



BOYS & GIRLS
C O U N T R Y
A Home for Children



BOYS & GIRLS COUNTRY

news

fall 2022

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Vince with the BGC Residential Team at our Alumni Day Basketball Tournament

VINCE'S VIEW

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

There are many days when we have to do hard things at Boys and Girls Country. Recently, I went to help a family that was living in a motel room. I was surprised to see seven people living in one room. I think the real shocker is that they had been living this way for a full year. There was one restroom, no stove, no privacy, no space and two beds. A family member called us before calling Child Protective Services (CPS). I am very proud of our amazing staff for moving quickly as we brought the children to live on our campus as an emergency placement.

This story is a reminder that our mission is needed now more than ever. There are many kids throughout the Greater Houston area that are living in motel rooms and sleeping on couches and floors of family and friends. During my tenure at BGC, I have met kids that have never driven past Katy or Cypress or made a day trip to Galveston. These things may seem minor, but they will be new experiences and new adventures for kids who come to live with us.

What a joy it is to tell children from hard places that God is going to do a new thing in their lives.

The Bible reminds us of God's faithful promise: "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing . . . I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (Isaiah 43:18-19).

Kids of all ages have seen the world turn upside down during the last two years, but I believe it is part of a grander plan for new things to come.

New things mean new chapters will be written as lives are transformed and dreams come alive. At times, it seems as if we are doing a small part, but I remind myself that one thousand little things are being done every day to support our children – a pat on the back, a kind word, a home cooked meal, daily prayers and devotion. It is amazing what a child can accomplish once they feel safe and secure in a loving environment.

I grew up watching Mr. Rogers in the 1970s. The work and life of Fred Rogers touched the hearts of children and families throughout the world. He was a fierce advocate and friend to all children. Mr. Rogers once said, "We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes." Every person who supports our mission is a hero to our kids. I am beyond grateful because we cannot do it without you.

Vincent Duran
Chief Executive Officer



CELEBRATING MILESTONES



Kidpreneurs

Our first year of the Kidpreneur program was a huge success! The kids learned a lot and really enjoyed practicing entrepreneurial skills.

Kidpreneurs is a program that started in the summer of 2021. Our kids used their creativity to make and sell their own products for a profit. They had the opportunity to put this knowledge into action at our Spring Festival!

Five of our kids created unique items to sell including paintings, craft pieces, tie dye shirts and homemade lemonade. They were all successful, and most of them sold everything they produced.

Sam created beautiful paintings and sold all of them at Spring Festival. He offered a variety of artwork, including some featuring sunsets that he was inspired to create after painting at church.



Beza also sold all of her art at Spring Festival. She finds painting to be soothing and enjoyed learning how to start a business.

“My favorite part was how people chose the one that related to them,” Beza said.

Both Beza and Sam said they would be happy to participate in Kidpreneurs again and look forward to selling more of their artwork.



Joseph Graduates from the University of Houston-Downtown



Joseph with his brother and sister-in-law

We are so proud of Joseph for earning his Bachelor of Arts in communications from the University of Houston-Downtown! Joseph is the first in his biological family and the second in his adoptive family to graduate from college.

“When I first came to BGC, obtaining a bachelor’s degree was not something I thought possible for myself,” Joseph said. “Because of my past, I had poor grades and a poor attitude, and I lacked confidence. I’m here to tell you that you are the decider of your own destiny.”

When Joseph graduated from high school, he thought his future was the military. However, life does not always go as planned, and Joseph discovered a new passion.

Joseph is a registered behavior technician and works in applied behavior analysis with clients who have autism and spectrum disorders. He is also a full-time caretaker for clients who have developmental delays or disabilities.

In the spring, Joseph is pursuing his Master of Arts degree in special education with a concentration in applied behavior analysis. He is thankful for the opportunities and support he has received from BGC.

“The memories and relationships that I have created here at BGC will last a lifetime,” Joseph said.

“This is a place that I’m proud to call my home even though I was not thinking that all those years ago. To all of the younger kids, please remember to take advantage of the opportunities this program has to offer because you truly do have the golden ticket.”

West Houston Church of Christ's Support of BGC



West Houston Church of Christ (WHCC) does it all! As the home church of our Watford Cottage family, the congregation and staff have wrapped their arms around them in many ways.

"I always knew that we had a BGC cottage attending our church, but as we got more connected, I realized how much support they actually needed. This is tough work and a huge spiritual battle doing the work you do every day with these kids," Associate Minister Andy Spell said.

Andy's wheels were spinning with ideas about how to support the Watford Cottage family in more ways than just worshipping together on Sundays. They started with a church-wide drive that provided items needed for new residents: bedspreads, sheets and towels. However, they wanted to find a way to support their cottage specifically, so they became a Friend of Cottage Sponsor. Through a monthly gift, the church helps provide for the general operational expenses of BGC, and a portion of the donation goes to spending money for their cottage to do things like see a movie or go out to eat.

During the holidays, WHCC members helped their cottage decorate for the BGC Christmas decorating competition and made the day extra special by bringing pizza and desserts.

"Of all the time we've spent with the girls, I think building gingerbread houses with them during the holidays has to be my favorite," Andy said. "Even the girls who started off shy or distant found their way into the group and were laughing and sharing stories by the end."

The WHCC group has spent many evenings with the Watford Cottage family from backyard BBQs to karaoke game nights. They come to visit the kids at BGC without judgement or expectations and have quickly learned that patience and consistency are key. They have built relationships with our girls and teach them that church is a place of love, friendship and acceptance.

In addition to their amazing support of Watford Cottage, WHCC has hosted donation drives to provide dozens of baskets for Spring Festival, and they host a fall golf tournament benefiting BGC. We are beyond grateful for everything West Houston Church of Christ does to show their dedication to our mission and our kids.



Summer IN REVIEW



Our kids celebrated the 4th of July in a variety of fun ways including making a patriotic cake.



We were blessed with several visits from Angel Paws, and our kids loved spending time with their furry friends.



Our kids performed fun science experiments at Little Beakers.



The elementary kids visited and learned about the animals at the Houston Zoo.



Our kids had the opportunity to play in the waves and sand at the beach this summer. For some of our kids, it was the first time they had seen the ocean!



The junior high kids enjoyed learning about firefighting at the Waller Volunteer Fire Department.

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VISION

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

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PRAY WITH US

Friends, the holiday season is quickly approaching, and this joyful time can be difficult for many of our kids. The holidays create a variety of emotions for our children including the "holiday blues." We strive to provide cheer and fun for our kids during this busy season, and we want to make sure they know they are loved and have family at BGC. We ask that you join us in prayer for the following:

- That our kids know they are loved and supported;
- That our children study hard and finish the semester strong;
- That we are able to provide care for even more children;
- That our houseparents may continue to model a healthy and safe family;
- That our community stays safe and healthy.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- ♥ To donate by mail, please use the envelope enclosed.
 - ♥ To give securely online, visit www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate
 - ♥ Text "BGC" to 22999 to donate and receive exciting updates about our kids.
 - ♥ Purchase supplies from our BGC Amazon list: www.bit.ly/wishlistbgc
 - ♥ Choose "Boys and Girls Country of Houston" as the charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases through Amazon Smile.
 - ♥ If you know a family who may need a placement for their child at BGC, please share our information with them. We hope BGC can serve families that are hurting in so many ways right now.
- 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



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For questions or address changes, contact us:
supportkids@boysandgirlscountry.org | Phone: 281.351.4976

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