

CYSS Detroit Arsenal Middle School & Teen (MST) programs awarded Nick Halo Award

By Teresa Brodsky, DTA CYSS MST Director

January 2011, Detroit Arsenal Child & Youth School Services (CYSS) Middle School & Teen (MST) programs were awarded a Nick Halo Award for the extensive community service efforts of their youth during 2010.

The Nick Halo awards are given out by TeenNick, a subsidiary of the kids and teens television network, Nickelodeon. TeenNick grants Halo awards to recognize teens that make a difference in their communities.

To qualify, organizations were to engage member's in a minimum of four of the Boys and Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) signature service projects, which are offered as a part of the Year of Service (YOS) initiative as well as enroll members in two or more of BGCA's Character and Leadership Development programs.

The Detroit Arsenal (DTA) youth exceeded the minimum requirement by participating in all seven events of the YOS. The initiative was the BGCA's answer to the challenge, set forth by President Barack Obama, to youth across the country to make a difference in their communities through volunteerism.

Qualifying events included Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, Nickelodeon's The Big Help, Global Youth Service Day, United We Serve, National Day of Service and Remembrance, Nickelodeon's Worldwide Day of Play, and National Family Week.

During 2010, DTA youth completed 16 service learning projects (10 were part of the United We Serve Campaign), associated with the YOS. These projects focused on the environment, youth and families, physical fitness and nutrition, hunger and homelessness, and military veterans.

The program actively engaged over 60 different youth in serving a total of 860 hours of time to their community. The economic impact of their service totaled \$6,000 which can be translated into manpower hours saved by the Greater Detroit area.

Additionally, MST youth actively participated in all four of BGCA's Character and Leadership Development programs; Torch Clubs, Keystone Clubs, Sports Clubs and Youth of the Year. Over half of the youth who participated in the YOS projects were also members of one of these clubs. Youth ages 11-13 are in Torch Clubs and youth age 14-18 are in Keystone Clubs.

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Members of both of these clubs work together to plan and implement local community service activities as well as organize service projects for military members and their families across the globe. Youth active in BGCA Sports Clubs assist the DTA Youth Sports in coaching, referring, and teaching good sportsmanship to younger children.

The Youth of the Year program highlights the community service, leadership, and commitment of one young person each year between the ages of 14-18 who embodies the characteristics of a leader through dedication to the program.

Nick Halo Award winning organizations are given a large sign by Nickelodeon to be displayed prominently at the entrance of their facility letting all who enter know of the programs' commitment to serve others.

As the Detroit Arsenal Middle School and Teen Program is currently without a permanent structure, the award signage will travel throughout the halls of the Detroit Arsenal's main buildings as well as partnership schools to show recognition for the youth's efforts.

The DTA MST program would like to thank the Boys and Girls Clubs of America for their knowledge and guidance as well as Nickelodeon for recognizing the importance of volunteerism among youth. The youth could not have achieved this award without the commitment of their parents, the dedication of the MST staff, and the support of the US Army Garrison leadership.

Our teens remind us that in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve".