



BOYS & GIRLS  
COUNTRY  
A Home for Children



BOYS & GIRLS COUNTRY  
**news**  
spring 2023

in this issue:

- 2 VINCE'S VIEW
- 3 HONORING MR. PETE
- 4 ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL
- 5 SPRING FESTIVAL
- 6 IN MEMORY
- 7 HONORARIUM
- 8 PRAYERS



## VINCE'S VIEW

### Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Our country is in the midst of a serious mental health crisis, one that has seen a startling increase of 29 percent in teen suicide over the last decade. An even more disturbing trend was discovered by the Oregon Health & Science University. OHSU researchers found a significant increase in pre-teen children, ages 10 to 12, attempting to take their own lives. This hit home for me personally because these are the exact ages of my two sons, and we have many kids at BGC in this age group. The good news is that we have answers for the children who call Boys and Girls Country their home.

Two years ago we made the investment to bring Dr. Angie Proctor to join our staff and work alongside our clinical team. Dr. Angie, as we call her, is a specialist in the field of trauma-informed care and has done extensive research while completing her doctoral program. Many of our kids have come to us with a long list of traumatic experiences. **Trauma can be associated with feelings of sadness, confusion, anger or problems with attention and hyperactivity.** Regretfully, we see these signs and symptoms every day at BGC, but our staff and house parents receive ongoing training and support to help manage these behaviors.

Our goal for 2023 is to develop and transition into a “trauma-informed community” at BGC. Trauma-informed care shifts the focus from “what’s wrong with you?” to “what happened to you?” We have learned that it is critical to have a complete picture of a child’s life situation - both past and present - in order to provide effective treatment strategies. Trauma-informed care gives us the opportunity to build trusting relationships in a safe and

secure environment. Not only will every staff member be trained in new interventions, but it is a philosophical shift on how we see the care and nurturing of children. Our core values of discipline and structure have not changed, but we will use the latest research and interventions when ministering to our children.

We are blessed to have a clinical team that is child-centered and Christ-centered as we incorporate best practice models into our mission. In fact, this summer we will have our first therapeutic camp led by Dr. Angie and the BGC team. Our kids will have several days filled with group activities which will enhance their emotional and behavioral self-regulation. I have seen the power of transformation for many children as they experience physical, social and psychological safety for the first time in their lives.

Not only will we use the most current research and interventions, we will continue to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to do what only God can do. The psalmist declared, **“He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds” (Psalms 147:3).** Regardless of a person’s traumatic background, God can repair, mend and heal our deepest wounds. Thank you for investing in our mission and giving us the opportunity to bring hope to the children in our care.

**Vincent Duran**  
Chief Executive Officer



# HONORING MR. PETE



Pete Wardenburg with BGC kids and staff



Pete with his wife, Marilyn

The Wardenburg family has been friends of Boys and Girls Country for over thirty years. Tis Gaston, our quality assurance and intake director, recalls her first meeting with Pete and Marilyn in the early 90s.

“It was a Saturday, I believe in 1993, and Dr.

Michael Bearden, our then executive director, told me that a couple was coming out for a tour. As I was showing them around campus a little boy rode up on his bicycle and stopped to chat with us for a bit,” Gaston shared. “The meeting was brief between the boy and the couple, but it had a lasting impact on them. It was the beginning of a lifelong relationship with the Wardenburgs and BGC.”

After that day, the Wardenburgs not only became donors, they became pillars of the BGC community. Marilyn was a valued long-time volunteer before her passing in 2022. She spent many afternoons in the development office organizing and lending a hand wherever she was needed.

Mr. Pete, as he is affectionately known to all the students on campus, became a campus mentor and BGC board member. He is well-known for his commitment to his family, his dogs and to BGC. Over the years he has adopted several cottages and acted as a role model and mentor for many BGC students. One of those students is a young man named Robert who fondly remembers

Mr. Pete’s effort to spend quality time with each of them while he was on campus.

“Mr. Pete is a very wise and caring man. I remember when he had his dogs, Clutch and Jesse, he would bring them over and allow us to play with them. He always took time out of his day to come and spend it with us,” Robert recalls. “He would actually discuss what we wanted to do in the future and with our lives. He encouraged us to do what we were best at.”

