



BOYS & GIRLS
COUNTRY
NEWS
FALL 2025

in this issue

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 3 VINCE'S VIEW | 10 SUMMER IN REVIEW |
| 4 ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT | 12 FOUNDATION SPOTLIGHT |
| 5 CHURCH IMPACT | 13 ENDOWMENT FUND |
| 6 COLLEGE & CAREER | 14 MEMORY / HONORARIUM |
| 7 VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT | 15 BOARD OF DIRECTORS |
| 8 COLLEGE & CAREER SUMMIT | 16 PRAYER REQUESTS |



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



Our Model Of Care

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

Vince's View Message from the Chief Executive Officer

AMAZED. INSPIRED. GRATEFUL.

These are the words I hear from our students that describe you as a donor and friend of Boys and Girls Country. The spirit of gratitude is alive and well on our campus and our staff and kids do not take anything for granted.

Over the past five years, we have had a "blended service model" on our campus. In short, our college-age students live alongside our residential students in separate cottages. They have access to the same amenities and services as the rest of our kids - the education lab, counseling, gym, recreational activities as well as a home-cooked meal from our houseparents on special occasions.

Our annual College & Career Summit is a new tradition for our high school seniors and college students. Every summer we commit to two full days of inspirational speakers, team-building exercises and planning sessions for the next semester. Guest speakers are the highlight of the event as they share their professional journeys that led to success. Their message is universal and clear: success does not happen overnight, and sacrifice is always part of the journey.

Before coming to Boys and Girls Country, I worked at another children's home where I met an alumnus named Randy Nicholson. You may not know Randy but you are reminded of his impact every time you pay at the pump. Randy helped pioneer "pay at the pump" equipment as CEO of Auto Gas Systems, Inc. He grew up his entire life in a children's home near Dallas. He once shared with me, "After high school graduation in those days, they would take some of us to a church in town that would help us find a job and a place to live." Randy eventually made his way to Abilene Christian University, graduated and went on to have a successful business career.



Tania is a junior at Texas Tech University

I share Randy's story because it reminds us how far we have come in caring for young adults. At Boys and Girls Country, our continuum of care extends beyond high school graduation. Our students not only earn a trade certification or college degree but also step into new careers debt free because of your generous support. Yes, debt free! The average cost to attend a university in Texas ranges from \$30,000 to \$50,000 depending on the school. These are big numbers, but our students are grateful for the scholarships, housing, assistance and daily encouragement you provide.

The future for our students is brighter than ever. Their physical needs are met and they have a place to call home because of you. Your generosity continues to touch lives in a special way. Please keep our kids in your thoughts and prayers as they face new challenges every day.

Thank You!

Vincent Duran
Chief Executive Officer

Alumni Spotlight – Joseph



Joseph, age 15

Before coming to Boys and Girls Country, Joseph experienced instability that could have limited his future. In 2012, he became part of the BGC family, where he found the support and encouragement he needed to focus on his education and start planning for life beyond high school.

Joseph thrived at Waller High School, where he not only earned strong grades but also excelled as a dedicated member of Junior ROTC, developing leadership skills and discipline that would carry him far. At Boys and Girls Country, Joseph was equally committed to making a difference. He served on Student Senate, where he advocated for his peers and helped shape meaningful changes that improved student life. His voice and example reflected the kind of leadership Boys and Girls Country strives to cultivate in all of our young people.

After graduating high school in 2017, Joseph attended Lone Star College before transferring to the University of Houston–Downtown, where he earned his bachelor’s degree in 2022. During his time in college, Joseph began working at Spectrum of Hope, an organization serving

children and adults with autism. There, he discovered a passion for behavioral health and the power of applied behavior analysis to change lives.

Joseph’s dedication to his work led him to pursue graduate studies at Texas Tech University, where he earned his master’s degree in Special Education with a concentration in Applied Behavior Analysis in May 2025. His hard work has already paid off. This September, Joseph accepted a position as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) with Spectrum of Hope.

Today, Joseph’s story is one of resilience, service and achievement. From advocating for his peers at Boys and Girls Country to preparing for a career that will impact countless families, Joseph has consistently stepped into leadership roles and embraced opportunities to grow. We are proud to celebrate his accomplishments and grateful that Boys and Girls Country could play a part in his journey.



