



November 2, 2006

Robert Stewart Named BGCB '06 Youth of the Year



Robert "Stew" Stewart.

Selected to Speak to Board of Directors and Overseers at BGCB's Annual Meeting on November 29

South Boston Boys & Girls Club member Robert Stewart recently was named Youth of the Year at his Club, and across Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston's (BGCB) five-Club network. The nomination process requires two essays from the applicant, along with letters of support, and an interview. As BGCB's 2006 Youth of the Year, Robert will be a featured speaker at the agency's Annual Meeting on November 29, this year to be held at BGCB's newly renovated Yawkey Club of Roxbury. This is the second consecutive year in which a South Boston Club member has been named Youth of the Year across all five BGCB Clubs. In 2005, Ryan Kelly (now a staff member at the Club) received that honor.

Robert, affectionately called "Stew" by his friends, says that being named BGCB Youth of the Year means that "people recognize how hard you work and appreciate what you do." He also says that he's proud to have been selected as Youth of the Year for his Club because it helps promote the Club as a great place to be where youth can take advantage of numerous opportunities, such as traveling to other cities and meeting new people through the Club's Keystone Club (a teen leadership club). Last year's BGCB Youth of the Year, Ryan Kelly, was also a South Boston Club member, so the honor for Stewart continues a sense of pride for the Club and the South Boston community.

A South Boston native, Robert credits his mother with helping him stay positive and on the right track. "I played a lot of sports, and my mom was always there to support me, no matter when or where. She taught me to always be a gentleman, which is important in sports, in the Club and in school," he says. As for his Club experience, Robert says the Club has provided him with positive activities that have kept him off the streets. "It's also helped me be my own person, and not what others want me to be," he adds.

Robert is a freshman this fall at Salem State College. He hopes to translate his love of sports and commitment to helping others into a career in sports medicine. He looks forward to coming back to help at the Club and at his high school when he has time.

For 66 years, the South Boston Boys & Girls Club has worked to create a welcoming and supportive environment where young people can develop into happy and productive citizens. The Club helps to create career and education competencies, a hopeful outlook, respect for oneself and others, and life skills. The South Boston Club is part of Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston. Since its founding in 1893, BGCB has provided high-impact, affordable programs and services that enable at-risk youth from disadvantaged circumstances to mature into productive, caring and responsible adults.

South Boston Boys & Girls Club Reunion

The South Boston Boys and Girls Club has a long and rich history. The club also has a vibrant present and an exciting future. Please clear your calendars now and plan to be at the South Boston Boys and Girls Club Reunion on Friday, November 3, 2006.

As I talk to the people who work and volunteer at the Club, and looked at the plans for what's to come, I am convinced that the club's best days are ahead. That's saying a lot, when you consider all of the amazing things that have happened here since I was a kid (not to mention the cast of characters that came out of there, whether you were from the Projects or the Point). We all had the club in common, and that still holds for today.

We learned tough lessons that helped us get through our child and adult hood. This is still our club, regardless of the changes in our community today, these kids still need a safe place to have fun and learn.

The challenges facing young people today are far greater than they were for us growing up in the City. Gangs, predators on the Internet, violence on television, and in real life are just some of the influences present everywhere today. More children are raised in single parent families, and most don't have a father. Many kids spend more time with their peers than they do with members of their family.

The Club's programs keep your kids safe, help them learn, and relieve parents of worries about what their children are doing during the after school hours and weekends. The kids and this community need these programs and they need us to stand up for them.

With that all being said, this will be a great time to reminisce about the good times we had with past club members, and memories of ones who are no longer here. Things like making sure you knew where you put your jacket and shoes, or you might end up walking home barefoot and cold!

So join your old friends this Friday night – you are guaranteed a good time, while supporting the new generation of “club kids”.

Boys & Girls Club readies for celebration

Peter Van Delft
Bulletin Staff

Have you ever been a member of the South Boston Boys & Girls Club? Is there anyone special that you'd like to meet up with from your younger days spent playing at the Club? And, do you want to help the staff with their efforts to obtain the funding to install a fully functional climbing rock wall for current and future members to use?

If the answer is 'yes' to either, both, or all of these questions, then come on out to the South Boston Boys & Girls Club Alumni Reunion on Nov. 3, 7 p.m., at the Club on 230 West Sixth St.

Providing kids ages 6 to 18 with recreation, guidance, and lifelong friendships, the Boys & Girls Club seeks to give members "many opportunities that challenge and encourage them to grow into responsible adults." Having served the South Boston community for over 70 years, the long list of alumni should provide event organizers with plenty of supporters for the cause.

"We're hoping to get over 400 people in for the reunion," said Pattie McCormick of the South Boston Boys & Girls Club. "We're also trying to really push to get the girls to come back. Up until the 70s, it was just a Boys Club and the Girls Club was just a small structure down the street. Really, we want to get the old boys and girls back in to the event. We've been meeting every Tuesday night planning the event and working out logistics and we hope that it all goes off as well as the last one."

According to McCormick, the last event - held in 2003 - featured a strong turnout full of former members looking to renew old friendships and establish new ones with other returning alumni.

For those old members who may be on the fence about the prospect of returning home after all these years, McCormick is hopeful that the great cause which the reunion fundraiser will support will be enough to tip the scales.

"We're hoping that the rock wall will offer something concrete - pun intended - that alumni will be able to see as a direct result of their participation in the event and that they contributed to building it. We've already called in a company to get a price on [the cost of the wall] and we hope that by the next reunion, it will be done and we can show it off." Helping to lure former members out to the event, the reunion offers attendees, along with great food and beer, the opportunity during a silent auction to bid on several prizes of note.

"We have a DJ, Jimmy LeBlanc, who is also an alum," said McCormick. "So far, we're doing great with donations. The local businesses have been really amazing. And I know that they are asked a lot, but they really come through."

"Congressman [Stephen] Lynch has offered to take people on a tour of the White House and Congress and then take them to lunch with him as an auction item," McCormick continued. "We just heard that the Mayor is also going to bring a couple of people to lunch."

And, if offers of good company, great food and drink, spectacular prizes, and a worthy cause aren't enough to get alumni off of their sofas and into the Club, McCormick has one more ace up her sleeve.

"The last time, we held challenges," said McCormick. "We had stories printed with an old buddy challenging other friends in a game of pool and we had basketballs out and ready in the gym along with other items for challenges among old friends. People accepted the challenges and had a good time seeing old friends and reminiscing." Though alumni are strongly urged to attend these events, McCormick stresses that the reunion is not restricted to former members.

"We've had significant numbers of alums come, but everyone who wants to support the club is welcome," McCormack said. "We're just trying to encourage old members to come out. It's just a great place that's been around for a long time and we want everyone to enjoy it. Just drop by and join us."

For more information, contact McCormick at (617) 268-4301, pmccormick@bgcb.org.