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**HOBY ARIZONA ALUMNA WINS INAUGURAL NATIONAL BIG IDEA COMPETITION**

PHOENIX, AZ– Erin Alibrandi, a 2016 Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) Arizona Alumna of Gilbert, AZ, participated in the HOBY International's Magic Makers' event to win funding for her big idea, Helping Others Build Opportunities (HOBO) on November 20, 2016. Six finalists from around the country descended on Los Angeles, CA to compete for funding to support their big ideas. Alibrandi took first place and earned a \$1,000 scholarship.

Alibrandi, a junior at Williams Field High School in Gilbert, AZ, began her journey with HOBY in June 2016 when she attended the Arizona seminar as a representative from her high school. Following the seminar, she developed her project, HOBO, dedicated to reducing homeless and hunger issues. Knowing that Phoenix ranks 15<sup>th</sup> in the nation for homelessness, Alibrandi wanted to see what she and her community could do to make a difference. Alibrandi explained that the organization connects student volunteers with homeless shelters and food banks to help where needed.

Alibrandi said, "I'm honored to have represented HOBY Arizona at this event. I'm thankful for everyone who provided both emotional and financial support. I was very impressed with all the finalists from around the country and wish them the best of luck with their big ideas. I have imagined HOBO as a new high school service organization focused on serving the homeless and those in need in our community. For high school students who want or need community service hours, HOBO will arrange for vetted service opportunities with local charities. Once again, I am honored to have received this award."

Phil Alibrandi, President, HOBY Arizona Board of Directors said, "On behalf of the HOBY Arizona directors, volunteers and ambassadors, we are so proud of Erin's achievement here. She has said that it was her experience at last year's Leadership Seminar that gave her the final push to make her "Big Idea" happen."

Ron Gillet, former Chairman of HOBY, and a current member of its Board of Governors, said, "Erin's Big Idea is something she is very passionate about and represents what happens when we work with our young people to help them realize their dreams. Her achievement reminds all of us that anything is possible if you have a dream and is willing to work to make it happen. I'm very proud of what Erin has accomplished and I look forward to the future she will help create through her service oriented leadership. Her participation in the HOBY Magic Makers event is just the beginning for her!"

To learn more about the HOBY Magic Makers event, where big ideas can change the world, visit <http://www.hoby.org/support/hoby-la-magic-makers/>.

For more information about HOBY Arizona and the leadership development opportunities available to high school students in Arizona, visit <http://www.hobyarizona.org/>.

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For 56 years, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY) has helped to cultivate tomorrow's leaders by inspiring a global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to leadership, service and innovation. HOBY programs annually provide more than 12,000 local and international high school students the opportunity to participate in unique leadership training, service learning and motivation-building experiences. HOBY also provides adults the opportunity to make a significant impact on the lives of youth by volunteering and today more than 4,000 volunteers annually and over 435,000 alumni proudly make up the HOBY family.