



BOYS & GIRLS  
COUNTRY

50  
YEARS

OF GOD'S PROVISION

BOYS & GIRLS COUNTRY

news

summer 2021

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## VINCE'S VIEW

### Message from the Chief Executive Officer

*“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?” Romans 8:35*

The theme for our 50th Anniversary is “Celebrating God’s Provision.” Our graduating students this year have seen God’s divine providence like no other senior class. Our 2021 class was in their freshman year when Hurricane Harvey changed the lives of so many in our community, leaving the city of Houston and many other areas decimated by the force and power of Mother Nature.

**Our graduating students this year have seen God’s divine providence like no other senior class.**

Judy Garland described a unique pattern in life by saying, “Behind every cloud is another cloud.” Our students were hit by another crisis following Harvey; it destroyed any sense of normalcy for them. The COVID-19 pandemic and financial hardship altered the lives of millions of students. Many traditional events and experiences became obsolete during the worst of the pandemic. Online learning, social distancing, curbside grocery shopping, constant sanitizing and mask-wearing became new standards for a world that offered more questions than answers. Thankfully, they were able to return to school with new health precautions and safety procedures, and our seniors finished the year most creatively by having an “outdoor prom.”

Those crises required all of us and our students to rely on God’s strength and focus on the prize for which God has called us heavenward (Philippians 3:14). Our hope and prayer is that our

children will remain resilient through their obedience to God and pursue the prize even if the world tells them otherwise.

I feel a special bond with this senior class, mainly because I have been with them since day one of their high school years. When I arrived at BGC, they were just completing eighth grade. The last four years have been a journey to remember, as they worked their first jobs, obtained driver’s licenses, started their first relationships, built a snowman on campus and made precious memories despite the crises. It is a joy to have a front-row seat to watch children grow and mature into young adults. Boys and Girls Country has been more than a home to our seniors. They wake up in a place where miracles happen for every child, where hope is placed in God alone.

During a recent campus tour, I was asked, “How do you define success at BGC?” I define success by watching our kids transition from surviving lives of chaos to thriving in school while living out their faith. Only God can give that kind of purpose and stamina! We have seen it for the last 50 years, as your prayers and support have made it happen for more than 1,600 kids. Thank you again for giving our children the chance to grow and prosper!

**Vincent Duran**  
Chief Executive Officer

P.S. If you’d like to tour our campus, please call us at 281.351.4976. We’ll be happy to see you in person.



# BGC ANNIVERSARY

## Celebrating 50 Years of God's Provision

Continued from Spring 2021 Newsletter

Friends, this year Boys and Girls Country is celebrating 50 years! It is an unbelievable blessing to be able to serve children from families in crisis for half a century.



By 1974, Boys Country was a home for 40 boys. Within a year, the funding for the school, administration building and a gymnasium was secured. Boys Country leadership also announced a plan to construct four total-care cottages (with each cottage accommodating 12-16 boys and teaching parents), a complete sanitary sewer system, commissary, barber shop, dispensary and enclosure of the gymnasium. This was an ambitious plan to improve the quality of the residential services offered to the children and provide other resources paramount for a healthy upbringing.

During that time the Ladies' Auxiliary was founded, raising \$10,000 in its first year. The auxiliary was a major force behind the success of the organization's growth. They started Spring Festival as a barbecue and steer auction to raise funds for Boys Country.



In the late '70s, four cottages were constructed and furnished at a cost of \$90,000 each. The ranch added a 250-chicken facility, and a commercial

laundromat was installed on campus. The renovations started on the original dormitory to convert it into a commissary, clothing closet and staff living quarters.

By the end of the decade, Boys Country was licensed to care for 130 boys. The improved square footage and added facilities classified the operation as the second largest boy's ranch in Texas.

In 1980 Boys Country opened two new cottages and expanded its total population (staff and children) to 141. With a budget of more than \$600,000, the staff had expanded from three to thirty-one. The program now included vocational, agricultural, and horticultural training, a complete athletic program and chapel services.

