



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**  
OF THE LOWER NAUGATUCK VALLEY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Great Futures Start Here: Exceptional Shelton Teen Named  
Youth of the Year for Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley**

**Lilly Taska to Now Vie for State Title**

**Shelton, CT, May 7, 2020** – Selected among several local outstanding youth, Lilly Taska has been named the Youth of the Year by the Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley. The Youth of the Year title is a prestigious honor bestowed upon an exemplary young person in recognition of leadership, service, academic excellence, and dedication to living a healthy lifestyle. Now in its 73<sup>rd</sup> year, the Youth of the Year program honors our nation’s most awe-inspiring young people on their path to great futures. Lilly will now go on to contend for the Connecticut Youth of the Year title and a \$2,500 college scholarship from Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

“Lilly exemplifies all of the attributes that a Youth of the Year should exhibit,” says Shaye Roscoe, Chief Executive Officer of the Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley. “We are so proud of her and could not have selected a better representative of our Boys & Girls Club.”

Lilly came to our Boys & Girls Club when she was only six years old and has been a member for 12 years. When she was old enough, she applied for a job as a Youth Development Professional, and was thrilled that she could finally help ease the financial burden for her single mother. Lilly participated fully in all the opportunities the Club had to offer, from Chess Club, Music, and Crocheting to our Immersion Science and STEM Mentoring programs as well as Healthy Habits, SMART Movies, and SMART Girls, our



resistance training programs that help youth say no to peer pressure and negative influences.

Lilly found a second home at the Boys & Girls Club, a refuge from the chaos of her home life. “They truly cared about my safety and well being, something I never received from any other adult besides my Mom,” Taska says. “When my Mom was working hard at two jobs, the people inside the Club stepped in to ensure that my needs were always met, both emotionally and physically.”

Despite a troubled home life, Lilly exudes a positive attitude that many adults in the same situation would be hard pressed to show. She is full of energy and life and the desire to guide our younger members away from the dangers of substance abuse, knowing intimately how it can ruin lives.

If Lilly is named Connecticut Youth of the Year, she will contend for the title of Northeast Region Youth of the Year, receiving an additional \$20,000 in college scholarships. Six finalists will then advance to Washington, DC, in October to vie for the title of Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s National Youth of the Year. The National Youth of the Year will receive an additional scholarship of \$50,000.

The Youth of the Year program is supported by Toyota. As a Signature Sponsor, the company is committed to partnering with Boys & Girls Clubs of America to ensure local Clubs provide life-enhancing opportunities for kids and teens to explore, develop, and apply the essential skills they need to be successful in life and work. Youth of the Year representatives are the workforce leaders, innovators, and problem solvers of tomorrow.

The Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley had an additional youth competing for the Youth of the Year honor—Da’Yanna Streater from the Joel E. Smilow Unit in Ansonia. Five members of the community served as judges for our organization’s competition, including Sharon Closius, President and CEO of the Valley Community Foundation; Anne Keane of Prudential; Senator George Logan; Ramon Peralta of Peralta



Illustration & Design, LLC; and Jimmy Tickey, District Director for Congressman Jim Himes. The five met at our Raymond P. Laviertes Unit in February to interview Lilly and Da'Yanna and deliberated to choose the winner.

For more information about the Youth of the Year program, visit [www.youthoftheyear.org](http://www.youthoftheyear.org). For more information about the Boys & Girls Club of the Lower Naugatuck Valley, visit [www.BGC-LNV.org](http://www.BGC-LNV.org).

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