

## Mercado and Oldknow-Pereira Honored at Club's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

As part of its diversity initiative, The Boys & Girls Club of Vineland held its Annual Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration and Recognition event at the Carl Arthur Center in Vineland in October and recognized two people that have supported the Club and/or youth in the community in the past year. Several Club youth made presentations to attendees about Hispanic heritage, Joshua St. Jean presided as main speaker, Julissa Rivera sang accompanied by her grandmother Carmen Oldknow on guitar, and everyone enjoyed Latino food. Honorees were Carlos Mercado (Vineland Fire Department); and Carmen Oldknow-Pereira (City of Vineland, Community Development Department).

A special thanks to area restaurants and the County Cultural & Heritage Commission for its support! Hispanic Heritage Month is the period from September 15 to October 15, when people recognize the contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans to the country's heritage and culture!



Above, from left: Club board member Shirley Santos; honorees Carlos Mercado and Carmen Oldknow-Pereira; and Club director Chris Volker at the Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration & Recognition event held at the Carl Arthur Center.

## Lights On Afterschool "Shines Light" on Out-of-School Time Programs



Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Vineland and Commercial Township recently took part in Lights On Afterschool events to promote the importance of afterschool programs for young people. Lights On Afterschool is a project of the Afterschool Alliance, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that all children have access to quality, affordable afterschool programs. Club members from the Carl Arthur Center are shown here with their light bulb projects which illustrates why they like the afterschool programs provided by the Boys & Girls Club.

The Boys & Girls Club celebrated Lights On Afterschool at its three sites in Cumberland County on October 25th! On this day, across the country, the Club and others shine the light on and recognize the enormous value all afterschool and summer learning programs bring to their communities by inspiring students to reach their full potential, keeping them safe, and allowing working families to thrive.

The Club realizes that for every child in an afterschool program in the US, two are waiting to get in. On this day, one million Americans nationwide gather not only to appreciate the programs that are available, but also to call for the lights to be kept on after school for all children in our country!

As always, we encourage Congress and donors to maintain support for the afterschool and summer programs that make a difference in the lives of our kids every day.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB  
OF VINELAND

# CLUB NEWS

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Awardees Leahe Parmenter of FSC and BJ Giercyk (center) with Club Director Chris Volker and FSC employees Elyse Miller (left) and Tracy Richardson.

## Giercyk and Family Success Center Receive Club Awards at Fundraiser

The Inspira Forest Lakes Family Success Center (FSC), located in Commercial Township, was presented with the Club's "Community Partner Award" and BJ Giercyk with its "Volunteer of the Year Award" at its recent Disco Night fundraiser. The recognition is awarded to those that have supported the mission of the Boys & Girls Club and are instrumental in helping area youth be the best they can be. The Family Success Center is the new location for the Club's Commercial Township site. Giercyk is helpful with fundraising and other activities to benefit the Club. A big thanks to the sponsors and volunteers for their help with the event and congrats to these fine awardees since their support is very much appreciated!

## DEA Speaks to Club Teens on Opioid Crisis



The Club held a presentation with representatives from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) about the opioid crisis in our communities. Nick Kolen was the presenter and he discussed the problems with prescription and opioid drugs, especially how they affect young people. The Club has instituted a strong focus on this crisis in the communities in which it serves. SMART Moves provides youth with the knowledge, skills and self-esteem to help them make healthy choices and practice responsible behaviors, which includes avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs, especially prescription drugs. The program is supported by the Vineland and Commercial Township Municipal Alliances.

## Corning Foundation Supports Club

The Corning Foundation presented the Club with a check in the amount of \$10,000 to help support the Club's DIY STEM programs. Thanks to the Foundation, the Club is able to continue to provide programs to underserved youth at three locations in the Cumberland County area in the field of STEM.



David Lucht (above, third from right) presented the check from Corning to Club director Chris Volker at the Youth For Change Center. Also pictured are board members Diane Cristiano (left) and Vicky Miller (right) and Corning's Kelli McGeorge (second from right).