Joseph earning his master’s degree at Texas Tech University

Bethel Baptist Church

Serving with Open Hands and Open Hearts

At Boys and Girls Country, we often say it takes a village to raise a child – and Bethel Baptist Church lives that out. Their partnership has been a steady source of encouragement and joy for our children and staff.

Bethel's commitment flows from their faith. "Children are the next generation of disciples," they shared. "It is our responsibility to invest in their spiritual, emotional and physical growth." That belief has shaped a partnership that is intentional and heartfelt.

One of the sweetest expressions of their care is sharing meals with the kids in Watford Cottage. Around the table, laughing, listening and praying together, our kids are reminded they are seen and valued. Volunteers are often greeted with joyful shouts of "Bethel is here!"

Bethel also celebrates important milestones like senior showers, hosting meaningful gatherings that honor each graduate and bless their next steps. Their generosity continues through volunteering, organizing drives, opening their doors for community events and involving workplaces and partners to extend their impact.

Additionally, they give faithfully as monthly donors, helping ensure a safe home, caring staff and the resources our kids need to thrive. Most importantly, they hold us in prayer, offering quiet support that carries our kids through struggles.

Bethel has not only served alongside Boys and Girls Country but has woven themselves into the fabric of our ministry. Their love, prayers and willingness to champion our mission show how the body of Christ transforms lives when it works together.

We are deeply grateful for Bethel Baptist Church – for the meals, the milestones, the prayers and above all, the way they reflect Christ's love to our kids.



College & Career Spotlight – Hannah



Hannah came to Boys and Girls Country in March 2023, during her senior year of high school in Katy, Texas. At intake, she entered our Transitional Living Program, designed to help young people bridge the gap between high school and post-secondary education before moving fully into our College & Career Program.

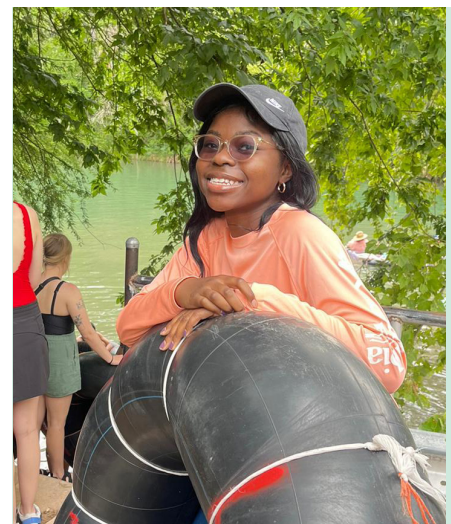
Before Boys and Girls Country, Hannah and her family faced housing instability and the constant threat of eviction. Here at Boys and Girls Country, she found the stability she needed, safe housing, transportation to and from school and the encouragement to finish strong. With this support, Hannah graduated from high school in May 2023 and began her college journey at Lone Star College that fall.

During those first two years, Hannah balanced her classes while gaining independent living skills, learning to cook for herself, practicing financial responsibility and even getting behind the wheel for the first time. She quickly became a vibrant part of our Boys and Girls Country family, joining community dinners, game nights, Teens for Christ and sharing her story with high school students preparing to follow in her footsteps.

This fall, Hannah took the next big step in her journey: transferring to the University of Houston, where she is now pursuing a degree in psychology. She's thriving, engaged with campus life through the Black Student Union, Christian organizations and cheering on the Cougars at football games. She's especially excited about her coursework in biological psychology and neuroscience, and she is already exploring her passion for working in healthcare. Hannah hopes to one day serve within a hospital system, potentially in a psychiatric unit or mental health facility, while currently seeking volunteer and internship opportunities to gain firsthand experience in the field.

Even as she builds her future at UH, Hannah remains deeply connected to Boys and Girls Country. Staff have already made several trips to visit her on campus, where she never turns down a Raising Cane's® lunch break between classes. To us, Hannah is not just a student; she is family.

Thanks to your support, Hannah's story is one of resilience, opportunity and hope. With each milestone she reaches, we are reminded that when students like Hannah are given the tools and community they need, their potential has no limits.



