

BOYS & GIRLS C O U N T R Y News

Fall 2020

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Read about this year's
Heritage Campaign
on page 5



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Vince's View

It seems the world was taken by surprise by COVID-19. Our lives have been changed in so many ways, and all the things that seemed so important a year ago do not seem so urgent right now. God is not surprised by this one bit. The things that scare us and shake us in this new reality do not nudge the Almighty. His plan is perfect and divine. His assurance is steadfast, and His grace and mercy have not changed. The New Testament reminds us that, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).



The impact of this pandemic will change some things forever. The hard truth is there will be no return for some businesses and ministries. However, we pray that the mission of Boys and Girls Country will continue. Thankfully, we are still here serving the most vulnerable children in the Greater Houston area. Our mission has always been based on a Biblical mandate: "Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and destitute" (Psalms 82:3). Over the years, I have learned that some of our donors and volunteers have been poor, oppressed or destitute at one point in their life. I believe this is one of the purest motivations to support the ministry of BGC.

"Not only has our mission not changed, but our faith has not changed in the midst of this crisis."

Not only has our mission not changed, but our faith has not changed in the midst of this crisis. In fact, my faith has been inspired and has increased in the midst of the most uncertain and confusing time in modern history. According to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center, "One-quarter of U.S. adults overall (24%) say their faith has become stronger because of the coronavirus pandemic, while just 2% say their faith has become weaker."

The community of BGC has relied on faith to help us press on in recent months. This summer we had to find another gear to push through several challenges and obstacles. We had a campus-wide quarantine for several weeks, and teaching parents found little relief as they battled the heat, long hours and staying at home for the safety of others. I commend our teaching parents and staff for their patience and diligence. We found new ways to become creative while taking care of children around the clock.

The good news is that the laughter and smiles have returned to our community. The routine of school assignments, sports and other activities have lifted our spirits as we prepare for our traditional fall and winter events. We are still practicing social distancing and all the safety precautions to keep our children safe while living in the world of COVID-19. I pray that you enjoy the stories and updates in this newsletter. Your gifts and support make these miracles happen every day at BGC. Good seed in good soil can grow a hundred-fold (Matthew 13:8). The children and mission of BGC have been good soil for nearly 50 years. Thank you for helping us keep the mission alive! ❤️

Vincent Duran
Chief Executive Officer

Give securely online at www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate

College and Career

Pursuing Their Dreams Despite Adversities

The Class of 2020 faced unprecedented challenges during their senior year due to COVID-19. However, they are pressing forward with determination so nothing gets between them and their dreams.



Some of our girls took advantage of newly available job opportunities as “sanitizers” for Prairie View A&M University, working to disinfect and deep clean every day. Lone Star College continues to be a

wonderful resource for our kids who choose to live on campus while obtaining their associate degrees. The campus is closed for in-person classes, but our students have started the semester online.

Some of our graduates have moved off campus. Cameron has begun classes at Rice University. She is attending virtual and in-person classes and enjoying the comfort of her dorm room. Mark was accepted into the architecture program at University of Texas in San Antonio. He is living in a campus apartment and enjoying smaller class sizes while UTSA has limited the number of on-campus students.



The Class of 2020 is strong, and we know they are going to rise above any challenges to achieve success. Thank you for your continued prayers for them as they navigate their way and discover what the Lord has in store for their futures. ❤️

By Jayna Harris, BGC College & Career Mentor

Alum Spotlight

Thankful for The Foundation BGC Provided

John’s mom left when he was four, and his grandparents began caring for him. But health issues prevented them from giving him the care he needed. He was placed at Boys and Girls Country (BGC) when he was six. As expected, John was unsure about his new home, but with time he understood the value of living at BGC.

John says BGC offered him a family, and he experienced things he thought he would never do like going to baseball games, visiting AstroWorld and celebrating Christmas as a family. The memories of family holidays remain very dear to him. He is grateful for the values he learned and for the Christian foundation that he relies on as an adult.

“I loved the faith-based approach to everything at Boys and Girls Country. I

am Christian now because BGC rooted me in faith,” shared John.

After turning 18, John quickly realized college was not for him. He preferred more physical labor. Since 2017, he has worked in the oil field as a control technician. Although he is often away from home, he enjoys his job and says that BGC prepared him to succeed in life.

“After everything I have been through, I realize how BGC gave me the necessary skills to be where I am today: social skills, etiquette, work ethic and how to take care of myself,” he added.

