In addition to the scholarship program with University of Phoenix, BGCA partners with University of Phoenix Foundation to provide BE GREAT: Graduate, a program

CLEVELAND– Academic success is a key priority for Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) and with partners likeUniversityofPhoenix, youth are receiving education opportunities to help them graduate from high school and prepare for college.

However, many adults long for additional education opportunities and Boys & Girls Club staff, parents and alumni like Shelly Johnson are getting that chance.

Johnson was one of 20 recipients nationwide to receive a full-tuition scholarship from BGCA andUniversityofPhoenixto complete an undergraduate or master's degree. More than 200 Boys & Girls Club staff, parents and alumni applied for the scholarship opportunity.

"Serving youth is the number one priority here at BGCA, and it's great to see such a wonderful opportunity for the staff, parents and alumni who are so devoted to our young people," said Judith J. Pickens, senior vice president for BGCA's Program & Youth Development Services. "Thanks to the support ofUniversityofPhoenix, we are able to reward these people for all their hard work and dedication to our movement."

Johnson has been with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Cleveland for approximately 10 years. She was recently admitted into theUniversityofPhoenix Bachelor of Sciencein Human Services/Management degree program. Her goal is that she will gain more insight into workforce diversity, performance systems and behavioral systems and apply what she learns to the work she already does for BGCA.

“I put my education on hold in previous years for family and financial reasons. I have two young children and didn’t want to be away at work all day and then at school most nights,” said Johnson. “This scholarship will allow me to complete what I started free of charge and still be able to spend time with my husband and kids. I am so excited and grateful for this opportunity!”

UniversityofPhoenixis committed to increasing access to education, especially for underrepresented and low-income students who may be underserved by traditional education structures. This effort provides a pathway for economic advancement for those who otherwise may not have one.

“We are proud to award Shelly Johnson and all the recipients with full-tuition scholarships toUniversityofPhoenixbecause each emulates the drive and motivation to be good citizens in their communities,” said Dr. Bill Pepicello, president ofUniversityofPhoenix. “Their connection to BGCA means they believe, like we do, in making this world a better place for young people across the country.”

“UniversityofPhoenixis dedicated to opening educational opportunities for theClevelandcommunity,” said Gina Cuffari, territory vice president forUniversityofPhoenix Ohio Campuses. “We are excited to offer Shelly this chance to finish her degree and apply her education to better the community through her work with the Boys & Girls Club.”

In addition to the scholarship program with Universityof Phoenix, BGCA partners with Universityof Phoenix Foundationto provide BE GREAT: Graduate, a program aimed to combat high school dropout among youth most vulnerable for dropping out of school. The three-year partnership focuses on helping young people at 10 Boys & Girls Clubs around the nation develop the academic, behavioral and social skills needed to be successful.