

# A Place to Become...

## A Success Story

Thirteen year-old Alisha Quero was on vacation with her family in California. They visited the U.S.S. Ronald Regan, a Flagship for the Navy that offers tours to the public. "I remember standing on that aircraft carrier and feeling my whole body shake as the jets came in to land on the flight deck. It was so exciting. It was right then and there I decided I wanted a career in aviation when I grew up."

Alisha, now 19, became a Club member as a first grader. She says, "I grew up in the Club. I would come here every day after school. Staff would help me with my math and English homework, and I made friends from other schools. I was active in participating in the Club programs, and I volunteered in the kitchen. Each day, at a certain time, I would tie back my hair, wash my hands, and put on an apron to help get snupper (the Club's afternoon meal) ready to serve. I was still in elementary school, but I learned the importance of being on time and responsible, and I liked the idea of having a job."



*Youth of the Year photo, 2016.  
Courtesy, Keri Blue Photography*

Alisha used her skills and experience at the Club to join the Young Eagles and Wings & Wheels programs at the airport. She volunteered to help with their events. "Being around the airplanes inspired me. Originally, I thought I'd work on a flight deck when I grew up, but that experience helped me realize what I really wanted was to become a pilot."

Alisha worked hard in school with a commitment to reach her goal. She was a leader at the Club, and influenced many younger members with her positive attitude. "My vision was to see all children make meaningful memories at the Club, just as I had. I wanted to encourage them to strive for the best and go for what they believe in." As a result of her motivation, moral character, life goals, and nine years as a Club kid, Alisha, a sophomore in high school, was selected as the 2015/16 Youth of the Year. She was selected for a second time in 2017 due to her influence on Club members and her consistency in embodying the values of the Club. She was honored for her accomplishments at the 2016 and 2017 Celebrate Kids Dinner & Auction, and gave moving speeches about her Club experience before crowds of nearly 300 adults and Club members. She also participated in the BGCA State Youth of the Year competition both years, all while remaining active in the Club, working part-time and attending school.



*Alisha holds the scanner at the Club Greeter Desk for Maya and Jazmin as they check-in for the day.*

By the time Alisha graduated from high school, she had become an official Club staff. "I always wanted to be a staff member. I really like working with kids, and I remember what it was like for me interacting with staff as a Club member....one staff in particular--Dave Forney. He was like a father figure to me. He was like a cool dad. He'd teach us kids how to juggle; we would watch movies; learn about different music, and even play dodge ball and learn about good sportsmanship."

Now it is time for Alisha to move on. She has received scholarships for school, worked the summer as a Club staff, saved her money, and is heading off soon to realize her dream of becoming a pilot. She is enrolled in the Aviation Program at the Central Oregon Community College in Bend.

She leaves us with this. "The biggest things the Club has taught me is to be open to new experiences, friendships, and to engage with people. It's like a family here...I'll miss it."

We'll miss her too, but we are all very proud of her and her accomplishments. Good luck Alisha. Reach for the sky!