Later that year the executive committee approved plans for a facility for girls, ages 5 to 10 years old. The program was located on FM 2920 and was designed to care for young girls from broken homes who had been abused or neglected. The siblings of Boys Country youth were given priority placement. Plans for the facility included a six-acre lake, a road system and two cottages.

In February 1982 Girls Country announced plans to open a Christian school on its campus. It began with a kindergarten. The original plan was to add one grade each year until all grades through high school graduation were offered. Future buildings of the school were to be added to the Spindletop Chapel which was completed in May. The school was later renamed Rosehill Christian School, and by 1989 the board of directors decided to focus on the child care and allow the school to become an independent entity.

By 1992, Boys Country's beautiful oak-shaded campus and farm encompassed 166 acres with 20 major buildings. Girls Country provided 40 acres of serenity nestled among a lake and tall pine trees with eight major buildings.



**“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”**

**Philippians 4:19**



# BACK TO school

Emily's parents divorced when she was three, and her birth mother was in and out of her life until she was 10. Emily hardly remembers what her mom was like, since she completely disappeared from the life of her kids eight years ago. Emily felt abandoned and unwanted. Growing up as the youngest of five kids, she found comfort and care spending time with her siblings. However, things changed drastically after their family moved to Texas and Emily's dad remarried.



Emily's relationships started to break apart as tension between her and her stepmom created a toxic and unstable environment. Her siblings told her they did not want her to be their sister anymore, and her stepmom no longer wanted her around. **Emily's heart was broken, and she was losing a battle with anxiety.**

Due to instability at home and changing schools, Emily was on the verge of not graduating from high school. "I wanted to get away from it all, from the pressure on my chest that I would get from the anxiety and stress. I was at the point that I would have anxiety attacks and end up in the hospital."

When Emily arrived at BGC, she was 23 classes behind her peers. While living at home, she did not have the emotional capacity to dig herself out of that hole, and she was in despair at the prospect of never graduating. At BGC, her teaching parents and program team came together to provide Emily with the necessary resources to tackle what seemed impossible, retaking her classes within a year to graduate on time.

"My teaching parents made me feel like I could go to them for anything without feeling like I was going to start a problem in their life or other relationships," shared Emily.

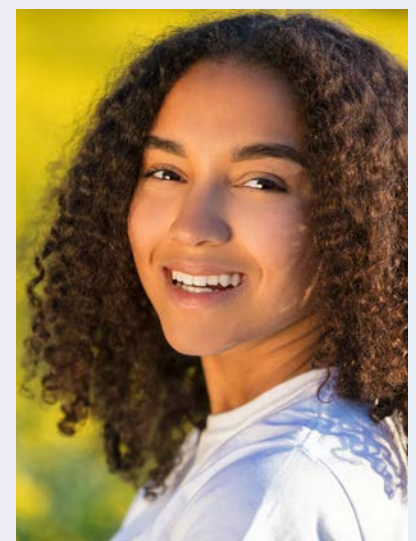
The sense of stability and support gave Emily a foundation to focus on her academics and trust those around her.

Emily's life finally started improving. She became the older sister to a cottage full of girls. That gave her a whole new perspective on life and a sense of responsibility to believe in oneself and encourage others. Her relationships at home also improved as she learned to control her anxiety and stress through counseling.

Emily shared that her relationship with God has grown significantly and has become a vital part of her life. She was inspired, encouraged and guided by her teaching mom, Ms. Angie, who is the first God-centered mother figure ever in her life. **Emily created a routine of writing prayers and volunteered to lead devotionals in her cottage. "Faith is the only thing to hold on to," commented Emily.**

Thanks to the guidance, advocacy and support Emily received from BGC's staff and Education program, she was able to finish all the required courses and graduate on time. It took a lot of discipline and left her exhausted at times, but Emily is very proud of her amazing achievement.

Today, Emily is on the way to achieving her dream of becoming an English teacher. Her passion for writing and reading is turning into a career. She chooses to be a light to the people around her and take advantage of the opportunities in life. Being an older sister in a cottage taught her that she can be strong for others and help them stay focused on the plan that God has for them.