Volunteer Spotlight

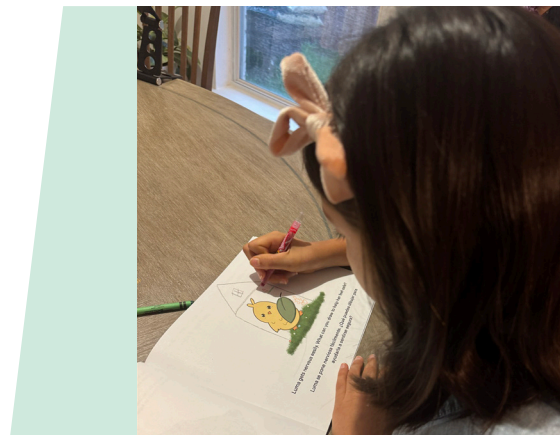
Aiden Wu – Author of *Color Your World*

Aiden Wu, a senior at St. John's School in Houston, created the book *Color Your World* to allow youth to explore their emotions through art. Many organizations and businesses have benefitted, including doctors' offices, schools in Peru and Boys and Girls Country. Aiden's reward is seeing the amazing results that kids craft through "their unfiltered creative joy."

Inspired by connecting with young people, he found that art was an excellent means to connect. Words, especially as a child, can be scary. Aiden feels that art provides a less intimidating route of communication, like another language of expression. He has witnessed children having fun navigating the book, almost like therapy. In elementary school, Aiden would draw his feelings, and to some extent, he still does today in a more sophisticated form.

Aiden feels strongly about volunteering, "It's not just about giving time. As a volunteer, you have the power to create as well. Oftentimes, what you create can be even more powerful. I think that working on the book has shown me how time and creativity come together to serve others."

The most rewarding part behind volunteering is seeing the human impact and receiving feedback. Knowing that *Color Your World* has connected with people brings great fulfillment. To those interested in volunteering, Aiden suggests "to look around and see what you can create to leave a place better than you found it. This doesn't have to mean literally creating—it could be as simple as fostering a tight relationship or organizing a simple initiative." We are grateful that Aiden has shared this amazing book with our kids, as it's revealed a skill that they can use to work through their emotions throughout their lifetime.



College & Career Summit

Reaching the Top

In 1996, Boys and Girls Country launched a program to support young adults transitioning out of its residential community. Originally called the Independent Living Skills Program—now the College and Career Program—it helps high school graduates pursue higher education or career training. Through guidance, financial assistance and on-campus housing, Boys and Girls Country ensures every graduate has a “bed to come home to” while working toward independence. The goal is to help residents become self-sustaining, contributing adults.

In 2023, CEO Vince Duran introduced the College and Career Summit to inspire and equip students in the program. Created to offer relationships, opportunities and meaningful experiences, the Summit prepares young adults to thrive both professionally and personally. Business leaders are invited to share their stories of struggle and success, giving students a chance not only to listen but to engage in honest conversation. These interactions help students envision their own paths and potential.

In 2025, Boys and Girls Country hosted its third annual Summit—expanded for the first time into a two-day event. Twenty college students and five rising high school seniors participated in two days of growth, connection and inspiration.

Day One opened with a cookout featuring homemade fajitas, followed by team-building challenges at Activate Houston where students worked together under pressure to compete for top scores. That evening, the group gathered in one of Boys and Girls Country’s newest cottages for a reception and social hour. Vince led a conversation with guest speakers Sherita Thompson and Olen Creekmore, who shared their career journeys

and faith stories. The evening set a strong foundation for the rest of the Summit.

Day Two began with a devotion led by Vince on the importance of spirituality in professional life, encouraging students to stay grounded as they pursue their goals. The day continued with panels and Q&A sessions featuring some of Houston’s most accomplished leaders, including:

- **Maria Moncada Alaoui** – Vice President, Porsche Brand at Sonic Automotive
- **Dr. Khara Breeden** – Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Texas Forensic Nurse Examiners
- **Georgene Britz** – Board Chair, Boys and Girls Country; Retired Managing Partner, Grant Thornton LLP
- **Catherine Crain, CFA** – Partner and Senior Portfolio Manager, Fayez Sarofim & Co.
- **Olen Creekmore** – Accounts Manager, Outside Builder Sales, Ferguson Bath, Kitchen & Lighting Gallery
- **Linsy Goodson** – Board Member, Boys and Girls Country; Chief Executive Officer, Mirand Response Systems / AtPoint
- **Anna Reger** – Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Flip Lok
- **Sherita Thompson** – Chief Associate Ambassador, The Reynolds and Reynolds Company

These leaders shared personal stories, professional lessons and encouragement while answering thoughtful questions from students.

