

Madison Resident Selected as New Boys & Girls Clubs Youth of the Year

Written by Boys & Girls Clubs, Andrew Gussert
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Mental Health Advocate Savannah Montgomery Aspires To Study the Impact Trauma has on the Brain

MADISON, WI - Selected among seventeen outstanding finalists from across the state, Savannah Montgomery was crowned Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of Wisconsin. Savannah plans to leverage her position to alleviate the stigma of mental health in communities of color, and to connect students with needed resources on trauma informed care as she advocates for more government resources at the local, state, and federal levels. If she wins at the Regional competition, she will compete for the title of National Youth of the Year and an additional \$25,000 college scholarship, renewable for four years up to \$100,000.

"We are honored and proud to have Savannah representing the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County as the 2019 State Youth of the Year," said Michael Johnson, Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County CEO, "Savannah's story is one many youth can relate to. Her focus on mental health is important work, and we are excited to see her grow and get even more involved in our community."

During her junior year of high school, Savannah earned an internship in the NICU at the University of Wisconsin Hospital -- an opportunity she accessed through the Dane County Club's career exploration and internship programming. This internship sparked her curiosity in researching the potential impacts of psychological trauma. Savannah plans on attending a selective university this fall, followed by medical school. Her overall goal is to become a brain surgeon, studying the impact trauma has on the brain.

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Now in its 72nd year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation's most awe-inspiring young people on their paths to great futures. Each year Wisconsin clubs from 159 sites in 57 cities select representatives to compete at the local level, with winners advancing to state, regional and national competition. Each competing Club member has to meet academic and community service requirements, write essays, submit letters of endorsement and prepare a three-minute speech. The winners were selected by an esteemed panel of nine judges:

- Mark Tauscher, Founder of Trifecta Foundation, former Badger & Packer Offensive Lineman
- Caleb Frostman, Secretary of Department of Workforce Development
- Emilie Amendson, Secretary of Department of Children and Families
- JoAnne Anton, Director of Kohl Philanthropies
- Lisa Peyton-Caire, President of Foundation for Black Women's Wellness
- Lea Culver, Director of the Culver Foundation
- Arvind Gopalratnam, Executive Director of Milwaukee Bucks Foundation
- Alexzandra N. Shade, Director of Corporate Social Responsibility CUNA Mutual Group
- Mark Bakken, Founder and Managing Partner at HealthX Venture

Boys & Girls Clubs of Wisconsin serve 144,810 youth, and provide over two million meals and snacks for free each year. Their mission is to ensure all young people, especially those who need them the most, can reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens. For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit www.bgewisconsin.org/youth-of-the-year-award

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You can see Savannah's presentation from Wisconsin Eye at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_W-xuCG4b8