**“He encouraged me to make my own path in life and to follow my dreams regardless of what other people thought about me. Mr. Pete is family,” Robert said.**

Last month we presented Pete Wardenburg with our “Lifetime Friend of BGC” award at our annual Friend of Children Luncheon. Mr. Pete is a valued member of our community, and the blessings of his commitment to the children at BGC will last for many generations to come.



Pete receiving “Lifetime Friend of BGC” award

# ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL

Sharing the gospel with our kids has been central to the mission of Boys and Girls Country since the beginning. In 1971, Reverend Jim Blumhorst from Salem Lutheran Church was asked by BGC's Executive Director Jack Brewer to serve as the very first spiritual advisor to our boys.

Harriet Graf, Blumhorst's wife of over 35 years until his death in 1995, remembers those early days well. "Every Friday morning Jim would head over to the campus and do bible studies and devotionals with the kids," she recalls. "Afterward he stayed for fellowship to build relationships with them, often just shooting hoops and hanging around."

BGC's founders were committed to doing all they could so the young men who lived at Boys Country would leave as strong, dedicated Christians. Blumhorst paved the way for integrating scripture into our kids' everyday lives, which has remained a core part of our mission ever since.

**"He believed deeply in Proverbs 22:6, which says to 'train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it,'" Harriet says admiringly.**

"What we wanted to give all of our kids is a strong base of their Christian faith, whether in our home, at church or for kids in care."

Blumhorst dedicated seven years to fulfilling this key part of BGC's mission before being called to serve out of state, and he dedicated the rest of his life to serving the Lord.

Harriet returned to Texas and continues to carry on his legacy by supporting Boys and Girls Country. From attending the Heritage Award Dinner with her daughter, Rebecca, to joining our cottage family celebrations at Tour of Lights with her son, Paul, Boys and Girls Country's mission is near and dear in the hearts of the Blumhorst family. Harriet is a cherished member of our Oak Society, so their family's support of BGC will continue on through future generations, ensuring our children continue to grow up hearing the gospel message every day.



Rev. Jim Blumhorst



Harriet with her son, Paul



Harriet with her daughter, Rebecca

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Visit [FreeWill.com/BoysandGirlsCountry](https://FreeWill.com/BoysandGirlsCountry) to learn more and get started on your plans!





Boys and Girls Country

# SPRING FESTIVAL 2023

Saturday, May 6th: 11 a.m.—4 p.m.

## ACTIVITIES

- Classic Midway Games
- Bucket Raffle
- Crafts
- BGC "Kidpreneurs"
- Giant Inflatables
- Basket Sale



Don't miss the  
armadillo races  
from 12-3 p.m.!



## Activity Passes

- \$20 for ages 5 and up
- \$5 for 4 and under

## Food and Activity Tickets

- \$1 each

*Food and activity booths range from 2 to 10 tickets.*

## FOOD

- Hamburgers and Hot Dogs
- BBQ
- Chicken Tacos
- Classic Carnival Food

18806 Roberts Road, Hockley, TX 77447 | [www.boysandgirlscountry.org](http://www.boysandgirlscountry.org)

# OCTOBER 1—JANUARY 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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Mr. and Mrs. Dale Seyler

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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

The year 2023 has already been a year of growth. As we have welcomed new children, staff, and partners to the campus, we look forward to all the positive changes that this year will hold. We also look forward to fellowship with our community. Our annual Spring Festival is our largest community event each year, and we hope to see you there! In the meantime, we ask that you join us in prayer for the following:

- Smooth transition for all new children and staff that enter BGC
- Health and safety for all who call BGC family
- Success of Spring Festival - to raise essential funds and awareness for BGC programs
- That our children will know they are loved and worthy of God's blessings

## WAYS YOU CAN HELP



Donate by mail – please use the envelope enclosed



Donate online – [boysandgirlscountry.org/donate](https://boysandgirlscountry.org/donate)



Purchase cottage needs via Amazon – [bit.ly/wishlistbgc](https://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.*