



The Cindy Platt
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB
OF TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY

P.O. Box 1360 • BREVARD, NC 28712 • (828) 885-7800

News Release

Boys & Girls Club Picks Brevard Teen as its ‘Youth of the Year’

BREVARD – Kaylee Holland, a 15-year-old Brevard High School freshman who has been going to the Cindy Platt Boys & Girls Club since she was 7, is the club’s Youth of the Year for 2015. She will compete later this month with some 25 others from Boys & Girls Clubs across North Carolina for the state title.

“The Boys and Girls Club has helped me realize the type of person I want to be and the person that I need to be in order to accomplish my dreams,” said Holland, who wants to go to college and have a church-related career. She leaves April 16 to compete for the North Carolina Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year title at interviews in Greenville.

Jessica Hockett, the local club’s director of its Teen Center, which Holland attends after school each day, said she was chosen by staff members from among a number of other teen-agers in the club. “She is awesome!” she said.

The staff rated Holland high in the three criteria for Youth of the Year: character and leadership, healthy lifestyle and academic achievement. Holland had to write essays about the three subjects. She also had to obtain recommendations from club staffers, a teacher at school and another outsider, in her case the youth and family minister at her church, Little River Baptist Church, in Penrose.

Holland, who grew up in Brevard, lives on Probart Street with her mother, Erika, and a younger brother and sister. She is on Brevard High’s junior varsity girls soccer team, where she plays midfield.

She is also active in youth activities in her church. “I really like church,” she said during an interview at the Boys & Girls Club recently. “If I’m not here or playing soccer, I’m at church,” she said with a laugh. She names the church as one of her families, along with her biological family and the Boys & Girls Club.

Holland hopes to attend Liberty University, a Christian school in Lynchburg, Virginia. She’s not sure what she’ll study, she says. “It varies from day to day, but I really want to do something having to do with church.”

Her other interests include singing, writing, acting... “Basically, anything to do with art,” she says.

Holland says she is thankful her mother enrolled her in the Boys & Girls Club when she was small. “At first it was just an after-school activity,” she recalls. “Then it developed into I just wanted to be here all the time. You can be who you are and no one judges you,” she says.

The North Carolina Youth of the Year title carries with it a \$5,000 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA).

“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,” said Candice Walsh, the executive director of the local club.

“As our Youth of the Year, Kaylee is a good example of an extraordinary young woman recognized for her leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to live a healthy lifestyle,” she added.

In return, Holland speaks of the club staff in the same glowing terms. “They are my second family, and they have made a huge improvement in my life,” she says.

The Youth of the Year program is presented by the Disney organization, which has supported BGCA for more than 50 years. BGCA’s mission is to empower young people to reach their full potential and provide them access to the tools they need to build the futures they imagine. Toyota, the Signature Sponsor of Youth of the Year, is committed to helping improve the quality of life in the nation’s communities and has demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring youth have access to a quality education. Additional support is provided by the University of Phoenix, which has worked with BGCA on many academic success initiatives, and the Taco Bell Foundation for Teens, BGCA’s premier partner for teen empowerment.

If Holland wins at the state competition, she will compete for the title of Southeast 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 to compete for BGCA’s National Youth of the Year. That winner will receive an additional scholarship of \$25,000, renewable each year up to \$100,000, and will have an opportunity to meet with the President in the White House.

The national Boys & Girls Club organization is more than a hundred years old. Today, more than 4,100 clubs such as Transylvania’s serve nearly 4 million young people annually. They provide a safe place, caring staff and adult mentors, fun, friendship, and high-impact youth development programs during critical non-school hours. In a Harris Survey of alumni, 57 percent said the club saved their lives. National headquarters are located in Atlanta.

