



BOYS & GIRLS
COUNTRY
A Home for Children



BOYS & GIRLS COUNTRY
news
summer 2023

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Vince with members of our board at Spring Festival

VINCE'S VIEW

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Twenty-five years ago, Boys and Girls Country had a vision to begin a College and Career program for our graduating seniors. The program began on the old Girls Country campus on FM 2920. We know that kids need our support long after they turn eighteen and graduate high school. According to a recent article in the Texas Tribune, "Numerous studies show that youth who age out of foster care experience higher rates of homelessness, lower educational attainment and more involvement with the criminal justice system than their peers." Ultimately, our vision is not to fail our kids after raising them for many years in our program.

We just completed another graduation season for our high school and college-aged students. Three of our high school seniors were homeless before they came to live at Boys and Girls Country. School counselors and social workers brought them to us since they had nowhere to go. They did not just find a home with us, but they found a family and an opportunity to pursue their dreams. One of the best ways to describe what we do for kids is that we give them "opportunity" – opportunity to work hard and prepare for a better future.

Even though our students have graduated high school and college, life and the real world are just beginning for them. I tell our kids all the time that "there is no finish line."

I also remind them that life is like a video game – you advance to the next level, and it does not get any easier. Our program is designed to help children advance to the next level in life. Last fall our college students had a passing rate of 97%. This past spring our students improved to a 100% passing rate! I cannot begin to tell you how proud I am of all their hard work. This kind of success puts a little pressure on all of us, but I believe it's a good thing to strive for excellence in all that we do, especially when it comes to taking care of children.

Boys and Girls Country is an investment! Our Christ-centered mission is endorsed by the Council on Accreditation (COA) and continues to have an impeccable track record. Over the past two years, we have hosted many visitors who desire to build and advance their operation similar to our model. Our nationally recognized program has been providing answers for 52 years. When our college students respond with a 100% passing rate, I cannot think of a better way for them to demonstrate biblical stewardship as they carefully manage your investment. Thank you for believing in them and supporting our future leaders.

Vincent Duran
Chief Executive Officer



CHILDREN'S AWARDS BANQUET



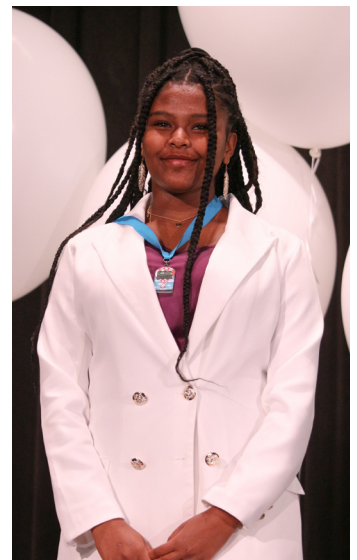
In June, we held our Children's Awards Banquet at St. Francis Episcopal Church in Houston. This annual tradition is a special night where we celebrate the previous school year and the achievements of the children at Boys and Girls Country. Awards are given for athletics, academics, citizenship and other special categories.

The children who live at Boys and Girls Country come from backgrounds which have caused them to be behind academically, and they have rarely been able to participate in extracurricular activities.

Because of these setbacks, our children are often overlooked when it comes to traditional academic awards and other recognition. But we see their many hours of hard work and dedication. Growth and success are not only measured by perfect attendance and honor roll but also by effort and improvement, by kindness and leadership.

Through their hard work and the stability provided at Boys and Girls Country, our children are given the opportunity to thrive.

We are blessed to honor the amazing year they've had!



BACK TO *school*

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Looking at Amanda, you would never know the trauma she has experienced in her short life. At just five years old, she was taken from her biological family and placed into Child Protective Services (CPS) custody after facing verbal, physical, sexual and mental abuse. She spent three years in foster care and was separated from her four siblings before finally being adopted.

She was hopeful for a better future with her new family, which was quite large with eight children. However, the dream she'd hoped for slipped away, and things quickly fell back into the patterns with which she was all too familiar.

Frequent verbal and mental abuse soon turned into physical abuse. Over the years that followed, Amanda became well-versed in the process of CPS check-ins. Her father would often enact creative "punishments," which would catch the attention of neighbors and teachers who then reported their concerns to law enforcement. Her parents would coach her and her siblings on what to tell CPS workers to explain away the injuries.

