



About Boys and Girls Country

Children need love and nurturing to thrive, and they need food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and education to grow up and become contributing adults. Boys and Girls Country is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that has provided a home to nearly 1,403 children from families in crisis since its inception in 1971. Our kids are succeeding in school, graduating from high school and college, learning independent living skills, taking on responsibilities like after school jobs and learning to drive, and growing up with healthy relationships and lots of opportunities to “just be kids.”

The *mission* of Boys and Girls Country of Houston, Inc. (BGC) is to change the lives of children from families in crisis by loving and nurturing them in a Christian home environment, raising them to become self-sustaining and contributing adults. Our *vision* is that every child has a place to grow up and a sense of being home.

With a small plot of donated land and a \$25 check, Boys and Girls Country was originally founded in 1971 as Boys Country, a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit charitable home to give at-risk boys a safe place to grow up and the chance to become productive, successful adults. A few years later, Girls Country, a similar campus for girls, was established several miles away. In 1997, the College and Career program was established to ensure that kids don't “age out” of our program; we continue to provide them with a home while they attend college, trade school, serve in the military, or begin a first job. One year later, Boys Country and Girls Country merged on the current 216-acre campus with the capacity to serve 88 boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 18. The College and Career program moved to the former Girls Country campus.

The Boys and Girls Country program is made up of a network of 11 cottage families and an extended Christian neighborhood that supports our children as they learn and grow, provides them with educational and emotional support, holds them accountable to their peers and the greater community, and encourages them to dream and achieve big goals. Each cottage is comprised of eight children, a married “Teaching Parent” couple (and any children they may have), and two single Teaching Parents, who raise these children as their own. Education is a major priority and focus for our kids and staff.

Boys and Girls Country is licensed by the State of Texas as a residential home. Children come to us from the Greater Houston area and surrounding counties, with the majority from Harris (79%) and Fort Bend (7%) counties. Our current resident population is 25% Hispanic, 31% Caucasian, 40% African American, and 4% other race. Up to 88 school-age children (ages 5-18) live on our Roberts Road campus. Six of our cottages are designated for boys, and five are for girls. All cottage homes have accommodation for eight resident children and a married Teaching Family couple, along with any children of their own. Our children are all encouraged to transition to the College and Career Campus after high school graduation,

where up to 20 young adults reside with mentors. Between both campuses, we serve over 100 children per year. The average length of stay for a child at Boys and Girls Country is three years; some children stay a short time, and others grow up here.

Boys and Girls Country receives no government support, and we are not a United Way member agency. Our organization depends on private funds which come from individuals, businesses, civic groups, churches, foundations, and volunteer support. Your tax deductible donation helps us provide a home for up to 88 boys and girls.

College and Career Program

In most residential programs, once a child turns 18 and graduates from high school, they are on their own. However, we know that becoming an adult does not happen overnight. It is a process, and the first few years after high school are a critical time of transition for every young adult. In 1997, we established our College and Career program so we could continue to be a family to our kids beyond high school graduation as they follow their own, individual paths to adulthood.

While still in high school, we work with our teens to develop what we call a Roadmap for Success, clarifying their educational and career goals. Some of our young adults attend college or trade school, others join the military, and some choose to join the workforce. Roadmaps are updated twice a year to ensure our kids are on track and meeting their goals. Four “mentors,” staff members who live on the College and Career campus, are available at any time to help our young adults. They are called upon to help set up a first apartment, buy a first car, or make that delicious pot roast they had the last time they were home for Spring Break.

With five high school graduates this year, the College and Career Campus will work with 16 young adults in 2015/2016 through college, trade school, the military, or a first job. Since its inception, 24 young adults have graduated from college or a trade school, and in 2014, Boys and Girls Country celebrated its first student to receive a Master’s Degree while living on campus.

Our History

A Brief Timeline of Events

1971: Tom Robinson founds a 501(c)(3) Christian home for boys with the help of Houston area friends and colleagues. He also donates 10 acres of land in Hockley, Texas. His wife, Mrs. Tom Robinson names the organization “Boys Country.” The initial campus includes three mobile buildings, a metallic building and its first dormitory under construction.

1980: Construction begins on a nearby 40-acre Girls Country campus.

1992: Boys Country has now grown into a beautiful oak-shaded campus of 166 acres with 20 buildings while Girls Country has eight buildings.

1993: Boys Country and Girls Country are combined and the organization is renamed Boys and Girls Country of Houston, Inc. Each cottage is set up to accommodate eight children. Houseparents (now called Teaching Parents) and relief staff start a comprehensive training program to focus on the changing needs of our children.

1996: Plans are initiated to pilot an Independent Living Skills Program for older youth who have completed their adolescent years at Boys and Girls Country. The Independent Living Skills Program is later renamed the College and Career Program. Thanks to generous continuing scholarships, all students who graduate from high school at Boys and Girls Country will now have the opportunity to be sponsored through trade school or college and into a first job.

1998: Boys and Girls Country launches a \$6 million capital and endowment campaign to enable capital improvements to the campus as well as strengthen our endowment -- a vitally important step in ensuring the financial health of our Home.

2006: The capital campaign concludes with the dedication of the Operations Center in February. The College and Career Campus is renovated in June and July to add housing for 17 new graduates from the class of 2006.

2007: Construction of a new swimming pool and a multimedia center in the Education Lab are completed. Boys and Girls Country launches a capital campaign to enable construction of a Student Life Center and other improvements to the campus.

2008: Due to decades of wear and damage from Hurricane Ike, our 30 year old gym has to be shut down. This blessing in disguise leads to renovation of the campus infrastructure, including improved roads and drainage. Construction of the Student Life Center also begins.

2009: Renovations to the road and drainage systems are completed, as well as the Penny Loyd Student Life Center. The Penny Loyd Student Life Center opens in August, serving as a hub for campus activities -- from education to recreation.

2010: The original 30-year-old gym is demolished and plans are made for a campus park on the land where the gym stood.

2011: New playgrounds are constructed, security lighting is installed, the old pavilion is converted into storage for teaching parents, half-court basketball courts are installed in the courtyards between our cottages, and campus irrigation and landscaping are completed.

2014: We celebrated our very first Master's Degree when Amy receives her MS from Sam Houston State University.

2015: We prepare to rebuild all 11 cottages on campus in order to provide new, energy efficient cottages with the improvements we desperately need for our children and our teaching parents.

In addition to the milestones listed here, our kids experienced many joys that cannot be measured. For example, one of our girls named "Karly" saw her first shooting star at 11 years old while another child "Grant" slept in a warm bed every night, rather than on the floor..."Donny" made all A's and B's for the first time, leading him to exclaim, "I didn't know I was smart!"

These every-day miracles and big achievements are only possible because of the support we receive from our friends in the community. Thank you for helping us meet our mission and change the lives of children every single day.