

AIS YOUTH REPORT

SPRING 2019

By Cheryl Deaton, AIS Youth Chairman

Currently we have 396 youth members registered in AIS. We consistently run around the 400 mark, with many new young people joining at the spring shows. There are quite a few remarkable young people who belong to AIS, and I encourage everyone to mentor a young person in their area so that we can spread the "iris virus".

There were a total of five youth members nominated for the CCMAYA.

This year's winner of the Clarke Cosgrove Memorial Award for Youth Achievement is a young man I first met in Dallas years ago. Michael Kowalchuk lives in Region 22 (Arkansas and Oklahoma), and is a senior in high school. He will be unable to attend this year's convention because it is the same week as his high school graduation. He has recently been designated as Region 22's webmaster, and is responsible for most of the social media for his region and his local club. He also helped to design the Median Iris Society website. His grandmother got him started in iris. He is honored and appreciative of this award.

First runner up is Katharina Brase from Region 21 and lives in Nebraska. Katharina places in the top five of every contest for Youth members, and is respected by the adults in her local club.

Second runner up is Region 18's Glory Winzer. Glory is from an iris family, and has been nominated often for the Cosgrove Award. She is very active in her local club and region and very well thought of by the adults in her area.

There will be first time youth attendees at this year's convention. If you happen to notice a young person in a garden, or at one of the functions at the hotel, take a moment to say hello and introduce yourself. Many of our adult members started out as a youth member and have continued their interest in irises to adulthood. They are the future of AIS, and deserve our encouragement.

Debbie Strauss will be announcing the winners of the Ackerman Essay Contest, sponsored by the AIS Foundation, at the Awards banquet on Saturday.

I have been promised irises for our youth members not only for 2019, but for the next 2 years as well. This generosity is so wonderful, and for many of our young people, the only opportunity to receive newer irises for their gardens. I get the sweetest thank you notes from our youth members.

If you need information, resources or help with a youth program, I am always available to assist you. Happy Irising!