



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 25, 2018

### **Central Indiana youth workers honored during awards ceremony**

INDIANAPOLIS – Through the Excellence in Summer Service Education Awards (ESSEA) organized by the Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc. (MCCOY), the Summer Youth Program Fund (SYPF) has awarded a total of \$26,000 in educational stipends to 26 local youth.

This year's award recipients, who included nine high school students and 17 college students representing 23 summer youth programs, each received \$1,000. These young people were selected by a group of seven committee members who reviewed applications sent in by more than 50 youth workers throughout central Indiana.

"The ESSEA Awards truly showcase the greatness of young people in Indianapolis," said John Brandon, president and executive director of MCCOY. "These bright, kind and hard-working teens and young adults have not only developed their employability skills; they have also made summer an enjoyable time of learning and growing for thousands of kids around the city. It is heartwarming to see youth helping youth, making this a winning situation for the programs, employees and young participants."

On her application, Brittani Buchanan, a student at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis who worked at the John Boner Community Center's Summer EDGE program, said, "I believe summer youth programs are important because this generation of youth is filled with amazing, creative ideas, and summer programs allow them to display their talents and ideas while introducing them to new concepts."

Similarly, Manuel Alarcon Nava, a student at North Central High School who worked with The Latino Youth Collective's Athena Academy for Media Arts, Science, & Technology, said, "I believe the most important aspect of summer youth programs is the memories and relationships individuals create over the course of the program. I was personally impacted mainly by the people I collaborated with, and hopefully it will lead to long-lasting friendships."

ESSEA honorees were presented with their portfolios and stipends during an evening ceremony on Friday, Sept. 21 at The Sol Center. Pastor John Girton of the Christ Missionary Baptist Church of Indianapolis served as a guest speaker during the event.

The Excellence in Summer Service Awards have been recognizing the work of high school and college youth in summer programs for thirteen years. To learn more about the



Excellence in Summer Service Education Awards and to download pictures from the ceremony, click [here](#).

To learn more about MCCOY, visit [www.mccooyouth.org](http://www.mccooyouth.org). To learn more about the Summer Youth Program Fund, visit [www.summeryouthprogramfund-indy.org](http://www.summeryouthprogramfund-indy.org).

### **2018 Excellence in Summer Service Education Award Recipients**

Brittani Buchanan	Summer EDGE at the John Boner Community Center
Ashley Uselmann	Summer EDGE at the John Boner Community Center
Gabrielle Carpenter	MLK Center
Natalie Cole	Butler Community Arts
Naomi Davis	Felege Hiywot Center
Mekenzie Dejesus	Jameson Camp
Alan Galarza	La Plaza
Olivia Richardson	La Plaza
Emerald Gibson	Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center
Kristabell Gichina	DirectEmployers Institute
Jessica Gutierrez	Indiana Latino Institute/La Plaza
Maxwell Hamm	Speedway Baptist
Unique Jackson	Fay Biccard Glick Neighborhood Center
Janelle Jenkins	Art With a Heart
Bryandon McElroy	St. Florian
Rachel McKay	Nina Mason Pulliam
Sumayyah Muhammad	Hawthorne Community
Manuel Alarcon Nava	ATHENA Academy
Clara Oesterling	Keenan-Stahl Boys & Girls Club
Kevin Sanders	Keenan-Stahl Boys & Girls Club
Nicholas Smith	Indiana Writers Center
Andrew Stinson	Lawrence Summer Kids Camp
Raegene Thomas	Summer Learning Institute
Riley Tindal	Diabetes Youth Foundation
Connor Waddell	Keep Indianapolis Beautiful
Marques Woods	Young Men, Inc.

### **Reviewers**

Kim Brand	1 <sup>st</sup> MakerSpace
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*The Marion County Commission on Youth, Inc. (MCCOY) is the youth services intermediary for central Indiana whose mission is to champion the positive development of youth through leadership on key issues and support of the youth worker community. MCCOY's vision is that every young person in central Indiana has opportunities to thrive, learn, engage and contribute.*

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