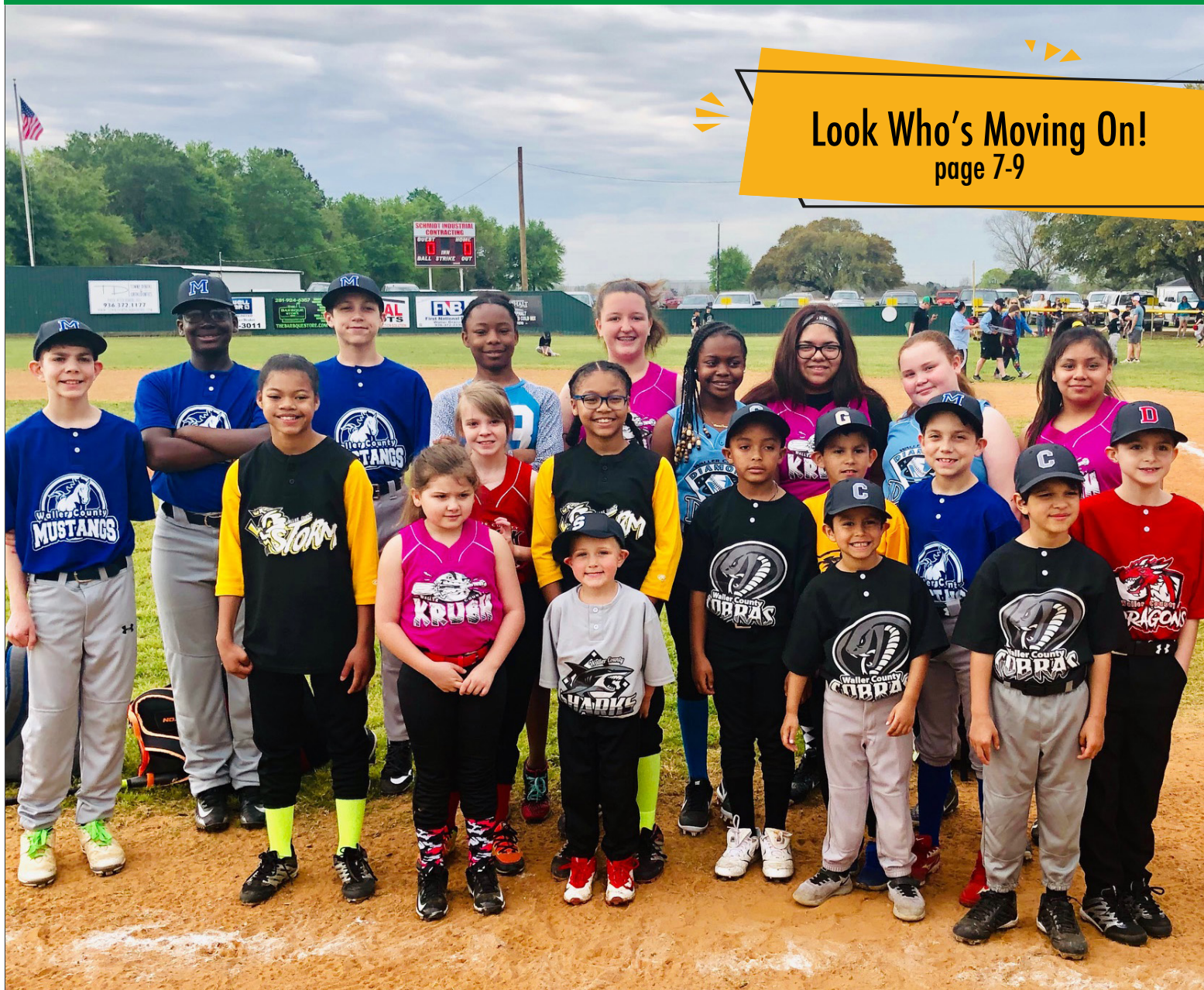


# BOYS & GIRLS C O U N T R Y News

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Look Who's Moving On!  
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## Message from the Executive Director

### Vince's View

This year, Boys and Girls Country of Houston partnered with the Waller County Sports Association (WCSA) to give our kids the opportunity to play little league baseball and softball. As a result, many of our kids are playing an organized sport for the first time. What a joy it is to see our children hitting and catching the ball and having a great time. Some of our kids have hit their first home run, and some of them have found a position they may play for many years to come. A few of them were even selected for the WCSA All-Star Team.

