

BRIGHTON — The Brighton Boys & Girls Club stands out among the 4,300 U.S. clubs; it placed in the top seven in the 2017 Blue Door Decorating Contest.

More than 15,000 votes were cast for 614 nationwide entries and Brighton was a finalist, which earned the club \$1,000. The Kip's Bay Club in Bronx, NY, won the \$20,000 grand prize supplied by Lowe's Home Improvement stores.

The Brighton door's optimistic theme "Begin with Us... The Possibilities are Endless" was illustrated with some of those possibilities including a doctor, basketball player, teacher and astronaut.

"We came up with the theme by thinking about what makes our club stand out," said club manager Taylor Seder. "It was that our possibilities are endless."

The contest's purpose was to kick off National Boys & Girls Club Week from March 27-31 and show communities what the clubs do for the kids. Clubs in Hollywood, Immokalee and Big Cypress also participated in the contest.

"The kids are excited that we made it into the top seven," Seder said. "They all got involved in the voting. We put it out to the community and there was great parental participation as well."

Nearly 700 youth enjoy the Boys & Girls Clubs tribal wide, where they participate in activities as varied as computer scavenger hunts to obstacle courses to cooking classes.

The Brighton club is a busy one with daily averages of about 15 kids age 5-6, more than 30 age 7-11 and a handful of teens. Seder isn't sure what they will use the money for but ideas are streaming fast; perhaps a volleyball net or a grill or renovations to the new Kids Club building for age 5-6.

A typical day in the BG Club starts with an hour of independent study or homework help if needed. Then the kids go outside for some physical activity such as dodgeball, kickball, softball or obstacle courses. The third hour is spent inside for crafts or science experiments and the last hour of the day is for computer games and scavenger hunts that teach how to search for answers online. Game consoles are also available.

"We hope they are learning good character and leadership skills," Seder said. "We want them to share the knowledge they learn with their families."

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