Press Release

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Fort Drum teen named New York State Military Youth of the Year

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – Abigail Frimpong, a Fort Drum community member and sophomore at Indian River High School, recently was named Boys and Girls Clubs of America’s New York State Military Youth of the Year.

“This was an achievement I never expected to have, and I am so delighted to have this opportunity,” Abby said. “Being the Military Youth of the Year for New York felt like I was proving to myself what I could do, and it impacts my life constantly.”

The Boys and Girls Clubs of America’s Military Youth of the Year was introduced in 2013 as a distinct component of the Youth of the Year Program. It recognizes outstanding teens in military communities around the world, served by BGCA-affiliated Youth Centers on military installations.

“The Fort Drum Youth Center is like my second home,” Abby said. “Not only have I built bonds with the people there, it has become a safe and nurturing place for me to develop into who I am today.”

She recalled her first visit to the center with her older brothers, who showed her the art room while they went to play basketball in the gymnasium.

“I always created some type of drawing or painting, and it was my favorite room to be in,” Abby said. “Then I made many friends, and I became involved in programs such as Smart Girls, Drama Matters, and the 4H cooking and sewing clubs.”

Years later, she is still active at the Youth Center, where she participates regularly in the sewing/crochet club, cooking club, and anime club. She also was involved in the Ups Driving Course and the BGCA Junior Staff, which is a leadership program that helps teens in exploring a career in youth or human services.

Abby said she has learned a lot from the programs and clubs that Fort Drum Child and Youth Services offers at the Youth Center.

“They have taught me to be resilient, respectful, open-minded, and inquisitive,” she said. “And to question what I don’t understand and to not be afraid to learn new things. So, I am very lucky to have a place like the Youth Center.”

It’s also a place where Abby can meet with friends and socialize in a safe, friendly environment.

“It’s a short walk from home, so I don’t have to worry about someone driving me all the time, and my parents don’t have to worry about where I am,” she said. “I often come to the Youth Center with my friends, and we can hang out in the gym, art room – playing games or getting homework done.”

At school, Abby is a member of the Tri-M Music Honors Society, where she participates in performances and community service activities. She plays volleyball and recently joined an art club. Academically, her favorite subjects are art, chemistry, and math.

“In the future, I want to be in the medical field so I will most likely study medicine and then go into a more specific field later on,” she said. “I’m mainly interested in medical jobs like radiology or pediatrics, but I can also see myself in the business or management field.”

This is the third consecutive year that a Fort Drum teen has been chosen for this honor, which comes with a scholarship and a chance to earn the title of National Military Youth of the Year.

Coincidentally, the title of NYS Military Youth of the Year went to her brother, Michael Frimpong, the previous two years. After Abby decided to apply for the competition, he offered encouragement throughout the process.

“I knew my parents wanted me to apply, but Michael explained that I could really do it,” she said. “He knew I would work hard enough and try my best at least, so he definitely influenced my decision to apply. He told me to make sure I could recite my speech at any time and to practice with a variety of people outside my family.”

Abby said her brother gave her the advice she needed when she doubted the quality of her speech and her oratory skills.

“He told me to not change anything, but to be confident, calm, and smile as I spoke,” she said.

Michael Guerrieri, Fort Drum Youth Program assistant director, said Abby has been recognized as Youth of the Month at the center multiple times, so he knew she would do well in this competition.

“She’s a hard worker and good natured,” he said. “Abby will volunteer to help at the Youth Center without anyone even asking. And always with a smile on her face.”

Cyrea Coronado, a Child and Youth Program assistant, began working as an art instructor at the Youth Center three months ago.

“I had heard a lot of good things about Abby beforehand, and that she was very good at art, so I was very excited to hear that she would be in my room a lot,” she said. “And when I met her, I wanted to ask her to teach me how to paint because she’s so talented!”

Coronado said that Abby enjoys being creative, and she often brings friends with her to the art room.

“She’s very talented for such a young person,” she said. “And I would also say kind, even though I know that’s a broad word to use. But Abby is always willing to talk to you, and share with you, and help you out with anything.”

Coronado said that when she saw less of Abby in the art room it meant she was working on Military Youth of the Year requirements.

“I know that she worked really hard on that, and it meant a lot to her,” she said. “I really think she deserves it. We are all very proud of her.”

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Photo Captions:

MYOY1 - Abby Frimpong, 16, stands in front of one of her paintings in the Fort Drum Youth Center’s art room. She recently was named Boys and Girls Clubs of America’s New York State Military Youth of the Year. (Photo by Mike Strasser, Fort Drum Garrison Public Affairs)

MYOY2 – Abby Frimpong (left) participates in Cooking Club at the Fort Drum Youth Center. She recently was named Boys and Girls Clubs of America’s New York State Military Youth of the Year. (Photo courtesy of Fort Drum Youth Center)