

THE TIMES

SPORTS

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Many talents to be displayed at CYC's boxing show

WITH ITS ALL-IMPORTANT fund-raiser coming up next Wednesday, the Community Youth Center of Concord wanted to pick one of its members to not only entertain the guests, but showcase the facility's value to the area. Twelve-year-old flutist Christal Barajas was chosen.

It could be a knockout performance.

Barajas, who is learning to play the flute as an Oak Grove Middle School (Concord) seventh grader, is 2-0 in the 95-pound weight class for Gary Sullenger's boxing team at CYC. "She is the sweetest kid you could meet," Sullenger said. "But put her in the ring, and she gets busy. She takes on a different persona."

Sullenger has put together



JAY HEATER
Boxing

an eight-bout program for the CYC's sixth annual boxing show that opens on Wednesday at 6 p.m. with a cocktail hour. Dinner, catered by Scott's Seafood Grill and Bar of Oakland, will be served at 7 p.m. and boxing begins at 8 p.m. Cost of the event is \$150 per person. For tickets, call Heather Powers at 925-682-

4830, ext. 104.

Proceeds benefit not only the CYC's boxing team but all the other sports and programs aimed at benefiting the community's youth.

"We are a non-profit entity," said CYC executive director Dennis Costanza. "Fifty percent of our funding comes through private donations from the Hofmann Foundation and our real estate holdings that have been donated to us by the Hofmann family. We need to have fund-raisers to raise the rest of the money."

The CYC offers programs in boxing, gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, tae kwon do, judo, wrestling, dance and cheerleading and makes academic tutoring available to its members. "We have 730 members, most who pay very low fees, about

\$20 a month," Costanza said.

"So we need to show our major donors what our center is all about. Of course, boxing is one of our signature programs. This event gives people a chance to tour our facility. Plus, every one of our head coaches will be there for the social hour prior to the event."

In putting together the eight-bout card, Sullenger wanted to pick two shining examples of the CYC at work, so he selected Barajas and 15-year-old Daniel Thomas, a 125-pounder from Concord.

Thomas is one of CYC's top amateurs. He has compiled a 14-2 record and has qualified to compete in the Junior Olympic Nationals on June 26-30 in Marquette, Mich. "Daniel is such a pleasant surprise," Sullenger said. "He continues

to beat guys who I didn't think he could beat. He is so tall — 6 foot — for his weight class, but for a skinny kid, he is strong. The kids who spar with him tell me he is really starting to crack them.

"When he came to me, he was awkward and nothing like the epitome of a boxer. But he wants to be one so bad. He studies the game and trains harder than anyone in there. He has learned to use his reach to his advantage."

Barajas is new to the boxing game, but she rivals Thomas in work ethic, according to Sullenger. "She is kind of like a little Daniel," Sullenger said. "Both these kids speak volumes about what we do. They are good kids who are working their way toward becoming the kind of citizens that you want.

They are good role models. We don't have to worry about them talking trash or being disrespectful."

Although Sullenger said both young boxers already were good kids when they came to the program, he said the CYC keeps them pointed in the right direction. "The CYC and the Hofmanns have been so supportive of these kids," Sullenger said. "I have never had to want for anything in training our kids. I have been given everything I need to get these kids to grow and see the world."

Sullenger has yet to finalize the bouts, but teams from all around Northern California will participate.

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