Her only escape from her abuse was school. At school, she was an excellent student who thrived in her classes and smiled regardless of the pain she was carrying from home.

One of her last interactions while living with her second family involved her father pressing a screwdriver into her palm until blood began to pool; this was done to convince her to "confess" to stealing food from the pantry. Soon after, her mother threatened to send her away to "straighten her out," and Amanda decided to take her up on her offer.

Amanda came to Boys and Girls Country at 15 years old. After coming to BGC, Amanda began regular counseling sessions. She opened up for the first time about her home life and was told that what she had experienced was abuse. This was news to Amanda, who thought physical abuse was just how parents expressed their frustrations to their children.

During her first few months at BGC, Amanda recalls feeling like a robot, scared to speak up for fear she would be punished again. She remembers going through the motions and asking permission for her every movement. Soon, she realized that

she was welcomed here, that she was loved and wanted. Finally, her personality began to shine. She became the smiling and optimistic girl at home that she was always known to be at school, except now it wasn't a mask.

Now 16 years old, she is working through the trauma that is often associated with stories like Amanda's. She has struggled with depression, anxiety, and self-harm but is hopeful that she will one day be able to use her experiences to help others.

She is still in the top of her class at school where she has joined ROTC and plans to start a new Christian club for her peers with the help of her assistant principal. After high school, she plans to go to Sam Houston State University to study psychology with the goal to become a counselor for those who have experienced painful abuse and trauma. When you ask Amanda what she wants people to know about her, she replies,

**"I want to be known
as someone who helps
people."**





3.2 CAMPUS
GPA



12 AVG. NUMBER OF
HONOR ROLL
STUDENTS

19

STUDENTS IN
AP CLASSES

151

MENTAL HEALTH
ASSESSMENTS

2,350

TUTORING
HOURS

DATA PRESENTED AS OF 2022

Dear faithful friends,

With the support of donors like you, Boys and Girls Country is able to provide the stability and resources needed for children like Amanda to thrive, in an environment full of love and safety where there is no fear of harm or neglect. Once these very basic needs are met, we are able to help children focus on academics and personal growth.

Research has shown that education is the key to a successful future. Unfortunately, children living in dysfunctional and toxic situations are less likely than their peers to graduate high school or earn a GED, and they are significantly more likely to end up in jail than to graduate from college. Our children have been fighting to survive for most of their lives; school has not been a priority for them or their families. Most are grade levels behind their peers when they arrive at BGC, and many have special educational needs that have never been addressed.

Children are assessed at admission to determine their education level and to identify any special learning needs. We provide counseling, tutoring, and mentorship that allows those who were behind their peers before coming to BGC to catch up academically and focus on their bright futures. This is achieved through after-school tutoring and remediation from our director of education and amazing team of tutors.

With your help, we can support children like Amanda in reaching their goals and creating a successful future.

When you donate, you are investing in the dreams of the children at Boys and Girls Country.

You can give using the enclosed envelope or securely online at boysandgirlscountry.org (choose "back to school" as the purpose). Your gifts of any amount - \$50, \$100, \$200 or more - are helping us provide for the futures that they deserve.

Thank you for helping the children at BGC succeed. Your support helps make a difference!

Blessings,

Vincent Duran
Chief Executive Officer



HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2023



ALTON

Alton came to Boys and Girls Country in 2014. During high school he played football and was a member of Teens for Christ. He has been accepted to Texas State University and is interested in studying nursing and dreams of becoming an anesthesiologist one day.



HANNAH

Hannah came to Boys and Girls Country in early 2023. She finished her senior year at her local high school as a part of our Transitional Living Program (TLP). She has been accepted to Texas Southern University (TSU) but will first attend Lone Star. Hannah plans to transfer to TSU in the fall where she will study psychology and plans to use her degree and expertise to help others someday.



JAYLA

Jayla came to Boys and Girls Country in 2022. She finished her high school career with straight A's and was elected prom queen at her senior prom. She was accepted to Texas Tech University and recently earned her EMT certification. Jayla hopes to continue to achieve her paramedic license and eventually work in the medical field.