I have to admit there have been some hard lessons learned along the way. There have been errors, strikeouts and losses. Over the years I have heard people say, "Playing sports builds character." While I do believe playing sports can teach children important lessons about leadership and hard work, I know that playing sports does reveal character. In sports, we see the players who blame others when times get tough, and we see those who rise to the occasion when faced with adversity. We all hope that our kids will be the latter.

We know without a doubt that every child at Boys and Girls Country is an All Star! Their all-star status goes far beyond a batting average or performance on the field. Every player has a fan club, a group of people who support and cheer them on regardless of wins and losses. One of my favorite quotes is from psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner who once said, "Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her." At Boys and Girls Country, we are insanely crazy about the children we serve and

their successes. But, more importantly, we tell our children their Heavenly Father is their Creator and very biggest fan.

The psalmist in the Old Testament declared, "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:13-14 English Standard Version).

**My prayer is that our kids will continue to have the confidence that we are in their corner, and we applaud their every effort, win or lose.**

It has been another busy summer at Boys and Girls Country as our kids participate in on-campus enrichment programs and enjoy cottage vacations. Church youth camps are always a highlight as our kids continue their spiritual growth development. We had a large senior class this year – 13 All Stars have successfully entered our College and Career Program. Once again, you helped us make this happen, and we are grateful for your ongoing support. ♥



**Vincent Duran**  
*Executive Director*



## Walk of Hope Tour

Curious about life on our campus and in our cottages? Would you like to see firsthand the warm, family-oriented home your support makes possible?



Come join us for a tour of our campus and cottages. It's an hour of wonderful stories, great information and an inside look at where our children live. This is not a fundraising event. Bring only an open heart and a friend.

Below are our upcoming tour dates. You can find more information on our tours on our website.

Saturdays at 10 a.m.  
Meet in the Administration Building

- September 7
- October 5
- November 9

Give securely online at [www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate](http://www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate)



# 2019 College Graduates

## Joseph

Joseph has been a resident of Boys and Girls Country since 2011. For three years prior, he'd been roaming the streets of Houston because he thought it was better to be homeless than to live in an unstable home with a parent struggling with addiction.

Joseph was 16 when he arrived at BGC, and he was severely malnourished from his time on the streets. It did not take long for the gaunt, listless young man to begin seeing improvements in his health, succeeding at school, and taking a leadership role in his cottage.

Recently, Joseph moved beyond being a student at Boys and Girls Country

to becoming a donor! He made a decision to donate his 2007 Ford Fusion to BGC. He had the car since 2015 and said that it served him very well.

**"I would not be here today if BGC did not help me become a better person," he added.**

Joseph graduated from the University of Houston in May with a bachelor's degree in economics. His college experience was hard, but it gave him a chance to pursue something for which he has passion.



He is grateful for the chance to attend college and to develop friendships that will last for the rest of his life. ❤️

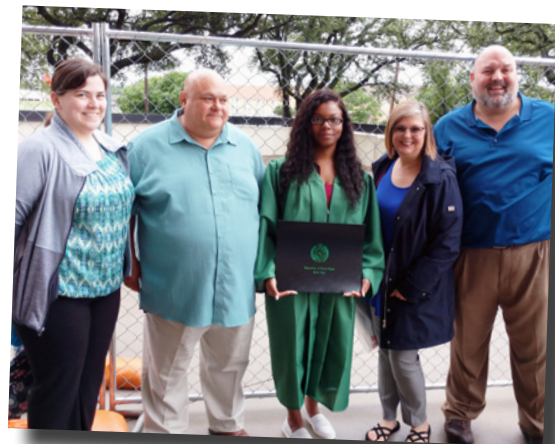
## Denisha

Denisha's early life was filled with uncertainty. She did not have the opportunity to enjoy her childhood because her mother became very ill when Denisha was only 7 years old. Denisha and her brothers had to learn how to manage on their own. There was no stability in her life, and she moved around a lot.

At the age of 12 Denisha came to BGC and was placed in a cottage full of girls. Quickly she learned the importance of family meetings. She also learned that her decisions would have consequences. Though it was all new, she appreciated the security her new home offered and was grateful for teaching parents who cared about her well-being.

Denisha became a great leader on campus, often helping other kids navigate through the difficulties in life. She excelled in school and took advantage of the opportunities presented.