John is very grateful kids like him have a place to call home, and that’s why he became a BGC donor. Thank you, John, for giving back to BGC and providing for children in need! ❤️



John and his family

Dedication

A New Blessing on Campus: Woodforest Cottage



The newly built Woodforest Cottage was dedicated in September, and we could not be more excited! The cottage will be home to eight boys from the former Cottage 11 and their teaching parents, Cody and Angela Noble and daughter Lily. For some of the boys, they'll have their own rooms and bathrooms for the first time. This is the fourth completed cottage on campus as part of our campaign to replace the original cottages due to weathering and inefficiency.



We are so grateful for the generous investment from the Woodforest Charitable Foundation which made this new home possible. Partners in this cottage rebuild include Woodforest National Bank, HomeAid Houston, Empire Communities, Ziegler Cooper, Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) and a number of other vendors who donated materials, labor and services.

"A home is a place of safety and comfort. Providing a home for the children and young adults at Boys and Girls Country is one of the first steps in meeting their emotional and physical needs. The opportunity to live and flourish in an environment that cares for their total well-being and spiritual growth is of utmost importance to us. We are delighted to partner with an organization that offers

so much to the future of our youth," shared Kim Marling, Executive Vice President of Woodforest Charitable Foundation.

"The impact that this amazing cottage makes on the lives of our children is immeasurable. The kids who come to us experienced trauma, abuse, malnourishment and are behind their peers in school. A cottage is a home where they can start a new life in a caring and loving environment. It gives them hope for healing, opportunity to grow spiritually and a chance to dream big. We cannot thank our partners enough for the investment of their treasure, time, labor and resources into making this cottage a reality," commented Vincent Duran, CEO of Boys and Girls Country.

Everyone was thrilled to celebrate this cottage's completion despite various hurdles along its way, including COVID-19. Now it is a beautiful loving home that offers plenty of space for a large cottage family to gather, for each child to have his own room and for all the kids to play and relax together. You are invited to view our dedication ceremony here:

www.bit.ly/woodforestdedication 



Heritage Campaign

Thanks for Your Support!

Because of COVID-19, we made the difficult decision to cancel our annual Spring Festival in May and the Heritage Award Dinner in October; these revenues constitute about 45% of our budget. In their place, we have created the Heritage Campaign, the revenue from which is absolutely critical to the care of our kids.



Class of 2021

We are very thankful for everyone who has committed to support our campaign! With God's blessings and the support of friends like you, lives are being changed at Boys and Girls Country. Every year we are inspired by our seniors who have overcome so much in their lives and are finally reaching the big milestone of graduation. Despite the current circumstances, our Class of 2021 will soar! We invite you to watch testimonials from some of our seniors as they share how their lives were changed thanks to your support. Please visit our website www.bit.ly/heritagecampaign to view them.

"They will soar on wings like eagles." Isaiah 40:31

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College and Career

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Summer in Review

This summer was unlike any other. Despite the tough times, our teaching parents did a great job of keeping the kids entertained and on track with learning. Friends provided special deliveries. And our kids were troopers through it all!



Thanks to Will Overall and family, our kids received a special surprise on a hot summer day...the Kona Ice Truck!



The boys of Cottage 5 made a prayer box so they could battle the COVID-19 blues with prayer!



The Cottage 7 boys kept their summer service project close to home by cleaning up and weeding around campus.



Cottage 3 got creative in keeping their summer outings outdoors. They enjoyed a day at the Gerald D. Hines Waterwall Park!



Every Wednesday, the Hamill Foundation Cottage share devotionals. Even young Charles shares his heart with his older cottage brothers!



Our Cottage 8 family enjoyed an old school movie night watching Ghostbusters at the Showboat Drive-In.



Mr. Calvin showed off his skills by teaching the girls how to plant and care for a beautiful new tree.



Cottage 5 and 6 guys beat the heat with a good old-fashioned water balloon competition!



This summer, we were so blessed to have a full library of donated books on campus to fill the endless hours of quarantine.



Hamill Foundation Cottage is grateful to their coaches, Carl and Richard, for teaching them new skills at the Alkek Velodrome in Cullen Park.

June 1 - September 30, 2020

In Memory Of

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

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We regret any errors or omissions and would appreciate notifications of corrections.

*Includes gift(s) made to the Boys and Girls Country Endowment Fund

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

Make Your Contribution Online!

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Thank you for your gift to change the lives of our children!

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