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Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito's Youth of the Year Celebration a Huge Success

Solana Beach, Calif. (August 4, 2015) – The Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito presented the 3rd Annual Youth of the Year Celebration, “Treasures Under the Sea,” on July 24th at the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club, Infield Pavilion. About 400 people attended the fundraiser and it surpassed the fundraising goal of \$110,000!

The fundraiser honored individuals that attend one of the seven locations of the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito and showcased the impact the Boys & Girls Clubs programs have on the youth we serve. Elvert Vasquez, 16, sponsored by Voit Real Estate was named the Overall Youth of the Year from the La Colonia Branch in Eden Gardens Solana Beach. Each Youth of the Year nominee received a lap top and backpack donated by HP. In addition, Elvert received a \$1,000 college scholarship from the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito Foundation.

The evening also included night horse racing, silent and live auctions, a wine wall, a gourmet dinner, entertainment, and dancing with Sully and the Blue Eyed Soul Band. All net proceeds raised will help provide funding for POSITIVE activities that allow children to learn, grow, and develop healthy lifestyles within a safe and nurturing environment.

“The Youth of the Year Celebration was a huge event and it wouldn’t be possible without the assistance of countless people,” said Marineke Vandervort, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito. “This year’s Youth of the Year winner Elvert Vasquez, the nominees and approximately 5,700 youth we serve each year are the reason we all come to work each and every day ready to fulfill our mission and make a difference in their lives. In the 24 years I’ve worked at the Club, I’ve seen the need for our programs grow exponentially. The support of this fundraiser helps us continue in our mission to assist those youth in our community who need us most through offering close to \$370,000 in financial aid across our seven branches and numerous after school specialty programs.”

Vasquez attended the La Colonia Branch in Eden Gardens, Solana Beach since he was 8 years old. Before attending the Club he did not receive a lot of academic help and he was struggling with school. Neither of his parents received a high school or college education and neither could read or speak English. Therefore, they were unable to help him with his school work. In addition to his academic struggles, Elvert was diagnosed with Diplopia, a condition in which a single object appears as two objects. From one day to the next, Elvert found himself struggling to see and focus on objects correctly. It was a very depressing time in Elvert’s life and he sometimes felt lonely with having no one to turn to. Slowly he became more and more comfortable with the people in the program, the staff members, and more comfortable with speaking English.

“The Club has a very big influence on the educational needs of students like me and offers the necessary tools and supplies to those who do not have access to them,” said Elvert. “Thanks to the Club, I have a positive vision for myself and have the tools and support to achieve all my goals.”

Eight years later, after Elvert’s first day at the La Colonia branch, he is scheduled to graduate Torrey Pines High School in 2016 and will be the first in his family to graduate high school.

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Elvert excitedly commented, “Boys and Girls Clubs has a program called “College Nights” which has taught me so much about the road to college and because of this program, I have made the decision to aim for a 4-year university.”

In addition to overcoming obstacles and excelling academically, Elvert volunteers with the city of Solana Beach in the annual Easter Egg Hunt, Cinco de Mayo event, Casa de Amistad program, feeding the homeless in downtown San Diego, and participates in community trash pick-ups.

Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s Youth of the Year recognition is the highest honor a Club member can achieve. The Youth of the Year program celebrates youth who have overcome enormous odds and demonstrated exceptional character and accomplishments. A committee was comprised of Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito volunteers and board members who chose Elvert, the Overall Youth of the Year for 2015. Elvert will go on to compete on the local, state and regional levels for Youth of the Year, with the five regional winners meeting in Washington D.C. to compete for the National Youth of the Year title and a \$50,000 college scholarship.

The National Youth of the Year serves a one-year term as representative and spokesperson for some 4 million youth served by Boys & Girls Clubs nationwide traveling across the country to address various groups on important youth issues and the role Clubs play in shaping great futures.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito

The Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito, founded in 1966, is a 501(c) (3) non-profit community asset and neighborhood resource that serves not only youth and teens, but adults and families. It is an organization dedicated to providing positive activities to develop the education, health, self-esteem and character of youth. Today, the organization serves more than 5,700 youth in San Diego County every year to include seven branches in Carmel Valley, Del Mar, Encinitas, Solana Beach and Eden Gardens. Our various branches offer exceptional programs for youth to include:

- Personal development through Core Program Areas
- Clean facilities with dedicated, caring staff members who provide a safe environment for youth
- Quality after-school programs and activities at affordable prices
- Diverse summer camps to fit the needs of all campers
- Innovative specialty programs in academics, aquatics, music and arts, athletics, volunteering, and healthy living

For the past 49 years BGC San Dieguito has been at the forefront of identifying and acting on the needs of the community it serves.

For more information on Boys & Girls Clubs of San Dieguito or for a tour of one of our facilities, please visit us at bgcSanDieguito.org or call (858) 755-9371.

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