By the end of the Summit, students left with strengthened friendships, practical tools for next steps and renewed excitement for the future. For high school seniors, it offered a



Guest speakers with our College and Career students

clear vision of life in the College and Career Program. For current college students, it was a reminder that they are supported by mentors and peers who believe in their potential.

The Summit reflects the heart of Boys and Girls Country's mission: not only to provide a supportive Christian-based home for children and young adults from families in crisis but to continue building relationships and opportunities that prepare them to thrive as independent adults.



Catherine Crain with College and Career students



Linsy Goodson meets with students at the Summit



Maria Moncada Alaoui visits with Adrian, Matthew and Jos

Summer in Review

Summer at Boys and Girls Country isn't just about fun—it's about growth. From teamwork in the pool to persistence on a fishing line, every adventure teaches our kids lessons that last a lifetime. These moments of laughter and joy happen in the safety of a loving environment and are made possible by your generosity. Your support ensures our children not only enjoy the simple pleasures of summer but also gain skills and memories that will stay with them for years to come. Thank you for giving them the gift of summer!



Fishing is all about patience, persistence and celebrating every catch!



Cottage vacations and surfing teach teamwork, trust and the lasting bond of sisterhood at the heart of cottage life!



At Second Baptist's teen beach retreat, pool adventures help our kids see they're part of something bigger—a family, a community and God's love in action.



Life is brighter when you share it with friends—and a little color never hurts!



Exploring, experimenting and discovering the wonder of science—summer fun at Little Beakers!



Discovery comes in unexpected forms—our kids learned about nature, respect and curiosity this summer.



From the kitchen to the heart—our kids took cooking lessons that helped them find responsibility, pride and the joy of serving others.



Discipline, focus and a whole lot of courage—our kids embraced a new adventure, Muay Thai style at Heritage Muay Thai!



Our girls celebrate creativity, friendship and the joy of simple summer pleasures. Chalk on!



Every game is a chance to build trust, confidence and connection. TBRI camp in action!

A Foundation of Kindness

Kiwanis Foundation of Houston's Impact on our Community

At Boys and Girls Country of Houston, we are blessed to be surrounded by generous partners who not only believe in our mission but actively walk alongside us in creating a nurturing, empowering environment for our children. Among these cherished supporters is the Kiwanis Foundation of Houston, whose steadfast generosity has helped meet essential needs across our campus, both practical and purposeful.

Thanks to their continued support, we have been able to make vital capital improvements that enrich daily life and strengthen our sense of community. One of the most impactful recent gifts has been a commercial dishwasher, which allows us to host internal events with greater ease and efficiency. These gatherings, from community meals to campus-wide celebrations, are a cornerstone of life at Boys and Girls Country, helping to strengthen bonds, celebrate milestones and build lasting fellowship among children, staff and volunteers.



In our cottages, new family wall calendar systems are helping us stay organized and engaged. This small but mighty tool reinforces our family-style model of care and keeps everyone on the same page. They have quickly become a daily touchpoint for our houseparents and kids alike, fostering shared responsibility and helping everyone feel more connected to the rhythm of cottage life.



Over the years, the Kiwanis Foundation has also ensured our grounds remain safe and beautiful by supporting tree trimming across the property, creating a welcoming space where children can play, explore and grow. Their generosity also made possible the purchase of a 4-H trailer, an essential tool of our agriculture program. This trailer transports animals and equipment, enabling our kids to participate in hands-on learning, leadership development and county fairs; experiences that shape character and build lifelong confidence.

These contributions are expressions of care, belief and investment in the future of every child who calls Boys and Girls Country home. The Kiwanis Foundation of Houston exemplifies what true partnership looks like: consistent, compassionate and committed. Together, we are building a legacy of kindness, one meaningful act at a time.



Create a Lasting Legacy for the Next Generation through Nourishment

Boys and Girls Country receives generous food donations each year, yet we still spend over \$109,000 annually to feed our children.

That's where **The Children's Table (TCT) Fund** makes a difference. This endowed fund helps cover food costs—its principal is invested, and only the earnings are used, ensuring lasting nourishment for our kids year after year.