## Club Teen Wins NJ State YOY Title



Fradelly Delacruz (pictured second from left) went on to win the NJ State Youth of the Year title and \$15,000 scholarship for college. She is attending Monmouth State University.



### 2018-19 Board Members

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Unit Director  
Commercial Township FSC Unit

FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
CONTACT CLUB SITES BELOW:

**Carl Arthur Center**  
856-896-0244

**Commercial Township**  
856-413-5494

**Youth For Change Center**  
856-696-4190

www.vinelandbgc.org

Mailing Address: 560 Crystal Ave-  
nue, Vineland, NJ 08360



## FROM CHRIS VOLKER, CLUB DIRECTOR

### The Club Needs Your Help More Than Ever!

As you know, The Boys & Girls Club provides a number of greatly needed services and vital programs to needy youth and their families in our communities. Last year, we provided assistance to over 530+ young people; many who wouldn't have had anywhere else to turn for help without The Club. In addition, we opened a third site at the Inspira-Forest Lakes Family Success Center in Commercial Township to help serve families in that community, especially those who need us the most!

Statistics say it best since 100% of our teens have graduated from high school and a good number have gone on to college or trade school. In addition, 99% of the younger youth at the Club have advanced to the next grade level. Furthermore, 76% of all Club members have been involved in healthy lifestyle programming and 42% have completed some type of community service.

Our work has a powerful impact not only on the people that we work with directly, but also on the larger community as a whole. We are completely reliant on charitable donations and grants in order to be able to continue to provide these services.

During this holiday time and as we embark on our 15th year of service to the community, we ask that you remember The Boys & Girls Club of Vineland in your donation plans. Your generosity will truly have a positive impact on people who are in need, as well as the community as a whole.

**Every gift matters. Please, decide to help make a difference today! Visit [www.vinelandbgc.org](http://www.vinelandbgc.org)**



### Club Kids Adore Making Found Object Art

Art instructor Tionne King led a found object art program with members of the Boys and Girls Club of Vineland in an effort to create some wonderful works of art using found objects such as bottle caps and old tires (right). The youth also learned how to recycle and save the environment through the projects they undertook during the sessions held throughout the year.

This is part of the Club's Fine Arts Program supported by The Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission/ NJ State Council on the Arts. Through the program, youth learn to use their creativity to incorporate their ideas into a visual format using found and reclaimed items. The major intent for the Found Object Arts Program is a way of expression. Whether you are trying to share an experience, an emotion, or even trying to depict a diverse population, creative arts like this can be an elegant and powerful means of expression -- especially using everyday items.

To finish out the year, youth will create sculptures made out of wire hangers, buttons, newspaper, tissue paper, string, metal, and other found objects.

For more info on this and other Boys & Girls Club programs, call 856-696-4190/856-896-0244/856-413-5494 or visit [www.vinelandbgc.org](http://www.vinelandbgc.org).



# Club Highlights



*(Pictured, left) Club members are shown here practicing for the Club's Annual Talent Show held during its summer enrichment program last summer. Members danced, sang and more to entertain the families and others in attendance. The Club is readying its dance team to perform during the holidays at the Veterans Memorial Home in Vineland thanks to Dotty Cullen & Friends.*



*(Middle) A number of Club teens took part in the C-5 curriculum during its summer teen program. This is part of its CareerLaunch programming and youth received certificates of completion for all of their hard work during the six weeks of sessions.*



*(Bottom, left) Pictured at left are: Staff and members participate in a STEM Program during its summer program. Club kids also learned about various ways to make slime and other interesting and fun experiments thanks to a grant from Corning Foundation.*



*Ashanti Rankin (left) won a BGC raffle prize during the Club's Pancake Breakfast held at Applebee's Restaurant.*



*Bottom (right) Club kids from Commercial Township site were able to visit Union Lake in Cumberland County to go kayaking and learn about the area environment and living things in and around the waterways thanks to Steve Eisenhauer and the Natural Lands Trust.*