GRENVILLE BAKER
BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

PILOT BE CONNECTED

April 2025

MEET THE 2025 YOUTH OF THE YEAR

Announcing our 2025 Youth of the Year… Valentina Canales!

Youth of the Year is our signature effort to foster a new generation of leaders, fully prepared to live and lead in a diverse, global and integrated world economy. On March 19, we gathered a full house into the Tween Room to announce Grenville Baker's 2025 Youth of the Year. Congratulations to Valentina Canales, a junior in high school, who has been a Club kid since elementary school. Like so many other kids, the Club is a second home. But for Valentina it has also become a place where she can freely express herself with confidence.

One of Valentina's favorite memories growing up at the Club were the talent shows. She remembers feeling nervous her first time participating because she had never sung in front of a group before. After she performed, she remembers thinking that wasn't so bad. She also received many compliments, building her confidence.

In middle school, Valentina joined the Torch Club and eventually was elected president, a role she kept for 3 years. She admits she was nervous because she lacked leadership skills. She is truly proud she had the courage to take on this role because it has helped her become who she is today

Currently, Valentina has strengthened her leadership skills and this year she is president of Keystone, a goal she had before joining in 9th grade.

As a junior, Valentina is undecided as to where she wants to go to college but would like to study marketing. She also loves the arts and was recently cast as Matron Mama Morton in the school's production of Chicago.

For Valentina, being a Club kid has been a big part of her growth.

Please wish her luck in the next phase of the Youth of the Year competition in Albany on May 19.

Learn more and stay in touch
by visiting www.gbbgc.org or
follow us on social @grenvillebaker

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MARCH MADNESS INVADES THE CLUB

It was pure March Madness at the Club on Saturday, March 22, as championship finals took center stage in every division! The excitement kicked off with the 5/6 boys title game, complete with a bagpiper leading the way — now that's how you make an entrance! Halftime brought even more energy, with a show-stopping dance performance that had the entire crowd on their feet.

Adding to the celebration, the Club was proudly recognized with a special citation from a government official — a true honor for our community. A heartfelt thank you to Joe Ramirez, Nassau County Regional Representative for Governor Kathy Hochul, and Representative Tom Suozzi for joining us and making the day even more memorable.

Congratulations to all of our division champions — what a day to remember!

BASKETBALL AWARDS CEREMONY

200 people attended the event to celebrate another great season. Whether it was someone shooting on the wrong hoop and making everyone laugh when they shrugged it off or when one player would get a score and the whole team would jump for joy or when kids high-fived players from the opposite team when they made a free throw, these were the positive memories the Club was gathering to recognize. The guests arrived and lined up for all the various foods. Thanks to our Club staff and volunteers for helping to serve everyone! Then people settled down to listen to the presentations. All the players were recognized, the champions were awarded trophies and this year the staff voted on finals MVPs, which the members were proud to earn. It was a very fun night!

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PANCAKE BREAKFAST & EASTER EGG HUNT

Spring got an early start at the Club with our annual Pancake Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt! While the weather didn't quite cooperate, the atmosphere was nothing but sunny smiles on Saturday, April 5th.

Guests enjoyed a delicious spread of pancakes, eggs, bagels, donuts, and more. Families got crafty with Spring-themed activities, joined in the fun of the Easter Egg Hunt, and even got a special visit from the Easter Bunny himself!

A heartfelt thank you to our incredible staff, dedicated volunteers, board members, and enthusiastic Keystone Teens for making the event both memorable and mouthwatering!

BROADWAY BOUND!

Our teens took a trip into the city to catch one of Broadway's newest productions—The Great Gatsby! They earned the opportunity through their outstanding participation in teen programs and consistent involvement in Keystone meetings.

Having read the novel in school, the group was especially excited to see the story come to life on stage. While the musical took a few creative liberties, they all agreed it was a fantastic show. The evening was made even more memorable by a special giveaway—actors handed out signed memorabilia to lucky audience members. While our teens didn't snag a prize, they loved the added excitement!

Many of them have started collecting Playbills and continue to grow their passion for live theater. We're incredibly grateful to Susan Carusi for sponsoring these unforgettable experiences in honor of her father. Thanks to her generosity, a new generation is discovering the magic of Broadway!

DONOR RECOGNITION EVENT

On Monday, April 7, we had the pleasure of honoring our most dedicated supporters at our annual Donor Recognition Event. More than 70 donors gathered in the Tween Room as we proudly welcomed five new members into our Lifetime Giving Society and eight new members into the Loyalty Society, recognizing over 20 years of continued support!

Our 2025 Youth of the Year, Valentina Canales, shared heartfelt remarks about her journey with the Club and expressed her gratitude to the donors who have played a vital role in shaping her path.

One of the most memorable moments of the evening was our Chairman Colin O'Donnell presenting Chairman Emeritus Patrick Mackay with the inaugural Robert Gardner Award—a new honor recognizing individuals who have generously given their time, talent, and treasure to the Club. Patrick, who has served on the board for over 44 years, exemplifies this commitment.

In a surprise announcement, we also revealed that the Heritage Society will now be renamed the Patrick Mackay Legacy Society in his honor. Congratulations, Patrick!

A special thank you goes to Board Member Susan Carusi for graciously stepping in to emcee the evening at short notice. Guests enjoyed mingling, delicious food from Schultzy's, and live music by The Current.

It was truly a night to remember—a celebration of generosity, community and the impact of our incredible donors.

Stay connected about upcoming events at the Club–like our Alumni & Friends Reunion on April 25–26 and our Annual Gala on May 30! Visit www.gbbgc.org for the latest updates, or follow us on social @grenvillebaker.