



GREAT FUTURES START HERE: INSPIRING TUCSON TEEN WINS BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA'S PACIFIC MILITARY YOUTH OF THE YEAR HONOR AND SCHOLARSHIP

HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif., July 23, 2013 – Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) named Daj'zhane Radford-Walton the 2013-14 Pacific Military Youth of the Year. A member of Davis-Monthan Air Force Base Youth Programs, Daj'zhane will receive a total of \$11,000 in college scholarships from the Youth of the Year program's national sponsor, Tupperware Brands Corporation and an additional \$5,000 from the Taco Bell Foundation. Daj'zhane Radford-Walton was chosen from eight military youth candidates within BGCA's Pacific region and will compete for the national title in Washington, D.C. in September.

Daj'zhane and her fellow Youth of the Year candidates were honored at BGCA's annual Pacific Region Youth of the Year Celebration dinner, held in Huntington Beach, Calif. The Celebration Sponsors for the dinner were Taco Bell and Toyota Financial Services, with *EXTRA* entertainment reporter Adrianna Costa serving as master of ceremonies.



To earn the Military Youth of the Year honor, Club youth served on military installations must advance through local, state and regional competitions—demonstrating how they have achieved academic success, and made outstanding contributions to their family, school, community and local Boys & Girls Club, while overcoming personal obstacles. After the Military Youth of the Year is named during an elite ceremony in Washington, D.C., he or she advances to join other Regional Youth of the Year winners from traditional Boys & Girls Clubs in competing for the National Youth of the Year honor. The youth will also have a chance to meet with President Barack H. Obama in the White House Oval Office in September. If named the 2013-14 National Youth of the Year, Daj'zhane will receive an additional \$50,000 scholarship from The Rick and Susan Goings Foundation.

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, founded in 1947, celebrates youth who have overcome enormous odds and demonstrated exceptional character and accomplishments. These deserving young people are recognized for service to their Club and community, academic performance and contributions to their family. This year, the Youth of the Year program was expanded to also recognize members who are served on military installations in the U.S. and overseas.

Multiple parental deployments have left Daj'zhane feeling responsible for her younger sister, but have not decreased her determination to maintain good grades and contribute to her Club and community. Throughout high school, Daj'zhane has remained on the honor roll with a 3.89 GPA, while taking advanced and honors classes. Determined to be well-rounded, she also participates in a number of extracurricular activities, including marching band, track and a program that advocates the importance of wellness to other students. When asked how his Boys & Girls Club has affected her, Daj'zhane replied, "The Club is a place where even a wallflower can blossom into a rose."

About Boys & Girls Clubs of America

For more than 100 years, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (GreatFutures.org) has enabled young people most in need to achieve great futures as productive, caring, responsible citizens. Today, nearly 4,000 Boys & Girls Clubs serve some 4 million children and teens through Club membership and community outreach. Clubs are located in cities, towns, public housing and on Native American lands throughout the country, and serve military families in BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on U.S. military installations worldwide. Clubs provide a safe place, caring adult mentors, fun and 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, 57 percent said the Club saved their lives. National headquarters are located in Atlanta. Learn more at bgca.org/facebook and bgca.org/twitter.