



▲ Nathan Boyd

I have often written about programs and how clubs or members can become involved. This month, I'd like to share some of the successes

that have been accomplished through some of our youth programs.

Clay Busters of Arizona, a skeet club operating out of the Ben Avery Clay Target Center in Phoenix, Arizona, is one organization that has definitely utilized the NSSA youth camps to introduce new shooters to the shooting sports. In 2017, Clay Busters of Arizona was able to host two successful youth camps, their first-ever in June and a second one in December. While they have the luxury of shooting in the month of



December without the harsh weather some areas face, they also have a great volunteer group that works hard to host the youth camps. In December, the club had 20 youths that came out to learn the game of skeet. Level II Certified Instructor Mike O'Keefe, along with Level I instructors Brian Fanning, Brian Trapp and Stephan Waltz, and volunteer Chic Worthington, deserve credit for hosting a successful camp. It is their effort, as well as that of other instructors and volunteers across the country, that have made the youth camp program such a success.

Not only are Arizona youth being introduced to the shooting sports and the game of skeet, but they are participating in registered events as well. Prior to the success of their youth camp, the Clay Busters of Arizona held a one-day, 100-target event just a few days after Thanksgiving. The Turkey and Fixins Open had a great turnout with 52 participants. The exciting part was that half of the participants were youth competitors. Eleven Sub-Juniors and 13 Juniors battled it out on the skeet field. And would you have expected anything else? When all was said and done, it was a Junior shooter who blasted one of the perfect scores to claim the championship honors. The attendance at the 2017 Turkey and Fixins Open is just



another example of the successes in the development of the youth shooting programs happening in Phoenix, as well as throughout Arizona.

While warm and sometimes downright hot weather may be nice year-round, it does not dictate the success of youth shooting. Minnesota boasts a great group of shooters in both the skeet and sporting disciplines that are working diligently to improve the



number of young shooters in their area. You have to look no further than the Minnesota State Skeet Shoot to find Junior shooters who are claiming the very awards their mentors are striving for. Max Bunning, Barrett Swenson and Nathan Zimmer all claimed open or class honors while competing at the 2017 Minnesota State Shoot. While NSSA Chief Instructor, Ralph Aaron, was instrumental in training many of the coaches responsible for teaching the current youth, those coaches have taken their time to introduce a new generation to the shooting sports. Not only do they help with youth camps, but they are working towards improving the high school shooting teams in Minnesota and striving towards teaching them multiple shooting disciplines. Thank you to Randal Baker, John Jensen, Scott Melchisedech, Brian Hendrickson, and Al Doucette for your efforts to improve youth shooting. **CTN**