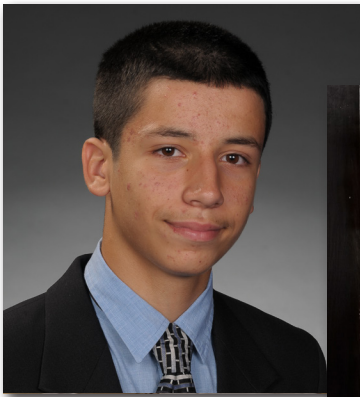




ANDREW

Andrew came to Boys and Girls Country when he was 12 years old. After graduating high-school he received a scholarship to play football at Texas Lutheran University. While in school he was elected president of the Alpha Kappa Psi Business Fraternity. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology with a minor in Psychology.

He is continuing his education in pursuit of his radiology certification and plans to become a physical therapy practitioner.



LEO

Leandro “Leo” came to Boys and Girls Country when he was 14 years old. Originally attending Texas Lutheran University, he forged his own career path and has earned his Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) with a Hazmat Endorsement from Emerald Logistics Services.

He hopes to earn his Independent (GDN) License next and own a vehicle dealership one day.



ROBERT

Robert came to Boys and Girls Country when he was 13 years old. Graduating in the top 10% of his class from high school, he attended Oklahoma Christian University on an academic scholarship. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biomedical Lab Sciences and is pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree.

He has a job lined up as a biomedical laboratory technician in Oklahoma and is excited to continue his work in the medical research field.

SPRING FESTIVAL WRAP-UP

Our annual Spring Festival was held on May 6th, and was a major success! Together with the assistance of our sponsors, we grossed over \$476,000 for the children at Boys and Girls Country! This whole event is made possible with the help of our dedicated volunteers and cook teams who made this whole event happen. Thank you to all who attended, and we hope to see you again next year!



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BOYS AND GIRLS COUNTRY'S HERITAGE AWARD DINNER

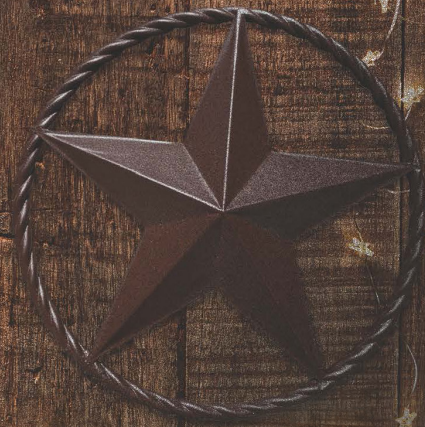
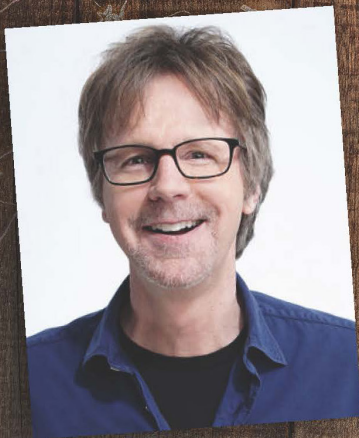
SAVE THE DATE – NOVEMBER 2, 2023

THE POST OAK HOTEL

HONORING
THE WEGMANN FAMILY

ENTERTAINMENT
DANA CARVEY

BOOTS, JEANS & JACKETS



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO
BECOME A SPONSOR CONTACT:

Shannon Smith

shannons@boysandgirlscountry.org

281-290-1288



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FEBRUARY 1—MAY 31, 2023

In Memory

Thank you for remembering someone special with a gift to our children at Boys and Girls Country.

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MISSION

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.

VISION

That every child has a place to grow up and a sense of being home.

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PRAY WITH US

Summer is always a busy and exciting time at Boys and Girls Country. The campus is bustling with children, friends, and visitors. As we prepare for the new school year, we ask that you join us in prayer for the following:

- A smooth transition for our students as they enter new schools and grades
- For the teachers of our students in their new classrooms
- The mental and physical well-being of all who call BGC home
- Our new houseparents and staff
- Successful reunification for the children who have gone home to live with their loved one

WAYS YOU CAN HELP



Donate by mail – please use the envelope enclosed



Donate online – boysandgirlscountry.org/donate



Purchase cottage needs via Amazon – bit.ly/wishlistbgc



If you know a family who may need a placement for their child, please share our information with them.



Your gift today will ensure children from families in crisis have a safe home, a loving family and a successful future as contributing adults. Thank you for loving our kids!

FIND US ONLINE



@boysandgirlscountry

supportkids@boysandgirlscountry.org

Phone: 281.351.4976

Some names may have been changed to protect the privacy of our children and their families.