do I contact if I want to become or recommend a Mentor for the Youth of the Year Program?

Call Alycia Bertles at (609) 695-6060 x223 to discuss the Youth of the Year program and how you can get involved. You can also email her at abertles@bgcmercer.org to express your interest in being a mentor.

If I can not be a Mentor, are there other Ways to Help?

There are lots of ways in which you could support our Teen programs without being a mentor

- Become a YOY Judge
- Host a table at our March 12th College, Career & Job Fair
- Conduct a workshop at or Nov 7th Teen STEM Conference or March 19th Business/Entrepreneur Conference
- Be a Career Guest Speaker
- Assist in the Writing/Public Speaking workshops, Homework Help/Tutoring classes.

For more information about additional volunteer opportunities in the Teen Department Contact Alycia Bertles at abertles@bgcmercer.org or call her at (609) 695-6060 ext. 223

