



For more information:
Carol Brejot
carol@carolbrejotpr.com
713/503-3885 (c)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Austin Johnson named 2022 Julius Young Youth of the Year for Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston at Celebration Dinner on Feb. 22

HOUSTON, February 23, 2022 – Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston (BGC GH) announces that **Austin Johnson**, a member of the Wharton Teen Scene Boys & Girls Club and a senior at Wharton High School, was named the 2022 Julius Young Youth of the Year at the annual celebration dinner held Feb. 22 at the Junior League of Houston. Nicholas Perkins, Chairman, President and CEO of Perkins Management and Fuddrucker's, served as keynote speaker, while emcee duties were handled by Drew Dougherty, Host of Texans TV.

Perkins inspired the audience with his story of hard work and success as a Black entrepreneur who has been a visionary leader in the culinary industry. He is a strong proponent of Workforce Readiness, which is one of the key pillars of Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

The Youth of the Year (YOY) program honors and celebrates inspiring teens and their incredible journeys and is based on outstanding leadership, service, academic excellence and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle. The program and event were generously underwritten by Chevron.

In 2021, the Houston award was renamed Julius Young Youth of the Year in memory and in honor of Julius Young, Jr., who was elected Board Chairman of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston for 2020-2021 and passed away in September last year. Young was the organization's first Black board chair and "Club kid" and made a tremendous impact on the lives of Houston-area youth in the time he served. Robert Ellis of the Johnny Mitchell Club in Galveston received the inaugural award in 2021.

Johnson will compete in the state Youth of the Year competition in March and will receive \$10,000 and \$5,000 college scholarships which he will use for Texas A&M University. His ultimate goal is to become a teacher.

More than 260 attendees, including BGC GH board members, staff and supporters, also got to hear from BGC GH's two other top YOY candidates: **Kiara Estrada**, Wharton Teen Scene Boys & Girls Club and a senior at Wharton High School, and **Ashly Alavez Gomez**, Houston Texans Teen Club and a senior at Heights High School. Each gave inspiring speeches about their personal journeys with Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston and received scholarships as well.

When asked about his philosophy, Johnson replied, "I like to use the quote 'Go Big or Go Home,' to push myself. Why go small when you can go big and achieve great things? I want to be a person who changes things in small and big ways."

“We are proud to honor our Julius Young Youth of the Year, Austin Johnson, for his exemplary leadership and character as a member of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston,” says Kevin Hattery, President and CEO. “This honor is given with much thought and deliberation about the candidates and is a tribute to our late, beloved Board Chair, Julius Young. Austin represents the very best in our organization and will show the world that ‘Great Futures Start Here’.”

Newly-elected Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston Board Chairman Will Leven says, “All of the outstanding Julius Young Youth of the Year finalists deserve our praise and respect for striving for the highest standards in their academic and personal lives. As we know, ‘character counts,’ and these young people are going to change the world through their determination, integrity and pursuit of excellence.”

To learn more about Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston, please visit www.bgcgh.org.

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Link to [photos here](#)

Photo caption: Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Houston (BGCCH) announces that Austin Johnson, a member of the Wharton Teen Scene Boys & Girls Club, was named the 2022 Julius Young Youth of the Year at the annual celebration dinner held Feb. 22 at the Junior League of Houston.

Photo credit: Andres Garcia

About Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Houston

Our mission is to inspire and enable all youth, especially those who need us most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. Our vision is to put success within reach for our Club members and keep them on track to graduate high school. We help them realize a positive plan for the future that includes good character, citizenship, workforce readiness and a healthy lifestyle. Each year, more than 30,000 youth ages 6 to 17 walk through our doors for our after-school and summer programs. At our Clubs, youth are provided meals, strong role models, homework assistance, organized athletics, character development and access to the arts. Membership costs just \$10 per school-year and \$25 for the entire summer. Founded in 1952, this year we are celebrating 70 years of building great futures for youth! We are a United Way agency.

For more information, visit our website www.bgcgh.org. At Boys & Girls Clubs, we do whatever it takes to build great futures!

BGCCH Social media handles:

Instagram: @bgchouston

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