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### **Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Microsoft Honor Local Teen**

*Summer trip helps prepare Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue member for the "real world"*

**ATLANTA, July 27, 2009** – While there is no question that today's generation is incredibly savvy when it comes to technology, many question how well-prepared they are for the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace. Yet the talent, creativity and technical ability displayed by Boys & Girls Clubs of Bellevue member Ivaylo Draganov in the National Club Tech Digital Arts Festivals showed that with the right resources, all young people have the potential to do great things in the future.

Draganov, 17, joined Boys & Girls Clubs members from across the world in Atlanta where Microsoft and Boys & Girls Clubs of America provided them with a trip filled with hands-on experiences in the art and technology worlds. They took part in interactive workshops at the Art Institute of Atlanta and the global public relations firm, MS&L. Participants also visited CNN, World of Coke and the Georgia Aquarium for behind-the-scenes view of what it takes to keep the tourist destinations going.

"While many of today's youth utilize technology, we have the opportunity to give our members access to training in a unique way that builds not only their skills but their confidence," said Roxanne Spillett, president and CEO, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA). "Through the Club Tech Digital Arts Festivals we're not only giving them the technology tools they need, but we're also showing them first-hand how they can leverage the skills they've gained to be great at whatever they choose to pursue."

Throughout the year, Boys & Girls Clubs members competed locally with hopes of progressing to the regional competition and finally the national level. Participants were encouraged to combine creativity with technology know-how to create a digital masterpiece in one of five categories – photo illustration, music production, filmmaking, graphic design and website development. Youth, ranging in age 10 to 18, submitted nearly 1,300 pieces of original digital artwork, incorporating the theme "Nature of Design."

BGCA provided Draganov with generic pictures of a leaf, vine and crescent moon and he was challenged to design a completely different digital image that could be used as a computer's desktop wallpaper. The result, entitled "Scenery," creatively pulled together the images and captured the essence of nature.

The digital arts competition is only one component of Club Tech, a partnership between Microsoft and BGCA that aims to equip Bellevue-area youth with the skills needed to succeed in school and the workplace. The initiative successfully integrates software training, digital curriculum and hands-on experiences to level the "virtual playing field" for all youth.

"Our young people are central to our future economic success," commented Pamela Passman, corporate vice president of Microsoft Global Corporate Affairs. "The Clubs provide young people with a supportive environment that fosters learning and growth, and readies them for the jobs of tomorrow. Initiatives like Club Tech and the Digital Arts Festivals offer a fantastic opportunity to showcase creativity using technology, promote digital literacy and expand skills that will not only benefit the participants but our entire society."

According to a recent study by the University of Washington's Center for Information & Society, the technology access kids get outside of school is an important complement to the learning that happens in the classrooms. Researchers found that through Club Tech, Boys & Girls Club members not only learned the fundamentals of computers, but they also learned how to harness technology in a way that made them more literate in current affairs and other topics that spill over from school and from home.

"The Club Tech Digital Arts Festival goes beyond just providing access to computers. This experience affords all youth the opportunity to become productive citizens in a global economy that's driven by technology," added Spillett. "We are extremely proud of our winners as they are living proof that we're having a positive impact on the lives of our children."

For more information about the above winners or to view their artwork, please visit [www.bgca.org/digitalart](http://www.bgca.org/digitalart).

Gemma Aronchick of Microsoft Presents Award



Ivaylo brainstorming for clay animation movie

