

Kaizen Institute of America awards \$50,000 scholarship to BGCAZ Youth of the Year

(Phoenix, Ariz. - March 9, 2023) - Thanks to the generosity of Kaizen Institute of America, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley Youth of the Year Xitlalic Portillo received a life-changing announcement – her college expenses are covered.

Through the Youth of the Year competition, Portillo has been open about challenges she has faced and how the Club helped her through them. Moved by Portillo's inspiring story of perseverance, Kaizen Institute granted the North High School senior the inaugural \$50,000 Kaizen Scholarship to ensure there is no financial barrier disrupting her dream of pursuing post-secondary education.

QUOTE FROM KAIZEN REP

Portillo has been a member of the Warner & Shirley Gabel Branch in Central Phoenix since 2018. She will attend Glendale Community College in the fall, with plans to transfer to the University of Arizona after two years. She will study criminal justice as she works toward her goal of being a resource for at-risk children through a career in law enforcement.

Portillo was surprised with the scholarship on March 4, hours before being honored on stage at the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley's annual Today's Kids, Tomorrow's Stars gala.

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. Next month, Portillo will join other Youth of the Year winners from Boys & Girls Club organizations around the state to compete for the State Youth of the Year title. The winner will advance to the Pacific Region competition in Beverly Hills over the summer.

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About Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley

Boys & Girls Clubs of the Valley offers affordable after-school and summer programs for 16,000+ young people in grades K-12. At 30 Clubs across the Valley, BGCAZ provides award-winning programs designed to change the lives of young people. For over 75 years, BGCAZ has been creating equity and opportunity for youth through academic, social, and workforce opportunities. We help young people make healthy decisions and focus on social and emotional development to build resilient young adults. Most importantly, we work to develop strong character and leadership skills by creating positive connections to caring adults and their community. For more information: visit bgcaz.org. Follow us on social media at @BGCArizona.