

Mesa, Arizona, February 24, 2017 – Selected among eight outstanding youth, Leo Martinez of the Compadre Branch – Chandler, AZ has been named the Youth of the Year by Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley. 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 live a healthy lifestyle. Now in its 70th year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation’s most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures and encourages all kids to lead, succeed and inspire. Leo will go on to vie for the Arizona Youth of the Year title and a \$5,000 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

“Leo embodies strong values in leadership, service, academic excellence and living a healthy lifestyle. We are very proud to have Leo represent Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley at the Arizona Youth of the Year competition,” stated Mark Hanke, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley.



Leo Martinez firmly believes the Boys & Girls Club teaches youth they can be anything—even if they can’t picture it for themselves. As a member of the Boys & Girls Club, Leo has had a great number of mentors and experiences that have helped him to dream and think bigger.

Leadership conferences, college tours and community service have all been significant parts of Leo’s Club experience, yet they are only the beginning. Leo has high praise for the staff of his Boys & Girls Club who have opened the doors to these experiences and enabled him to discover his own incredible

potential. Over the last 7 years of his membership, Leo has developed into a true citizen leader, encouraging his peers to be their best and mentoring the next generation to achieve the same.

Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley 25th Anniversary Banquet Youth of the Year program was presented by the Jerry W. Brock Foundation. The Hoag Family Trust, The Victoria Lund Foundation, and Maricopa Community Colleges fund the scholarships to the East Valley Youth of the Year Candidates. The Victoria Lund Foundation awarded Leo with a \$20,000 scholarship to pursue his next level of education. Freddie Dobbins Chair of Youth of the Year, Jerry Brock of the Jerry W. Brock Foundation, Mark Hanke, CEO of BGCEV Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year recognition program is presented by Disney, who has supported the youth advocacy organization for more than 50 years, empowering young people to reach their full potential and providing youth with access to the tools they need to build the great futures they imagine. Toyota, the Signature Sponsor of Youth of the Year, is dedicated to inspiring the next generations of engineers, thinkers and leaders who will help drive the American economy. Additional support is provided by University of Phoenix, a committed partner who has worked with Boys & Girls Clubs of America on many Academic Success initiatives, and the Taco Bell Foundation, Boys & Girls Clubs of America's premier partner for teen empowerment.

Pictured Below: Freddie Dobbins, SRP; Leo Martinez, 2017 East Valley YOY;



Jerry Brock, Jerry W. Brock Foundation; and Mark Hanke, CEO of BGCEV

If Leo wins at the state competition, he will compete for the title of Southwest Region Youth of the Year and an additional \$10,000 college scholarship, renewable for four years up to \$40,000. Five regional

winners will advance to Washington, D.C. in September 2017, to compete for the title of Boys & Girls Clubs of America's National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year will receive an additional scholarship of \$25,000, renewable each year up to \$100,000 and will have the opportunity to meet with the President of the United States in the White House. Boys & Girls Clubs of the East Valley is home to the 2003 and 2010 National Youth of the Year Winners.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit www.youthoftheyear.org.