

Local club throws party celebrating Nashua ‘Bug Juice’ stars



Photo by Amy DeMien The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua holds a celebration for two of its members, Barion Perry and Aaralyn Lopez, who appeared on the Disney show, Bug Juice. From left are Lopez; her sister, Jordin Lopez; Perry’s sister, Diamond Perry; and Perry.

NASHUA – If you grew up in the 1990s, you may remember watching the hit Disney reality show, Bug Juice, which follows a group of campers through the trials and tribulations of their summer camp experience.

Now, 20 years after the premiere of its first season, Bug Juice has relaunched for a new generation of viewers. The series documents the summer adventures of children from all around

the country including, for this season, two Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua members: Barion Perry and Aaralyn Lopez.

To celebrate their feature roles in the show, the club held a red carpet event, during which their fellow club members and their families could come together and view episodes starring Barion and Aaralyn. During the event, attendees enjoyed brownies, took photographs with the stars, viewed two of their main episodes, and participated in a question and answer session about the starring members experience being on the show.

“This is such a great opportunity for them,” club member Tiana Brown said. *“They are definitely going places.”*

“They’re such great role models for others to follow so it’s great they were picked to be on the show,” club member Mia Rosario added.

“I am so happy for them. They’re living the dream,” club member Naaliya Diaz-Doran added.

During its premiere run, close to 500,000 viewers tuned in to watch the summer camp saga. Just as in the first season which aired in 1998, the reboot of the reality series focused its attention on Camp Waziyatah in Waterford, Maine. It documents the kids’ outdoor adventures, following their development of new friendships, while showing how they adapt to a new environment away from home. Though the new theme song is different from the original Bug Juice Anthem, *“It Doesn’t Come in Jar,”* the show maintains its playful style with floating illustrations and color-block letter captions overlaying the real-life experiences of the children.

For the launch party, the episode titled *“Later, Taters!”* and the episode titled *“Everyday I’m Paddlin’”* were shown to the over 150 kids and parents in attendance.

“Later, Taters!” documents the campers last day of Session One at Camp Waziyatah. It focuses on children sharing tearful goodbyes and accomplishing goals that, at the start of their camp experience, seemed impossible. The episode culminated in the camp’s Community Award being presented to Perry during the camp’s Banquet Night. This award goes to the person who demonstrates great character and serves as a role model for their fellow campers. As one counselor puts it, the recipient receives legendary status as they are called to light the camp’s final campfire. Upon viewing his acceptance of the award, Perry’s fellow club members and parents burst into cheers.

“I had no clue I was going to be considered for that award. I just wanted to be nice and to be a good person and friend,” Perry said.

In *“Everyday I’m Paddlin,”* it was Aaralyn’s turn to take the spotlight as the episode followed her and a group of other campers on a day of outdoor activity, including a counselor fashion show with costumes designed by campers, a canoe trip ending in a capsized boat, and Lopez achieving and even exceeding her goal of making at least three three-point shots on the basketball court.

Within the episode, an entire segment was devoted to Lopez practicing non-stop under the tutelage of her favorite counselor, Alex, until she made not just three, but six three-point shots. Unwilling to give up in the face of a challenge, she received cheers from a large group of her fellow campers.

As one Camp Waziyatah counselor put it, *“Aaralyn is setting the goal of being the best version of herself and that’s what camp is all about.”*

After the Bug Juice viewing, Barion and Aaralyn participated in a question and answer session, while Clubhouse Director Eric McCambly presented both of them with custom-designed silver-framed Hollywood stars, signed by all of their fellow club members and staff mentors. Their own personal mentors within the club were especially proud of their achievements throughout the series.

“It has been amazing watching Aaralyn grow. When I first met her she was quieter and would never dream of being in the spotlight. Since participating in Bug Juice, she has found her voice and has been participating in more school activities and trying new sports. I love the fact that she feels more comfortable trying new things,” Stahl Teen Center Education Director Bree Cosgrove, who served as Aaralyn’s mentor this past year said.

As a club member, Aaralyn participated in SMART Girls, Healthy Habits, SMART Moves, Positive Action, and girls basketball. Barion similarly engages in many programs at the club including, Torch Club, Triple Play Leadership Club and Soccer. In 2017, he was recognized as the Torch of the Year.

“It has been a pleasure to mentor Barion. He’s a standout Club member, always getting his homework done during Power Hour and always setting a good example to our younger club members,” club Athletic Director Tim Davidian said.

Also present at the viewing party were Barion and Aaralyn’s family who were excited to see the 16-episode documentation of their camp experience come to life on the big screen and happy with how the two of them were represented on the Disney show.

“I was surprised to see him open up. He’s shy but when he gets to know people he’s able to make new friends. He’s a very kind person and, during his time on Bug Juice, he ‘wowed’ me. I can tell he’s going to go far in life,” Barion’s sister, Diamond Perry, said.

“I was really happy that she went and that she had a great experience and has made life-long friends. I would describe my sister as funny, crazy but really nice. Watching her, I wish to be just like her someday,” Aaralyn’s sister, Jordin Lopez, added.

Barion and Aaralyn closed the night by teaming up to lead their family and their fellow club members in a campfire song, a tribute to their time at Camp Waziyatah.

“I feel like my behavior changed during my time at camp. This experience really helped me to grow,” Aaralyn said.

“It was really cool meeting so many different people from all different states,” Barion added. *“I really opened up during my time there and had so much fun. I will never forget my time at Camp Waziyatah.”*