

Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year

This past Friday I had the privilege of being a judge for **Youth of the Year** for the Boys and Girls Clubs. This award is an honor that is given to a high school student that has been a member or a volunteer for their local Boys and Girls Club. Boys & Girls Club of Greater Gaston, one of our 26 UWGC partner agencies, was pleased to host the state-wide competition here in Gastonia. It was great to see students from all around our state coming together in friendship and sharing in the common bond of service.

The Youth of the Year program, which has been nationally sponsored by the Reader's Digest Foundation since 1947, recognizes outstanding contributions to a member's family, school, community and Boys & Girls Club; academic excellence; and personal challenges and obstacles overcome. The North Carolina nominees had an extensive application packet to fill out including school transcripts, personal character references, two essays and a community service involvement report.

There were four panels of judges and each one reviewed application packets and had the opportunity to meet and talk with their assigned students. One by one, they came in and had five minutes to share with us why they should be chosen as North Carolina's Youth of the Year. The 2010 NC Youth of the Year was awarded to Xavier Del Rosario, from Wake County Boys & Girls Club. He will compete in Regional's in Atlanta and from there 5 winners will go on to compete for the National title in Washington D.C. In addition to receiving the prestigious title, Xavier won a \$2,000 scholarship this weekend and if he wins the National title of Youth of the Year, he will meet our President and be given a \$65,000 college scholarship.

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Gaston's Executive Director, Tripp Hord states, "It was our pleasure to host this state competition and pleased to have so many wonderful students from across our state have the opportunity to represent their local clubs. This competition is a true testament to the positive impact that Boys & Girls Clubs have on our students everywhere."

Our very own Tierra Whisnant from the Bessemer City Boys & Girls Club unit was among the 29 students who competed for the state title. She was a delightful young lady who is a wonderful role model to the children at the Club. She has big goals and big dreams and I have no doubt that she will accomplish them all. Congratulations to her and to the entire staff of the Greater Gaston Boys & Girls Club, not only for a job well done this past weekend, but for what they do for children in our community on a daily basis.