**3.37** CAMPUS GPA



**31** AVG. NUMBER OF A/B HONOR ROLL STUDENTS

**8**

STUDENTS IN AP CLASSES

**10**

STUDENTS IN REMEDIATION SERVICES

**4**

STUDENTS IN HOPE ACADEMY



The Texas Education Agency considers 53% of Greater Houston students at risk of dropping out of school—higher than the statewide average of 50%. The pandemic disconnected children from many necessary resources for success and heightened the risk of depression and anxiety. “Studies have shown that three measures—establishing a ‘culture of high expectations’, designating more time on task, and using data to intervene early—are vital in keeping children academically successful.” (Children at Risk, 2021)

After family and God, education is one of the most emphasized values at Boys and Girls Country. All the kids who arrive at BGC carry a lot of pressure on their shoulders. Trauma, food insecurity, distrust in adults and lack of self-control lead to poor academic performance. That’s why it is so important to evaluate the children who are placed at BGC to see what underlying issues they have that prevent them from being their best selves. **Thanks to your support, Boys and Girls Country has the necessary resources to equip our kids for success and meet them where they are.** Whether they need special accommodations at school or a private tutor to get back to their grade level, our kids can be sure that the support they need is within reach.

Thanks to the investment of our generous donors, kids like Emily can find safety, stability and care at BGC and focus on the talents God provided them. This year, 10 seniors graduated from high

school and are off to pursue a bright future of becoming independent adults.

This is BGC’s 50th anniversary, and we hope you will help us leave a legacy of providing a loving home, leading children to God and helping them become independent adults. **When you make a donation of \$50, \$100, \$200 or more, you invest in comprehensive care that gives children hope, provides loving parents and sets them up for academic success.** As we prepare for the upcoming school year, we ask that you prayerfully consider making a gift to invest in their futures.

You may give using the enclosed envelope or give 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 support. Every gift ensures that our mission is alive and that the future of our children and young adults is bright. Thank you for supporting this important mission for the future of our children.

Blessings,

Vince Duran, CEO





## CONGRATULATIONS

# 2021 *Class of*

We are so proud of our Class of '21 seniors who persevered through a very difficult year to reach the high school finish line. Graduation is a wonderful accomplishment and a stepping stone to achieving dreams and defying the past. Thanks to your support, our kids have had a chance to have a healthy childhood and take advantage of the many opportunities life offers. As you read about our amazing graduates, please say a prayer for their futures, with God guiding them every step of the way.



2015



2021

### ALAN

Alan was nervous about graduation but also very excited about the next stage in his life. At school, he participated in Color Guard and art, as he had always been very creative. He will miss quality time with his teachers and school friends. BGC helped Alan thrive and enjoy his hobbies: drawing, reading and exercising. He shared that his teaching parents made the greatest impact on him because they taught him how to be focused on his goals. Alan says that without BGC he would probably not be alive because he used to be very depressed and hang out with the wrong crowd.

**Favorite Scripture:** *2 Corinthians 5:17*



2014



2021

### BRANDIE

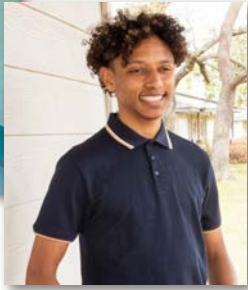
Brandie was very excited to graduate and start college. In high school, she acquired a Pharmacy Technician certificate, and she is going to Lone Star College to become a Veterinary Technician. In the seven years that Brandie has lived at BGC, she acquired many memories she will cherish because they included her younger brother. Whether it was treating him to lunch or spending Christmas together, she is grateful for the safe family environment that BGC provided for both of them. Brandie was proud to be baptized in 2019 at a church camp. Her teaching parents made a significant impact on her life because they taught her how to communicate properly and control her anger.

**Favorite scripture:** *Romans 5:8*





2014



2021

## ESTIFANOS

Estifanos has lived at BGC for seven years. At school, he was involved in cross-country running, soccer, football, wrestling and track. He enjoyed having a normal childhood at BGC, where he could play video games, basketball and hang out with his cottage brothers. His favorite BGC memories include playing Sardines in the dark with his cottage family and going on vacation to Galveston. He is thankful that BGC provided structure and positive influences in his life.

