

Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced County

Volume 3, Issue 3

www.BGCMerced.org

Fall 2011

The Club, Camping & The Great Outdoors

Merced's youth spend 4 days backpacking in Yosemite.

This summer 9 high school students from Merced County had the unique experience of backpacking for 4 days in Yosemite National Park. Prior to the trip, many of the students had not had the opportunity of ever visiting Yosemite. The trip was led by Club staff member, Ms. Lou Ohki, a recent graduate of Portland State University.

The group backpacked across approximately 25 miles of wilderness. The journey brought the group from the Valley floor of Curry Village to the heights of Clouds Rest, at nearly 10,000 feet above sea level. For the trek, each student prepared and carried their own supplies, took part in the preparation of meals, participated in team building and leadership exercises, learned about employment opportunities within the Park system and ultimately came away with a greater appreciation of environmental conservation.

During the trip students met with renowned park ranger, Shelton Johnson, and learned about his journey from a youth in Detroit to a Yosemite Park ranger. Ranger Johnson encouraged the students to live out their dreams and follow their passions.

The program was made possible by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced County in partnership with Wild Link Youth Leadership. This fall participants will complete a community service project.

11-Year Club Member Gives Back

Former Member of the Year joins the Club's staff.

Monica Meza, a Merced College work study student, spends her afternoons and evenings giving back to the very organization that helped her to develop from a child into a young lady and contributing member of society. Originally from Cathedral City, Monica joined the Boys & Girls Club there at the tender age of seven, and she was hooked. She was grateful for the opportunities provided to her, and jumped in with both feet.

One of the honors that Monica earned during her time with the Boys & Girls Club was Member of the Year. Members who are recognized for this have to give of themselves to the club and community, completing many hours of service. In addition, they must focus on academic success and have a strong moral character. Being positive and poised is an important part of the criteria.

Now 18 years old, Monica lives in Merced and continues her tradition of service at BGC Merced. She will be working with the Skills Mastery & Resistance Training (S.M.A.R.T. Girls) program in addition to her other duties with the youth. Monica believes all of her experiences will serve her well in the future as a registered nurse.

Thank you for your support!

Private support enables the Club to realize its mission.

Donors like you make it possible for our community's Boys & Girls Club to continue to serve our youth, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring and responsible citizens.

With your support we provide our community's youth a safe place to learn and grow through ongoing relationships with caring, adult professionals that oversee academic and character building programs.

Without private support from community members like you, we would not be able to provide the hope and opportunity to our youth at the Club. We thank you for your continued support.

GREAT FUTURES START HERE.



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
of Merced County

YOUTH TECH CONFERENCE

Club members coordinate a technology based conference.

Cultivating our Club members' leadership and other practical skills that can be utilized later in life are two areas that are a continual focus at the Club. This coming February Club members will host and take part in a Technology Conference at the McCombs Youth Center in Merced.

The Tech Conference is a unique event in that its coordination is being led by Club Member and Golden Valley High School student, Marshelle Smith. Ms. Smith and other Club members are working with technology focused companies in the Merced area, such as Comcast, PG&E, HP and Staples, to attend and present at the conference.

The conference will be open to all Club members and former Club members who are recent high school graduates. The conference will be geared towards providing a better understanding of current and future technology used by the participating companies along with a discussion of what skills, education and experience is needed to become involved in various technological fields.

The Tech Conference is scheduled to be held on February 25th, 2012. For more information, please contact Executive Director, Tony Slaton at (209) 722 – 9922.

POWER HOUR WITH A PLUS

Pilot program launched to address literacy issues.

Power Hour has been a signature program at Boys & Girls Clubs around the nation. Now, our County's Club is participating in the launch of a pilot program, Power Hour Plus. The new pilot program is focused around 5 youth that are receiving one-on-one tutoring from Golden Valley and Merced High students. Each tutor has received specific training in order to assess student reading levels and address specific literacy issues.

The main goal of Power Hour Plus is to address the need to improve student reading levels. From the analysis of school performance data, the Club has found that 629 students in 3 schools adjacent to the Club are at or below the basic reading level for their grade. This new program is designed to improve this picture one youth at a time.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **January 6th, 2012** – Karaoke Night at the Boys & Girls Club
- **February 25th 2012** – Youth Tech Conference
- **March 23rd, 2012** – Boys & Girls Clubs of Merced County Annual Dinner

For the most current event information, please visit www.bgcmerced.org.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Club continues to broaden our Board in both numbers, depth of experience and community engagement. This fall we had the pleasure of bringing on 4 new board members. Our new members represent a diverse base of community leaders, which will help provide our Club with the knowledge, guidance and connections needed to continue to meet our mission of enabling all young people, especially those who need us most, to reach their full potential as productive, caring, responsible citizens.

Andre Mathews – Police Lieutenant for the City of Merced

Victor Nazario – Branch Manager for Westamerica Bank

Christine Smith – Administrative Services Manager for Merced County Association of Governments

Rosa Winzer- Manager of Risk Management for the City of Merced

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