

BE IN THE KNOW...

July 3, 2020

Dear Boys & Girls Clubs Friends,

Let us be among the first to wish you a SAFE and happy Independence Day weekend.

I address you as friends because here at the Boys & Girls Clubs we consider you a part of our special family made up of many, many good friends. "What Does Friendship Mean to Me?" was last week's topic for our Virtual Club's writing contest. The consistent theme in the kids' stories was "...**stick by your side....no matter what...**" I want to take this moment to **thank you for sticking by our side** as we work hard to accomplish our goals to save and enhance young lives. Your understanding and support is especially appreciated now as we wade through uncharted coronavirus waters. I can assure you, when given the option to sink or swim, we will SWIM!



What Does Friendship Mean to Me?

Friendship is very important. It is something everyone should have.

Everybody needs somebody to talk to, laugh and have fun with. Someone who understands you.

Friendship is having someone you can trust. **And who will stick by your side no matter what.**

Friendship is someone who turns your frown into a smile and makes you happy. A person you make memories with. It is someone who keeps you company.

A good friend will not talk behind your back.

A faithful friend will not lie or cheat you.

A trustworthy friend is kind, fair and honest. A person you share your secrets with.

On the other hand, a friend is not one who envies you, but **someone who wants you to accomplish your goals.**

I believe friendship is the key to a happy life.

**Savannah B.
Age 14
June 26, 2020**

As you know from my June 12th update, our Board and its very active Safety Committee had been working cautiously and methodically to safely reopen only our Indio Club on Monday June 8th.

All was going well and better than expected. Staff had invested a lot of time in training to re-learn programming techniques and how to disinfect a variety of surfaces frequently, which had paid off. Staff was comfortable with the new way of doing things, but better yet, **the limited amount of kids loved being back in their Club** (the new ratio of teacher to student is 1:10). After one staff member tested positive for COVID-19, we closed the Club. **The good news** is, our employee is doing very well, no additional staff members tested positive and we will continue serving our Club members via the online platform, Virtual Club.

GREAT, GREAT SCHOLARSHIP NEWS!

In the prior update, I reported on our Clubs' graduating seniors. I am happy to report that we **awarded 33 student scholarships** this season! **Twenty-three renewals and ten new applications!** We are so very proud of these students who are taking action to create a better future for themselves.

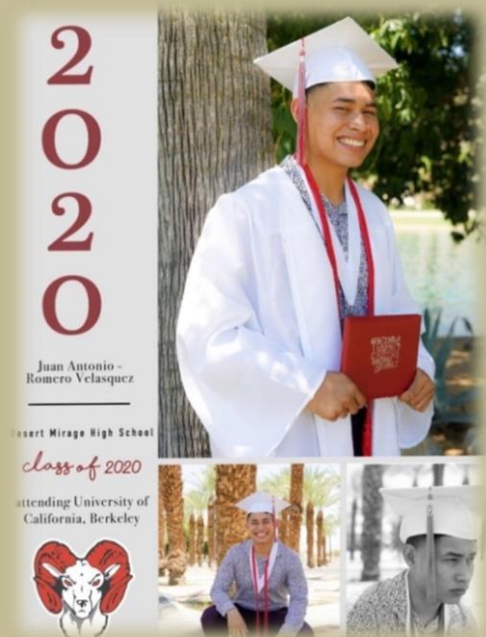
You should be proud of the support you provide to make this happen. Here's a great, **great** story that will make you all feel, well, **great!**

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF COACHELLA VALLEY MEMBER RECEIVES COLLEGE EDUCATION HELP BY DeAnn Lubell/Photos by Rey Mancilla

This is about a young man from the East Valley who spent seven years of his life, up until his 2020 high school graduation, going to the Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley after school since he was in the 5th grade. **Juan Antonio-Romero Velasquez** grew up in Thermal in a low-income situation. Despite financial challenges, Juan set lofty goals for himself. He credits the Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley as one of the driving forces behind his academic objectives.

"The Boys and Girls Clubs of the Coachella Valley has motivated me to achieve my career dreams," said Juan. "Club mentors guided me not only on the right path, but challenged me to take the most rigorous path as they believed I could do whatever I put my mind to that would benefit me in the long run. The BGCCV programs like Keystone, Passport to Manhood, Athletics and especially Palabra made me mature at a young age and gave me a vision of what I could become."

Juan, who loves math, envisions a career in engineering. He would also like to double major or minor in business and agriculture. Because of his 4.2 GPA and extra-curricular activities, he was accepted by The University of California, Berkeley as an engineering student and won much needed scholarship help for the steep tuition. Even though Juan received scholarships to help him attend the school of his dreams, there would be extra costs (remaining education tuition fees, books, meals, lodging, etc.) that would be a financial challenge for him.





Two amazing human beings would, in addition, unexpectedly change Juan's life forever. Palm Desert residents **Pam and Peter McIlroy**, about a year ago, were first introduced by a friend to Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley. It was clear to them that BGCCV was a lifeline to many under-privileged children. They were impressed by the culture of caring and support shown by the entire BGCCV staff. In the past, the McIlroys had donated to schools for building projects, but were looking to help a young person without means to receive a college education that would otherwise have been out of reach.

"The Boys and Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley immediately came to mind," said Peter McIlroy. "We contacted their President and CEO, Quinton Egson, and asked if he could recommend a high school student who we could help. We were looking for a young person who was intelligent and highly motivated to achieve a better life. Ultimately, we decided upon Juan because we felt he had everything we were looking for. When we met Juan, we knew right away that we had made the right choice. We loved his contagious smile, his cheerful disposition, his maturity, and the fact that he was committed to coming back to the valley someday to help his family and community. We feel blessed to be embarking on this journey with Juan and we look forward to the day that we can attend his college graduation."

Juan was equally impressed with the McIlroys. He met with them on two separate occasions (once at the Boys and Girls Club's administrative office and once at their home). Because of their trust and belief in him, he looks forward to completing his college education and from there his career aspirations. After that, he hopes to one day give back and inspire those in financial need the same way that the McIlroys inspired and helped him.

"I would like to tell Pam and Peter McIlroy that I am extremely blessed, thankful, and honored for the opportunity to get to go to one of the best public universities in the world and to get my tuition and other costs supplemented," said Juan. "I feel so many emotions that bring me joy. I am astonished, but also excited, to know that I will not disappoint them by investing in me and my future."

Thank you again for being such a good friend.

Remember, at Boys & Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley, [Great Futures Start Here](#) because of you!

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