**Favorite Scripture:** *Philippians 4:13*



2013



2021

## EVELIN

Evelin shared that high school was tough, but she will miss her teachers and friends. She was involved in FCCLA, band and Spanish Club. She is grateful for her BGC cottage, who became her second family. Together they had birthday parties and cottage vacations, which will always be the highlights of her life here. Thanks to living at BGC, she did not have to worry about earning money to provide for her family but rather enjoy her childhood and take advantage of the opportunities that have come her way.

**Favorite scripture:** *Jeremiah 29:11*



2008



2021

## KALEIGH

Kaleigh, also known as “The Goat Girl”, has lived at BGC for almost 13 years. Since she was little, Kaleigh was involved in a variety of after-school and on-campus activities like FFA, 4H, Waller County Jr. Fair Board, Teen Court and Leadership Council. She always took advantage of opportunities, making her high school years busy but fun. She will miss her teachers and friends. Kaleigh is grateful for the loving home that BGC became, for the memories of going on a hunting trip, being baptized and singing karaoke. Her dream is to get a degree in criminal justice.

**Favorite scripture:** *1 Timothy: 4-12*



2014

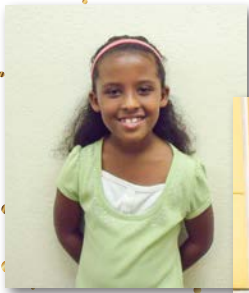


2021

## LUKE

Although the pandemic disrupted many normal high school experiences, Luke is grateful for the memories of Friday night football games. He enjoyed his high school experience but is also excited to start his journey to becoming a first responder. While living at BGC, Luke was involved in Waller High School football and Accounting UIL. In his free time, he cycled and played sports with other kids. Luke is grateful for his teaching parents who guided him through various challenges and never gave up on him. Luke said that without BGC, he would not have a real family and most likely be in a bad place right now.

**Favorite scripture:** *1 Corinthians 13:11*



2009



2021

## MEKDELAWYT

Mekdelawyt enjoyed her high school years and the support she received. She had fun being a part of Color Guard and theatre at school, and she learned a lot from those experiences. She understands how challenging the next step will be, but she is well-prepared to tackle it. She is grateful for many people who cared for her at BGC, especially her teaching parents and mentors who helped her overcome tough times. She will always cherish the memories of going to D.C. with her cottage family and decorating the campus for Tour of Lights every Christmas. Mekdelawyt shared that without BGC she would most likely be homeless and never know what a truly loving family is like.

**Favorite Scripture:** *Isaiah 1:17*



2011

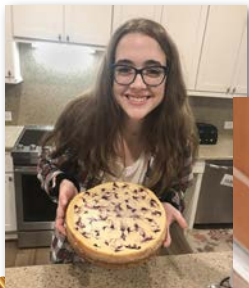


2021

## MIMI

Mimi enjoyed her high school experience, staying busy with Color Guard, choir and National Honor Society. Growing up at BGC was a blessing to her, and she is grateful for her teaching parent who became a mother to her. She appreciates the family environment that BGC provided and many campus traditions, especially Tour of Lights. Mimi's most cherished memory is going on vacation to Colorado with her cottage. Mimi believes that life is what you make it and hopes to become a therapist one day.

**Favorite scripture:** *Jeremiah 29:11*



2020



2021

## SOPHIA

Sophia's high school years were difficult, but she says they made her hard-working, confident and determined. She will miss high school events and getting ready for dances. In her free time, she enjoys writing, baking and playing with animals. Sophia is grateful for the support she received at BGC and the guidance of the counselor who helped her to improve the relationships with her family. She shared that without BGC her life would be full of anxiety and stress, but now she is hopeful for the future. Sophia's favorite memory is her 17th birthday party at BGC where she felt loved, appreciated and cherished.

