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Oceanside teen named Boys & Girls Club's California Youth of the Year



Club Senior Site Director Michael Hollins, Julie Hernandez, and club Director of Operations Hillary Adams (Photo courtesy Boys & Girls Club of Oceanside)

An Oceanside girl teenovercame immobilizing shyness to graduate from El Camino High School a year early with a 4.6 grand point average has been named the Boys & Girls Clubs' California State Youth of the Year.

Julie Hernandez, 17, received the title and a \$5,000 scholarship Tuesday night in Sacramento at the Boys & Girls Clubs of America's state competition, making her eligible for National Youth of the Year, the club's highest honor. She will compete for the Pacific Region Youth of the Year title June 8 in Costa Mesa.

"Julie is an astounding young woman who has not let her past circumstances define her future," Jodi Diamond, CEO of the Oceanside club said in a news release. "We are so proud of her achievements and are ecstatic to see her be recognized at a state level. This is only the beginning for Julie."

One of eight contestants in Sacramento, Hernandez was judged on her speech and essay about the critical impact the club has had on her life. She shared her story of how the club helped her overcome her

shyness and take on multiple adult responsibilities at a young age while growing up with a single mother working multiple jobs.

Now a student at MiraCosta College, she plans to transfer to the University of California, Berkeley, or Stanford University to pursue a degree in chemistry.

While in Sacramento, Hernandez and Orange County Boys & Girls Club Youth of the Year Sarah Arce met with state Sen. Patricia Bates, whose district stretches from Laguna Hills to Encinitas, to receive certificates in honor of their accomplishments.

“California has a bright future thanks to young people like Julie and Sarah, and to organizations like BGC!” Bates said in a post on her Facebook page.