**"Higher education was always a part of my plan and something I knew I would do, but BGC made it possible for me to go to college. I hope one day to give back to the place that molded me into the person I am today," Denisha said.**



This May, Denisha graduated from University of North Texas with a bachelor's degree in biochemistry. Denisha has accepted a position with an emergency room in the Denton area. She plans to apply for graduate school and pursue a career as a physician's assistant. ❤️

Thank you to our Corporate Sponsor: Trenegey



## “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” Luke 18:27

Cora has a contagious smile and is one of the happiest kids at Boys and Girls Country. She has a shy personality but is very open-hearted. There is a sense of gratitude that resides within Cora’s heart. She rejoices that she survived her past and now calls Boys and Girls Country her home.

The first 16 years of Cora’s life were filled with the fear of being hurt or raped. She survived one day at a time hoping to be rescued. Her stepfather abused her both physically and emotionally. She could not comprehend how a person who is supposed to be a father would do such things. The worst part was that everyone in her life believed her stepfather was a gracious and caring person. Cora’s mother was not able to help; she was another victim of Cora’s stepfather. They were both dependent on him to get by, and it made Cora feel lonely and hopeless.

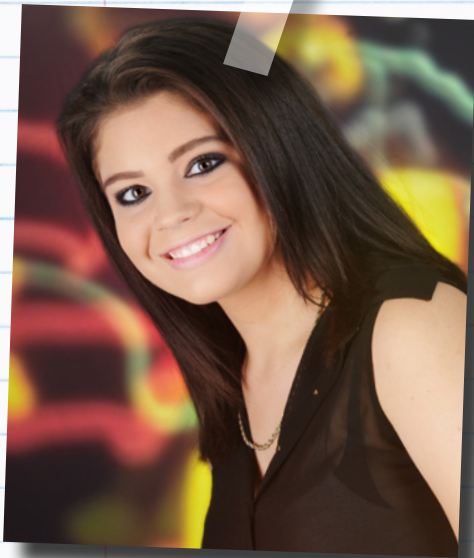
Cora was tired of suffering. She was afraid her high school graduation would be in jeopardy. **She was terrified to miss the only opportunity she saw in life - education.** Cora had always loved learning and felt receiving an education would be her only escape from the prison of abuse.

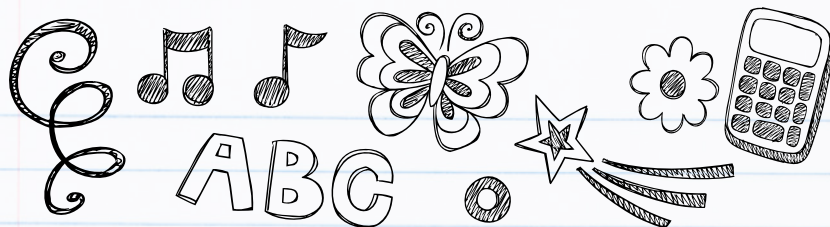
Cora has been at Boys and Girls Country less

than a year. Unlike some other teenagers on campus, she really wanted to be here from day one. She was eager to be loved and safe, and she had been begging God to give her a new life where she was not abused daily. Since the first day Cora arrived here, her smile has not faded. She feels the freedom of being a kid who is loved, cared for and valued for the first time in her life. She is overwhelmed with the support she receives, from her daily needs being met to the opportunities she has at school and finally shining a light on the atrocities committed against her and her mother.

Cora’s senior year of high school was not filled with fear, but with happy memories, new friendships, academic success and color guard experience. She was able to focus on the passion that God has placed in her heart. She graduated high school with a cosmetology license and hair extension certification. Her passion for make-up is her gateway to a successful job after graduation.

**Your investment has made this victory possible for Cora. She is no longer a victim of abuse. You helped her break the cycle of pain that would have impeded her success in life. Thanks to you, she has confidence, strength and faith that whatever hardships are ahead she is prepared to face them.**





## Dear Friend,

Thirteen high school seniors have transitioned into independent living at our College and Career campus this year, most with stories of hardships like Cora's. They are gaining necessary skills in team work, discipline and faith. They receive support from a BGC mentor who helps them navigate this next phase of life.

Like Cora, our kids realize that education is their best chance to escape the cycles of poverty, abuse and instability from their pasts and succeed in life. Your support helps our children not to worry about daily survival, their next meal or a safe place to stay.