**Favorite Scripture:** *Philippians 4:16*



2014



2021

## STEPHANIE

Stephanie had a wonderful time in high school and received a Pharmacy Technician certification. She enjoyed playing on the volleyball team, doing Color Guard, and participating in National Honor Society. As a staff child, Stephanie considers herself blessed to live at BGC. She built many important relationships here and cannot imagine her life without them. She loves BGC traditions, especially the High Rollers Toy Run and Spring Festival. Stephanie is excited for her life as an adult, and she hopes to build a career in the medical field.

**Favorite Scripture:** *Zephaniah 3:17*







## Billy Is Grateful for the Foundation BGC Provided



Billy's mom died when he was five years old, and his father was in prison. In the years that followed, he lived with strangers, experienced abuse and even ran away. Finally he was placed at BGC, his first stable and loving home. Billy shared that BGC truly became home for him when the staff helped bring his sisters to live here too, away from an abusive family, and all five siblings were reunited.

Billy built vital relationships with his teaching parents and cottage brothers. For the first time in his life, he felt supported, loved and encouraged. He shared that the memories he created with his cottage family will last a lifetime.

"BGC gifted me the opportunity to change the course of my family history. I find much healing in being the father for my children that my father never was for me," shared Billy.

Billy describes the life he has now as "perfect, amazing, blessed." He has a loving wife and two wonderful children. He has a good job and hopes to finish his college education in the future. Billy's dream is to make an impact on those in need the same way his teaching parents did for him.



BOYS & GIRLS  
COUNTRY  
A Home for Children

## BOYS AND GIRLS COUNTRY'S HERITAGE AWARD DINNER

SAVE THE DATE – OCTOBER 28, 2021

HONORING  
*Steve & Anne-Laure Stephens*  
ENTERTAINMENT  
*Frank Caliendo*

For more information contact:

Shannon Smith | [shannons@boysandgirlscountry.org](mailto:shannons@boysandgirlscountry.org) | 281.290.1288



# FEBRUARY 1 - MAY 31, 2021

## In Memory of

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

<b>Abby</b> Mr. and Mrs. Dale Seyler	<b>Don Carpenter</b> Noel T. and Betty Jean Jones	<b>Billy Lundquist</b> Ronald and Lorraine Nilson	Mr. Jim Grace Ms. Laura Jennett Mr. and Mrs. William T. Keele Paul and Nancy Pressler Tim Toler, Jimmy Kidd, Billy Nance, Bob Hayes, Skip Lingle, Dub Sullivan, Charlie Crady and Greg Gallagher Odile Tyler
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<b>Dennis A. Beck</b> June Brown	<b>Wayne Gonzalez</b> Dale and Kay Oder*	<b>Francis Mohr</b> Mr. and Mrs. Tom Carlile	<b>Dorothy Gail Weakley Thompson</b> Thomas and Kay Gallatin
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## Honorarium

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<b>Mike and Beth Armstrong</b> Jodi Schmidt	<b>Katherine and Scott Galloway</b> Patty P. and A.J. Hurt, Jr.	<b>Carolyn Little</b> Jack E. and Jill Little	

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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## 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

Friends, so many of our young adults are stepping on the untraversed territory of adulthood. We have all been there, and we know how daunting that path seems sometimes for our young adults. Yet, our hope is in God and His infinite care for us. We ask that you join us in prayer for the following:

- That our young adults remain focused on God and His path for them;
- That our mission thrive and provide continued care for vulnerable children;
- That our cottage families and staff remain healthy and safe;
- That kids receive the care they need at BGC to overcome their past.

## WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- ♥ To donate by mail, please use the envelope enclosed.
- ♥ To give securely online visit [www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate](http://www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate)
- ♥ Text "BGC" to 22999 to donate and receive exciting updates about our kids
- ♥ Purchasing supplies from our BGC Amazon list: [www.bit.ly/wishlistbgc](http://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 future as successful and contributing adults. Thank you for loving our kids!

## FIND US ONLINE



@boysandgirlscountry

For questions or address changes, contact us at:  
[supportkids@boysandgirlscountry.org](mailto:supportkids@boysandgirlscountry.org) | Phone: 281.351.4976

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