

# Three Local High School Students Named Youth of Year Ambassadors

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Jocelyn Perez, Gabriel Gomez and Genesis Sanchez have been named 2019 Youth of the Year ambassadors for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside.  
Courtesy photo

**REDLANDS – Three local high school students have been named 2019 Youth of the Year Ambassadors for Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside.**

The Ambassadors – Jocelyn Perez, Gabriel Gomez and Genesis Sanchez -- were chosen for their character and citizenship, academics, and commitment to a healthy lifestyle. They each wrote essays on three topics – Club experience, their personal brand, and their vision for America’s youth -- gave a short speech on how the Club has impacted them, and were interviewed by a panel of judges from the community.

The judges chose Jocelyn as the Club’s 2019 Youth of the Year.

Jocelyn said the Club gave her the confidence to speak up for herself. She was inspired by her older sister’s struggle with bipolar depression to have “a platform for youth mental health, and use that platform to spread positivity in the world.”

Jocelyn, a junior at Centennial High School in Corona, helped run her site’s dance program and is involved in planning a national emotional wellness project through Boys and Girls Clubs’ Keystone service club.

Gabriel said the Club helped him comfortably express his identity after he was bullied. Staff also helped him turn his disrespectful behavior around.

“The Boys and Girls Club saw potential in me and consistently encouraged me to be the best version of myself,” he said.

Gabriel, a sophomore at Citrus Valley High School in Redlands, is a Junior Staff member and president of the Keystone service club at his site.

Genesis, who was bullied because of vision loss in one eye, found kindness and acceptance at the Club.

“I had friends – they stood up for me, helped me get through tough times ... growing up as a Boys and Girls Club kid is one of the best experiences of my life,” she said.

Genesis, a sophomore at John W. North High School in Riverside, is president of Keystone at her site, where she has organized several service projects.

The Ambassadors will serve as spokespeople for the Clubs and will be honored at the Club's Be Great Awards on May 15. They also receive college scholarships.

Jocelyn competed in the area council Youth of Year competition and placed second, winning \$1,200 in scholarship money. The winner goes to the state competition and can reach the regional and national levels.

Youth of the Year is a national program of Boys and Girls Clubs of America and recognizes high school-age youth who embody the Club's mission to mold productive, caring, responsible citizens.

For more information about Youth of the Year, visit [youthoftheyear.org](http://youthoftheyear.org).

For more information about Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside, visit [BeGreatIE.org](http://BeGreatIE.org).