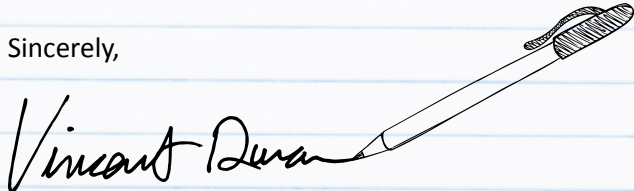
With the new school year fast-approaching, our kids need the love and support that Boys and Girls Country provides. They need teaching parents to care for them, tutors to assist them, counselors who listen to them and food that keeps them nourished. They aim to strengthen their relationship with God through church retreats, daily devotionals and Sunday worship. **Our kids depend on Boys and Girls Country to continue to thrive.**

Please consider making a gift today. Your gift of \$25, \$50, or \$100 or more will give our kids a safe and loving home. You may give using the enclosed envelope or securely online at [www.boysandgirlscountry.org](http://www.boysandgirlscountry.org). (Choose "Back to School" as the "Purpose of Gift".)



We are so thankful for your generous hearts. You are making miracles happen in the lives of our kids. ♥

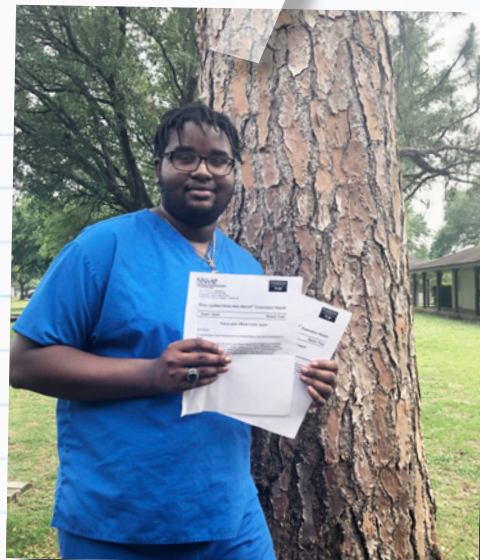
Sincerely,



Vincent Duran

Vince Duran  
Executive Director

P.S. We receive no government aid to care for our children and approximately 85 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to giving kids a better life. Please consider joining our BGC Family Tree, a group of our devoted champions for children who choose to make a sustainable monthly gift. You can learn about this program by visiting [www.bit.ly/bgcfamilytree](http://www.bit.ly/bgcfamilytree).



# Spring Festival Wrap Up



The 41st Spring Festival, held on Saturday, May 4, 2019, was an amazing day with gorgeous weather, delicious food, and tons of fun. We were blessed to see so many friends, volunteers, donors and community supporters on campus, and we are grateful for everyone who helped us raise funds to provide a loving, Christian home for kids who come from families in crisis. We are thankful for Ryan Rodgers, 2019 Spring Festival Event chair, and Scott Galloway, Event Co-Chair, for all of their hard work in making the festival a success!

Many thanks for coming out, seeing the campus, and enjoying the day with us. ❤️

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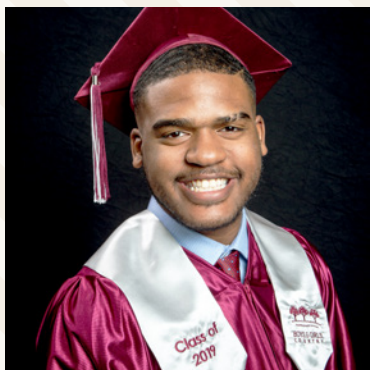


Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 2, 2020, for the 42nd Annual Spring Festival!

# class of 2019

**“Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans.” Proverbs 16:3**

The Boys and Girls Country family is extremely proud of our 13 high school graduates this year. This is an accomplishment many of them were not sure would become a reality prior to coming to Boys and Girls Country. Your support truly changes the trajectories of the lives of our children. Please pray for these young adults as they transition to the next phases of their lives. 

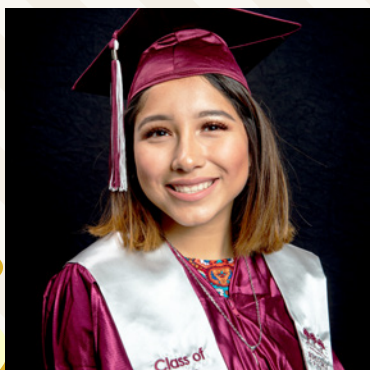


## Akia

I am thrilled to go to Bethel College in Kansas on a scholarship to play football. I had a great experience in high school and tried my hand in different areas. I enjoyed playing football and doing art, and I liked interacting with peers. My dream was to join the Navy until I was offered an opportunity at Bethel. I plan to study communications. I know it is going to be a great experience of growing up and becoming more independent.

