

How Toyota Encourages the Youth of America

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Shannyn Baumgartner, a credit supervisor at Toyota Financial Services (TFS),

relished her time volunteering with the [Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Denver](#), participating in holiday dinners and collecting back-to-school donations.

But when she became a judge for the Clubs' Youth of the Year Award in 2017, Baumgartner started having a direct impact on students' futures. Sponsored by Toyota, the award grants financial aid to extraordinary student leaders in Boys & Girls Clubs at the local, state, regional and national levels.

As judges, Baumgartner and her colleague Ingrid Arnold didn't just select winners — they served as mentors for the candidates.

“We sit down with each one of them; we interview them; and we give feedback to the students who don't win — tips on what they could do going forward,” explained Baumgartner.

The pair worked with countless students who were nominated for the award, including Malachi Haynes.



A member of the Aurora Boys & Girls Club since the age of six, Haynes

dedicated his time to improving his community. In a [Club video](#), he recalled being the smallest kid in the Club, and others remembered him as quiet and reserved. But as Haynes grew older, he developed into a passionate leader amongst his peers.

“One day, he went from doing the activities at the Club to leading those activities,” said Haynes’ mother, Debra Hall.

One of his flagship contributions to the Club was “Double Trouble,” a reading program he created with a friend to improve literacy among African American males in his community. As a tutor for the program, he made a bargain: One hour of studying in exchange for one hour of exercise. As a result, each of Haynes’ pupils saw improvement in their literacy levels.

But despite his glowing resume, Haynes didn’t win the local Youth of the Year Award in 2017 falling short of another Metro Denver student who ultimately received a scholarship to Harvard. But Baumgartner, enthralled by Haynes’ innate leadership skills, encouraged him to reapply for the award.

Her instincts were right, and Haynes won the next year.

“Malachi came back again, worked really hard, and won it,” said Baumgartner.

Haynes and his family celebrated with TFS workers, who presented him with gifts from Toyota: a clothing allowance, laptop, backpack, and other items to prepare him for college.

This was just the beginning of Haynes’ journey, and Toyota would be by his side every step of the way. He advanced through the state and regional levels, ultimately winning the 2018 National Boys & Girls Clubs Youth of the Year award.

“I found my purpose of mentoring and leadership at the Boys & Girls Club,” said Haynes during his triumphant victory speech. “I want to put forward a sense of ‘I can do this, too,’ and show students that we can actually make some changes.”

The award came with a \$100,000 scholarship, a free trip to Disney World, and a free Toyota Corolla, allowing

Haynes to study kinesiology at Colorado State University.

Baumgartner, the judge who encouraged Haynes to reapply, is proud to work with the children in the Boys & Girls Clubs, like Haynes.

“Every time I am at these judging events – seeing the kids I’ve seen – you know you’re getting responsible, hardworking kids,” she said. “All these kids are amazing.”