

Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs Names Hakima A. 2023 Arizona State Youth of the Year and Camilla M. 2023 Arizona Military Youth of the Year

Outstanding teens from seven Arizona Boys & Girls Club organizations and Military Base youth programs competed for the state's highest Club member honor

PHOENIX, Ariz. (April 3, 2023) - The Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs and presenting sponsor Fiesta Bowl Charities are proud to announce **Hakima A.** of Boys & Girls Clubs of Tuscon as the 2023 Arizona State Youth of the Year. Hakima is a senior at Sunnyside High School and has been a member of the Roy Drachman Clubhouse for three years. **Camilla M.**, a sophomore at Mica Mountain High School and a member of the Davis-Monthan AFB Youth Program, was selected as the 2023 Arizona Military Youth of the Year. Both candidates received a post-secondary academic award and will vie for the Pacific regional title in their respective categories this summer.

The breakfast ceremony was held at Chase Field's Third Base Lounge in downtown Phoenix with family, Club staff, and many state legislators in attendance. Local legislators from the House and Senate met with the seven finalists at the Arizona Capitol to learn more about them and their plans for the future. All the teens also had the opportunity to meet with Governor Katie Hobbs for nearly one hour following the announcement.

"We are so proud of Hakima, Camilla, and all of our outstanding nominees," said **Cheyenne Walsh**, partner of Compass Strategies Public Affairs and Board Chair for the Arizona Alliance. "These teens are dedicated students and leaders in their communities, and role models at their Clubs. They represent the very best of our more than 114,000 Club members across Arizona."

Bailey M., the 2022 Arizona State Youth of the Year, emceed the event. **Erik Moses**, Executive Director and CEO of the Fiesta Bowl, delivered the keynote address and announced this year's recipients.

"For over 20 years, the Fiesta Bowl organization has been honored to support the prestigious Arizona State Youth of the Year program," said Moses. "We are proud to be a part of the life stories these young people are writing and congratulate them on what they have achieved thus far. Our hope is that this experience will serve as an inspiring platform to launch them into their next season of success."

Hakima, the 2023 Arizona State Youth of the Year, has been an active member of her Club's teen and art programs like HeARTWorks and art club since joining three years ago. She thanks her Club for restoring hope in her future and empowering her to uplift the voices of those around her. She plans to attend Howard University and will major in education and humanities.

Camilla, the 2023 Arizona Military Youth of the Year, joined the Club six years ago. She has participated in Club programs like Torch Club, Keystone and 4-H and credits the Club with helping her form meaningful connections with peers after moving around the country for a significant portion of her life. Additionally, Camilla maintains a 4.0 GPA and is a dedicated musician. She plans to attend New York University in the future to double-major in music and journalism.

Selected from a field of seven candidates from Boys & Girls Clubs organizations around the State, Hakima and Camilla each will receive \$2,500 in academic awards courtesy of Boys & Girls Clubs of America and \$5,000 from FOX Sports Super Bowl LVII through their Gamechanger Fund. They will go on

to compete at the regional level in their respective categories with the hope of advancing to Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year competition.

In Hakima's three-minute competition speech, she shared her experience as a refugee coming to the United States from Somalia. She dared to break free of the cultural expectations placed upon her and credits the Club with helping her find her own sense of freedom. The staff members at her Club encouraged her in academics, arts, and athletics. She especially thanks her Club staff for teaching her to play basketball, ultimately helping her earn a place on her school's varsity basketball team.

Camilla also presented her speech to the large gathering and reflected on the challenges that come with being in a military family. After significant transitions throughout her life, Camilla found a home at her Club. Camilla acknowledged her opportunity as a member of a military family to connect with people from diverse backgrounds across the country. She now channels the difficulties she once faced forming connections into helping others with the same struggles through a club she started at her school.

Each of the candidates previously competed at local levels to represent their individual Boys & Girls Club organizations before moving on to the State competition. Youth of the Year is Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier youth recognition program. The Youth of the Year title is a prestigious honor bestowed upon an exemplary young person in recognition of leadership, service, academic excellence, and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle. Teens must write multiple essays, participate in an extensive interview process, and deliver a three-minute speech highlighting the impact of their Club experience.

Congratulations to the Arizona State Youth of the Year candidates:

- **Ryce L.**, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Colorado River
- **Nila A.**, Boys & Girls Clubs of Gila River Indian Community
- **Jaylin W.**, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Scottsdale
- **Isaac M.**, Boys & Girls Club of Sierra Vista
- **Hakima A.**, Boys & Girls Clubs of Tucson
- **Xitlalic P.**, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley

Arizona Military Youth of the Year candidates:

- **Camilla M.**, Davis-Monthan AFB Youth Program

Special thanks to the Arizona State Youth of the Year judges:

- **Kristina Chumpol**, Chief of Staff and Vice President of Community Investment, Fiesta Bowl
- **Mark Irvin**, Managing Member, Mark Irvin Commercial Real Estate Services, LLC
- **Deb Kuczora**, Vice President/District Manager, Kohl's Department Stores
- **Celeste Peterson**, Manager of Execution Excellence, Toyota Financial Services
- **Steve Sanghi**, Founder/Executive Chairman, Microchip Technology Inc.

About the Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs

The Arizona Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs (www.azabgc.org) is made up of 17 organizations from across the State, serving more than 114,000 kids and teens each year. The Alliance was formed in 2000 to increase the Club's visibility in communities and to advocate for Arizona's most vulnerable youth. Clubs

offer programs and services promoting and enhancing the development of youth by instilling a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and influence. Follow @AZABGC for more information.

About the Fiesta Bowl Organization

Since 1971, the Fiesta Bowl is a world-class community organization that executes innovative experiences, drives economic growth and champions charitable causes, inspiring pride in all Arizonans during and outside of college football bowl season. As a nonprofit organization, it is driven by its vision for the importance of community outreach and service. Through the Vrbo Fiesta Bowl, Guaranteed Rate Bowl and its year-round events, such as the Vrbo Fiesta Bowl Parade presented by Lerner & Rowe, corporate partnerships and numerous community events throughout the year, the organization provides charitable giving to enhance Arizona nonprofit organizations that serve communities through youth, sports and education.