TCT is part of the Boys and Girls Country Endowment Fund, which builds a legacy of hope and opportunity through funds such as:

- General Endowment – Fuels our mission
- Cottage Care Fund – Maintains safe homes
- Building Strong Foundations Fund – Preserves our campus
- Drive Forward Fund – Ensures reliable transportation
- Scholarship Fund – Supports higher education

Your investment today nourishes the next generation.

Learn more: endowment@boysandgirlscountry.org.



"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"

Helen Keller's words ring true at Boys and Girls Country. Because of your generosity—through clothing, food, financial gifts and time—our children experience love, stability and opportunity every day.

Today, we invite you to help in another way: through experiences.

Our kids love attending special events and many now dream of exploring new opportunities like:

- Ballets, art shows or museum events
- Cultural festivals or zoo/aquarium visits
- Opera, symphony or stage performances

If you have unused tickets, you can make a child's day. **Contact us at info@boysandgirlscountry.org.**

Together, we're building a village where every child's needs and dreams are nurtured.



In Memory

June 1—September 30, 2025

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

Abby
Mr. and Mrs. Dale Seyler

Doyal Gillespie
Ms. Pamela Sue Rush

Dr. Brent Sanderlin
Mr. A.A. Brautigam

Mario
Ms. Jennifer Kramer

Rose and Jake Jacobson
Mrs. Laura Hicks

Donald Sauer
Mr. and Mrs. Carl Tongberg

Connie Barnett
Mr. A.A. Brautigam

Harold Ralph Krause
Mr. Jeffrey English

Charles "Chuck" Scianna, Jr.
Reverend Eric Pitre
Ms. Rosie Luhn

William Carrol Book, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Stromatt

Roy Hohl
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen L. Hohl

Dwayne Thomas Stenson
Ms. Lydia Gibson

Cody Clark
Mr. A.A. Brautigam

Josephine Lanza
Ms. Lee Ann Watson

Anne R. Towery
Mr. H. Talbot Cooley

Sandra Cunningham Stilley
G.W. Miller
Mr. and Mrs. Jim McCain
Ms. Carol Smith
Mr. Chris Woldert

Thomas "Tommy" Patterson
Eebie Cheshire
Mrs. Kay Gallatin
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Peacock
The Reverend and
Mrs. Richard Petranek

Bernice Underwood
Ms. Charlotte U. Martin

Donald E. DeHay
Mr. A.A. Brautigam

Kevin Punty
Ms. Kim Watson

Gladys Underwood
Ms. Charlotte U. Martin

Walt and LaRue Evans
Ms. Mary Lou Kirves

Linda Russell
Ms. Lee Ann Watson

Honorarium

Joel Cliff
Mr. Kenneth Evans and
Mrs. Kristina Cliff-Evans

We regret any errors or omissions and would appreciate notifications of corrections. *Includes gift(s) made to the Boys and Girls Country Endowment Fund.

Board of Directors

Chief Executive Officer

Vincent Duran

Chair

Georgene Britz

Bill Aimone III
Brian Austin
Cyrus Bahrami
Jennifer Baker
Justin L. Baker
Craig A. Bunk
John W. Dalton, Sr.
Carlos De Aldecoa Bueno
Chris DeVault
Barton Duckworth
Scott Galloway
Mike Gatewood (ex officio)

Linsy Goodson
Randy Hale
Will Harper
Raleigh Jenkins
Robert B. Kneppler, Jr.
Charles H. Listen, II
Bert Lohse
Brad Marks
Scott D. Martin
Matthew Mealey
Parker Mears
James A. Miller
Ben Pisklak

Ryan Rodgers
Matthew P. Rotan
David Schwarz
Derick Smith
Zach Springer
Kristen Stedham
Steve Stephens
John R. Sult
Jim Tomforde
Scott Wegmann
Michael White
James Wu

Advisory Council

David J. Bishop
James Bloodworth
Donna Boyer
Jan Cameron
Hulda Coskey
Ronnie Deyo
Rodney W. Eads
Lesha P. Elsenbrook
Stephen H. Emmott
Brad R. Freels
Mike Gatewood

Sten L. Gustafson
Bryan Herr
A.J. Knapp
Robert E. Kurtz
Carolyn Little
Michael M. Lowther
Penny R. Loyd
Terry Malloy
Steve McEachern
Mark L. