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## **More Than \$2 Million Raised; Youth of the Year Arianna Williams Crowned at Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix Stars Gala**

PHOENIX, Mar. 29, 2016 — The Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix (BGCMP) held its 16<sup>th</sup> annual “Today’s Kids, Tomorrow’s Stars” gala presented by Universal Technical Institute, Inc., at the Arizona Biltmore on Saturday, March 19. BGCMP enables all young people, especially at-risk youth, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Highlights from the event:

- Approximately \$2.1 million in net proceeds were raised by the attendees to support after-school and summer programs for 30,000+ young people in grades K-12 at 13 clubs in Phoenix and the West Valley.
- Dignitaries who attended the event included former Boys & Girls Club kid and Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, Chief Executive Officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of America Jim Clark, and Zack Greinke, pitcher for the Arizona Diamondbacks. Anthony Spaulding, an alumnus of the MLB All-Star/Arizona Diamondbacks Branch, addressed the crowd and explained how being a Club kid supported his dream to become a ballet soloist for the world-renowned San Francisco Ballet Company.
- Thirteen live “Stars auction packages” were sold, including two Adele concert ticket packages with Gauthier jewelry for \$32,500 each, as well as a Breitling Limited Edition Navitimer 01 Honor Flight watch and gift certificates to Molina Fine Jewelers and Saks Fifth Avenue for \$20,000. In addition, Buzz Sands, owner of Sands Chevrolet, who has donated a new car every year since the event started 16 years ago, offered the highest bidder the choice of a 2017 Chevy Tahoe or Corvette. The package sold for \$70,000.

The night also included a celebration of 13 Club Youth of the Year candidates who have been on a 16-week journey of team building, relationship and leadership development, presentation skills and Toastmasters training.

The Warner A. Gabel Branch’s Arianna Williams ultimately took home the title of “BGCMP Youth of the Year.” A victim of bullying, Williams found a second home at the Gabel Branch where she

became a part of the Leaders in Training volunteer program and used her love of theater to create a broadcasting club program called *Lights, Camera, Teens!* Williams, a senior at Mountain Pointe High School, has been accepted into New York University and recently auditioned at the Tisch School of the Arts. “My Club recognized how hard I worked academically and in my extracurricular activities,” she says. “Because of that support, I’m able to pursue my dream of going to college to study journalism and theater.”

According to a 2014 study performed by the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, cases of juvenile crime nearly double between the hours of 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. “Each day, thousands of youth in Phoenix area are coming home to an empty house,” says Amy Gibbons, president and executive director of BGCMP. “Our Clubs provide a safe haven after school by offering nutritious snacks and meals, equipment and activities to stay fit, and life-changing leadership and educational programs. And with even more youth and teens coming through our doors, the proceeds raised from our Stars event are critical to keeping our Clubs available to youth and teens just like Arianna.”

The event also honored Bob and Renee Parsons of The Bob & Renee Parsons Foundation, the night’s Champions of Giving. During the evening, the Parsons generously matched the \$411,000 raised from the “Sponsor-A-Youth” direct support program, allowing BGCMP to maintain its after-school and summer day camp services in the Valley’s most dangerous and deserving neighborhoods. In addition, the Parsons surprised each Youth of the Year with a \$20,000 college scholarship.

### **About the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix**

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix provides after-school and summer programs in some of the Valley’s most deserving neighborhoods. Our programs focus on four key areas: Academic Success, Healthy Choices, Be Great-Do Good and Fun with a Purpose, providing youth with the tools they need to enjoy childhood and become successful adults. Every year, thousands of children and teens benefit from programs through our 13 clubhouses, outreach services in the community and children’s dental clinic. For more information about the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Phoenix, Like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/BGCMP>, follow us on Twitter [@bgcmp](https://twitter.com/bgcmp) or visit [www.bgcmp.org](http://www.bgcmp.org).

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