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Local Green Bay youth wins first at Oneida Smartphone Film Festival

Boys & Girls Club of Greater Green Bay's digital visual arts program took first place in their film category at the Oneida Smartphone Film Festival

GREEN BAY, Wis. (Nov. 25, 2019) – The [Boys & Girls Club of Greater Green Bay's](#) digital visual arts program won first place in the Group Filmmakers category at the [Oneida Smartphone Film Festival](#), organized by Oneida Nation Community Education Center, Wisconsin Arts Board and Oneida Film Society, that took place last Thursday, Nov. 21 at the Radisson Hotel & Conference Center in Green Bay.

Also known as the Creative Crew, the group members are Jose L., Aamira M., Mahuassa O., Jalen M., Kiara M., Harmony W., Melissa K., Kiara S., Guadalupe V., Andrew V., Graham Y., Angel M. Their winning film, [Minecraft Comedy Show](#), is about youth who are avid Minecraft gamers, who all decided to create a fantasy comedy based on the game, with a kid escaping to the Minecraft world to open up a comedy club.



Alex Zacarias, an Emmy Award-winning television producer and digital visual arts director for the Boys & Girls Club, states that this film was very interest-driven by the kids, which ultimately produced the best outcomes and 21st century learning experiences for the kids.

“Although every film was deserving of this award, I am thrilled our Club members – ages ranging from 10 to 15 – got to experience this win and know that these are real, 21st century digital visual art skills they are learning at the Boys & Girls Club,” says Zacarias. “This film was the culminating of everything we’ve learned in my program, from writing the script to shooting and editing the video; our key focus was always driven by the kids’ interests, storytelling ideas and to, simply, keep it fun.”

Mahuassa O., a Club member from the Creative Crew, states that joining the digital visual arts program has been a great experience.

"I am happy we won first place, since we all worked hard together. Every day after school, my friends and I always look forward to coming to the Club every day to Mr. Alex's room," says Mahuassa O. "He keeps it fun with different film projects and field trips; I don't know what else I would be doing at the Club."

The Boys & Girls Club's very own staff member, Middle School Support Specialist Cody Cottrell also won first in a different category, First Time Filmmaker, with his submission piece, *The Places I Saw You In*, a visual poem about his journey and finding the beauty of his fiancée in the nature and the world around him. He won a \$100 prize.

There were 13 film submissions for the entire contest, and the categories were youth, first time, experienced, group and judge's choice. The group filmmaker's category had three submissions, including the Creative Crew's piece, which won the \$150 prize.

The digital visual arts program is based out of the Boys & Girls Club east-side Lutsey location, 1451 University Ave. It is a part of the [youth arts initiative \(YAI\) program](#), one of the Boys & Girls Club's signature initiatives where Club members gain access to professional teaching artists, high-quality arts programming and a creative outlet. The Club has seen increased confidence and success in-and-outside the classroom. YAI builds real life problem-solving skills, develops social and emotional competencies and provides new outlets for self-expression.

The Oneida smartphone film festival celebrates Wisconsin filmmakers, with this year's theme as "Telling Our Own Stories." The vision is to create a film platform for novice and experienced filmmakers to incorporate talent and creativity into a 3-10 film captured on a smartphone or tablet. Films narrate belief, culture and personal stories. Winners were chosen based on a combination of audience votes and judge scores.

Attached Photo's Caption:

Digital Arts Director Alex Zacarias and the Creative Crew from the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Green Bay win first place in the Group Filmmakers category at the Oneida Smartphone Film Festival on Thursday, Nov. 21, and presents their winning \$150 check prize.

Media Note:

Video highlighting the event: <https://youtu.be/PdwM5-o4kqg>

Creative Crew's winning submission video: <https://youtu.be/5jK-j9Sni4g>

About Boys & Girls Club of Greater Green Bay

[The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Green Bay](#), 1451 University Avenue, believes every child deserves to be in an environment that brings out the very best in them. For more than 50 years, the Club has provided youth aged 7-18 with a safe place to learn and grow during out-of-school hours, while also opening the door to positive relationships with caring adult professionals and life-changing opportunities through educational programs. The Club has five locations throughout greater Green Bay where memberships are available for only \$10 per year. For more information, please visit www.bgcgb.org. You can also find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#)!

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