

## Allison Mertz Named Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Scottsdale Youth of the Year

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Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Scottsdale recently announced Allison Mertz, a junior at Pinnacle High School and seven-year member at the Thunderbirds Branch, as the organization's 2015 Youth of the Year. The award was presented to Mertz at the non-profit's Blue Door Ball which took place at the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess raising over \$500,000 for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Scottsdale.

Presented by Tiffany & Bosco and Great American Title, the event celebrated the top teenage Club members with more than 800 attendees including community leaders, supporters and esteemed guests. The evening boasted a silent and live auction, dinner and live entertainment while the teen finalists shared their personal stories of triumph and transformation.

Mertz's story centered on the impact of the SMART Girls program, which teaches health, fitness, education and self-esteem enhancement to girls. It was through that program Mertz realized she was not the only teenage girl facing peer-pressure issues – since then she has helped lead the program and mentor young girls. She also implemented community service projects and managed volunteer efforts through the Club.

"Teens all around the country struggle with self-image, worry of others opinions and sometimes feel like they are just not good enough," says Mertz. "The Club made me realize I wasn't alone and that I'm perfectly imperfect – and that's something for which I'll be forever grateful."

Mertz plans to use the scholarship money granted to her through the Youth of the Year program and General Dynamics C4 Systems toward earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Occupational Therapy at Arizona State University. She will also advance to the statewide Youth of the Year competition in April.

