



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Shelley B. Mayer

## Patch: Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester Visits Lawmakers in Albany

VICTORIA HOCHMAN February 2, 2024

Members of the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester visit Albany to lobby for funding for youth services



Albany, NY (January 31, 2024) – The Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester visited lawmakers at the State Capitol in Albany on January 30 for Afterschool Advocacy Day to lobby for funding for important afterschool programs and services.

Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester Director of Programming Athenia Lee, Associate Director of Teen Programming Daniela Perez-Torres, and Middle School Head Counselor Daniel Beaudreault traveled to Albany along with 13 teen leaders to advocate on behalf of youth programming statewide.

Boys & Girls Club CEO Alyzza Ozer said students prepare for months to understand applicable legislation and give compelling testimony to the importance of after school enrichment. Ozer added that uncertainty over the replacement of New York State After School Advantage Funding in the state budget – accounting for more than \$280,000 a year for the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester and hundreds of millions more for after school programming across the state - made the students first-hand accounts even more relevant.

“These diverse students brilliantly articulated the needs of youth throughout the state,” said Ozer. “They took their civic responsibilities very seriously, and impressed our legislators with their knowledge and sensitivity to all youth, demonstrating how important afterschool programs are to educating young people.”

The students and their advisors visited the offices of New York State Senators Peter Harckham, Shelley Mayer and John Liu and Assemblymembers Amy Paulin, Gary Pretlow, Chris Burdick, Mary Jane Shimsy and Michael Benedetto. The group was also introduced on the Assembly floor.

“I welcomed the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester to Albany for a great discussion about supporting the organization and funding its programs, like providing meals and mental health services for students,” said Harckham, who also [posted photos of the visit](#) on his Instagram account.

“I was very grateful for the opportunity to come up to Albany for the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester,” said Katie O., a Marlins Swim Team member and 2024 Youth of the Year candidate. “In Albany, my peers and I had the privilege of speaking to the state Assemblymen and Senators to share our experiences at the Club and advocate for mental health, education, and nutrition. Personal stories like the ones my peers and I shared make complex issues relatable, motivating the state legislators to engage and support the cause emotionally and socially,”

According to Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester Director of Programming Athenia Lee, “We are always grateful for the funding we – and many other organizations serving youth in New York – receive from the state. We hope that this year, our state legislators will still be able to find the funding for these vital afterschool programs that help so many of our youth who need important services that will help them thrive and succeed, now and in the future.”

For more information, visit <https://bgcnw.com/>

About the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester

The Club provides age and developmentally appropriate programs and curricula designed to foster academic success, good character and leadership development, and healthy lifestyles for ages 3 to 18. We provide youth with a safe, positive environment where they can learn and grow and feel a sense of belonging. We partner with school districts and local organizations to ensure each child receives the educational supports and enrichment they deserve.

Read the article here: <https://patch.com/new-york/chappaqua/boys-girls-club-northern-westchester-visits-lawmakers-albany>