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MEDIA ADVISORY

Wallingford Teen Wins Youth of the Year Competition

“I hope to make a difference in the lives of others like the Wallingford Boys & Girls Club has done for me.”

SEATTLE, WA – On Tuesday, February 9th, Boys & Girls Clubs of King County held their annual Youth of the Year luncheon at Benaroya Hall. From a field of 11 remarkable young men and women, Jazmin Velazquez was announced the winner of the competition. Jazmin spoke before a crowd of 300 guests, telling them about the obstacles she has overcome with the support of her family and her Club.

The Youth of the Year program is the premier youth recognition program of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America. It promotes and celebrates Club members’ service to Club, community and family values, academic performance, strength of character, life goals, poise and public speaking ability.

Jazmin, a junior at Ingraham High School, has been a member of the Wallingford Boys & Girls Club for 10 years. She told the room about the appreciation she and her family feel for the Club calling it their “second family...I mean family in the most important sense of the word, a bond of love and trust that I rely on and use as a source of strength.”

From a young age, Jazmin has dealt with very adult situations, often helping her mom with responsibilities at home. Jazmin’s mother has been a strong influence in her life, teaching her daughter the importance of working hard and instilling in her a “family first” outlook on life. “My mom has taught me that it’s family and friends that make you rich. The older I get, the more I realize how much the Club has proven that,” says Jazmin.

As part of winning the King County Youth of the Year title, Jazmin received a \$2,500 education scholarship and she will now advance to the state level of the competition. “The judges were struck by her uncommon insight and heartfelt reflections when speaking of the difficulties she has faced in her young life,” says Daniel Johnson, President/CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of King County, “Our sponsors, guests, staff and families were inextricably connected in support of these 11 exceptional young people - that’s what Boys & Girls Clubs is about.”

The distinguished community and business leaders who served as judges for the competition: Karen Bryant, Seattle Storm; Randy Both, Microsoft; Adam Cornell, US Attorney; John Meisenbach, Meisenbach Capital Management; Sandy McCullough, Pacific Public Affairs; Dave Musselwhite, Princess Tours; Debbie Lemman, Youth Advocate; and Stephanie Sarkisian, Youth Advocate.

Microsoft was the presenting sponsor of this event. Additional sponsors Regence, Princess Cruises, North Coast Electric Co., Frause, Lionfish, Titan, Dex, Macy’s, Northwest Sports Photography and Northwest Trophy.

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About Boys & Girls Clubs of King County

Boys & Girls Clubs of King County exists to inspire and enable all young people, especially those who need us most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens. With 13 full-service Clubs and 29 before- and after-school program sites, the organization is one of the largest of its kind in the nation, serving 17,000 members annually. Program areas offered to youth include character and leadership development, education and career development, health and life skills, the arts, computer training and sports/fitness/recreation opportunities. For more information, visit www.positiveplace.org.