## Albert

My plan is to attend Lone Star College this fall to get an associate degree and transfer to Sam Houston State University. I always liked psychology and cannot believe I will be able to study it in college. My teaching parents always told me that I am very observant and a good listener. I hope these skills will help me in the future to become a psychologist and provide counseling for people. I love to make people happy; it's one of the reasons I was involved in theater in high school. It was a great way to get to know people, study my characters and find new friends.



## Alma

I am so grateful for BGC and the opportunities I was offered here. I strive to achieve the best results at school as I realize the value of education. It has always provided an escape from bad situations that my family experienced. This fall I am going to Lone Star College, and I am already involved in their CLASS club. I can hardly believe that I will be able to go to college. My goal is to pursue a degree in social work. I hope to help kids from families in crisis from being abused and neglected.

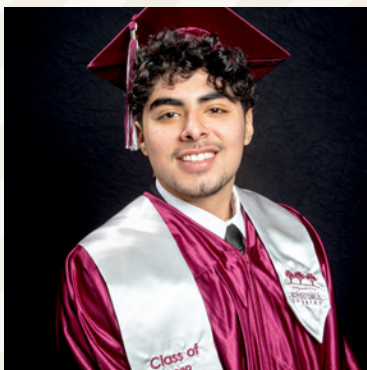


## Andrew

I have always been passionate about football. I loved being on the Waller High School team along with other kids from BGC. Sometimes it is hard for me to stay motivated, but I am extremely grateful to my coaches and teaching parents for not giving up on me. I received a scholarship to play football at Texas Lutheran University and cannot wait to get there. I will pursue a degree in Sports Science and Kinesiology. My dream is to become a trainer.

## Angel

I really enjoy football, but I knew I had to focus on academics in high school to further my education. My plan is to go to Lone Star College this fall and receive an associate degree. The next step will be training to become a State Trooper. I have always been interested in law enforcement, and I feel like this is the most prestigious form of it. Once I get the training, I plan to go back to school and receive a degree in criminal justice. Public service is important, and I hope I will be good at it.

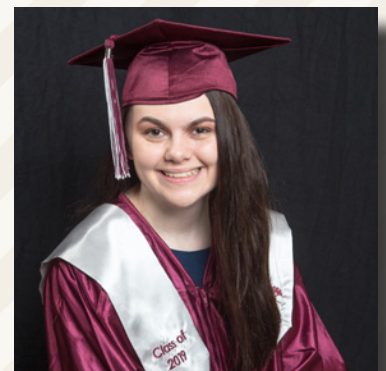


## David

It is hard to believe that I will be able to go to college. I haven't been the easiest kid to deal with, and given the circumstances I am coming from I did not expect that education would be a possibility in my life. I am very excited I was accepted to Prairie View A&M. My plan is to pursue a degree in mechanical engineering. Physics and computer science always fascinated me, which is why I got involved in robotics in high school. I hope to become a leader in taking STEM to the next level. My younger brother lives at BGC as well, and I am excited that I will be close by to stay connected with him.

## Destiny

I am looking forward to attending Wharton County Junior College this fall. During our college visit trip this spring I met their theater director and auditioned for a scholarship. I was blessed to receive a scholarship that covers all the expenses. I am looking forward to becoming independent and going to college. My dream is to work as a theater teacher one day. Once I finish my basics at Wharton I plan to continue my studies at Sam Houston State University. I loved theater in high school, and I really enjoy making people laugh.



## Deven

I had an amazing experience at Hargrave Military Academy, where I was involved in wrestling and participated in the state tournament in Virginia. BGC helped me achieve that dream and overcome my anxiety. I knew that school would be great for me as I thrive in structure. I joined the Marines this summer. My dream is to become an officer in the military.



## Firezer

Since I have been in the United States less than two years, it has been challenging to get better at school. But I was able to overcome my language barrier thanks to Ms. Kristi, our tutors at BGC and through services at school. I am going to Lone Star College this fall to complete my basic courses. My dream is to transfer to Prairie View A&M to pursue a degree in nursing. I want to take care of others because I have had so many people caring for me and providing support when I needed it most.



