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Service to kids helps earn scholarship for teen

Name: Kalia Murray

Age: 17

Hometown: Newark

Education: Recent graduate of Newark's Science High School. Will attend Seton Hall University in the fall, where she plans to major in elementary education.

Accomplishment: Recognized as the Boys and Girls Club of Newark Youth of the Year. Kalia was selected from more than 100 club members ages 14 to 18, and was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship. The Boys and Girls Club of Newark chooses from members who were selected as Youths of the Month and then chooses a Youth of the Year for each of its three units throughout the city. Kalia was selected as the overall Newark Youth of the Year, and was given the award in May at the club's 18th Annual Evening of the Stars.

About the award: To qualify for the award, the Boys and Girls Club evaluates its members' service to the club, community and family, academic performance, moral character, life goals, poise and public speaking ability. Kalia received recommendations and had an interview about what the club meant to her, and how her post-high school education will affect her life. While Kalia said she was initially nervous about the interview, she enjoyed meeting with the committee and found it to be more like a conversation between friends.

In addition to this scholarship, Kalia also received a Presidential Freedom Scholarship for Community Service and a Gladys Hillman Jones Book Scholarship. For the Book scholarship, Kalia had to write an essay on why she wants to be an educator.



MIA SONO/THE STAR-LEDGER

Kalia Murray, 17, helps Shakiea Bowers, 7, with her homework at the Boys and Girls Club of Newark. Kalia, a recent graduate of Newark's Science High School, was selected from more than 100 club members as Youth of the Year and was awarded a \$5,000 scholarship. She will attend Seton Hall University.

Service to the Boys and Girls Club: Kalia has been a member of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newark's Westside Unit for five years. She is a second-generation club member whose father began attending the Westside Unit in 1970. As part of her community service, Kalia tutors children with their schoolwork. She spends one-on-one time with children, helping them with their homework or going over spelling words. Kalia finds this volunteer work very motivating, and values the experience since she plans on working with and educating children.

A way with words: In addition to the tutoring, Kalia also started a poetry club for children ages 9 and 10 at the club.

While Kalia attended Science High and learned to love science, it is writing poetry and reading literature that are her true passions.

Kalia's other volunteer work involved serving as a membership clerk. She greeted members as they came in and performed data entry duties. She proved so adept that her volunteer work led to a part-time job. Kalia is grateful that the club has provided her with employment skills, and has helped her learn to effectively communicate with individuals from all walks of life.

Positive experiences: In addition to her volunteer work, Kalia participated in the club's Smart Moves Drug Prevention

program. There, Kalia learned how to deal with the peer pressure. While Kalia was initially concerned about the time commitment involved with Smart Moves, she was very motivated about participating.

Meeting people: One of Kalia's most memorable club experiences came when she was 13 and attended the Frost Valley Camp in upstate New York. This was Kalia's first time away from home and her parents, and taught her to become more responsible.

Kalia also values this experience because she met people from different cultural backgrounds. Kalia admits that she was nervous at first, but soon made friends, and still keeps in touch with a friend from camp. She said the camp experience has made it easier for her to meet new people, and prepared her for both high school and college, where she has met and will continue to meet people from different backgrounds.

Giving back: Overall, Kalia would recommend the Boys and Girls Club to other youths. She said it helped both her father and herself to get involved with their community.

"It means a lot. It helped build my character, and is another home away from home. People feel like family," Kalia said.

Other interests: While an honor student at Newark Science High School, Kalia participated in cheerleading and was a member of the literary magazine and Future Teachers of America. She describes herself as "career focused" and hopes to become a speech pathologist.

Family: Parents; Rudolph and Cynthia Murray, sisters; Kenyatta, Quadreya, and Shaquilla.

—Ellen Coughlin