## Leo

I had a vision to play football in college for a long time, and thankfully it is happening. I am grateful for my teaching parents and coaches who encouraged me and helped me stay focused on the goal. Thanks to all the hard work, I received a scholarship to Texas Lutheran University. I cannot wait to start school this fall. My dream is to become a high school football coach. I will miss our high school team but I know there is a new journey ahead.

## Marcus

I am going to Lone Star College to join their nursing program. I was able to complete Waller High School CNA program this spring, and it was a great experience. During our clinicals I was able to help a lot of elderly people, connect with them and provide comfort for people in need. It prepared me to become independent and see the value behind my skills. I was offered a job before I even graduated high school. I am passionate about helping people, and I cannot wait to get my nursing degree.



## Penny

My dream is to go to Blinn College and study human services. People always say that I am a very good self-advocate. I had to work hard to develop my independent living skills and meet the requirements to be able to go to Blinn. My next step will be going to Texas State University and working toward a bachelor's degree. I am not sure what my major will be yet, but I am determined to pursue an education that will give me skills to help people.

## Tirzah

I am looking forward to going to Lone Star College this year. Thanks to the courses I took in high school, I will be able to finish my associate degree in one year instead of two. My next step will be going to Texas A&M to pursue studies in the medical field, hopefully to become a pediatrician one day. It was important for me to get my EMT certification in high school so that I could work while going to college. I am looking forward to the experience of helping others.



January 31 - May 31, 2019

## In Memory Of

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

**Abby**  
Mr. and Mrs. Dale Seyler

**Jack F. Abercia**  
Florence Abercia

**Derek J. Adams**  
Emil and Ruth Pulido

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**Lauryn Wells**  
Mr. Steven Mason

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

## Student Spotlight

# Joseph's Milestone



In May, Joseph graduated from Lone Star College (LSC) Tomball with an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree. This is a great milestone and gets him closer to the dream of acquiring higher education.

**"I never could have imagined that this graduation would ever happen in my life. I am so grateful for the educational opportunities BGC provides," commented Joseph.**

Joseph has been a resident of Boys and Girls Country since the age of 13 after losing both parents. He was embraced with much-needed love and support, and that assurance helped Joseph become a leader in his cottage and at school. He was highly successful in ROTC and was involved in theater. He was a diligent student in high school and completed dual-credit courses that helped him finish his A.A. faster. While attending community college, Joseph held a full-time job at Russo's Pizzeria. He was rewarded for his strong work ethic by being promoted to a manager.

This summer Joseph is transferring to University of Houston-Downtown to work towards a bachelor's degree in communications. He is determined to pursue his dream of becoming a sports commentator.

"He is a huge sports fan and fantasy football guru. He has enough perseverance and talent to achieve great results," shared Cassie Parkin, College and Career mentor. ❤️



## Save the Date



BOYS AND GIRLS COUNTRY'S ANNUAL

# HERITAGE *Award* DINNER

SAVE THE DATE **OCTOBER 30, 2019**

Hilton Americas | Grand Ballroom | 1600 Lamar, Houston, TX 77010

HONORING **THE SCIANNA FAMILY**  
ENTERTAINMENT **JEFF FOXWORTHY**

For more information contact Shannon Smith,  
shannons@boysandgirlscountry.org, 281.290.1288.



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## BGC Needs

# Your Investment in our Family

It takes many resources to provide for our Boys and Girls Country kids. We are just like any other family! The cost includes housing, food, clothing, healthcare, counseling, and teaching parents. Every single investment you make in our children is critical to their success and well-being.

How You Can Help?

- Make a donation by check or online
- Give in-kind donations: clothes, school supplies, cereal etc.
- Consider leaving BGC in your will
- Donate 0.5% of your purchase on Amazon to BGC through Amazon Smile: <http://bit.ly/bgcsmls>

For more information send us an email to [supportkids@boysandgirlscountry.org](mailto:supportkids@boysandgirlscountry.org) or call 281.251.4976.

Thank you for your investment in the lives of more than 100 children and young adults! ❤️

## 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.

*For questions about this mailing or to make an address change, please call 281-351-4976. Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of our children and their families.*

## Make Your Contribution Online!

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

Give securely online at  
[www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate](http://www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate)  
Thank you for your gift to change the lives of our children!



To donate by mail, simply include and return your donation in the envelope enclosed.

## Connect with us!

**Contact Information:**  
[info@boysandgirlscountry.org](mailto:info@boysandgirlscountry.org)  
Phone: 281.351.4976  
Fax: 281.351.4978

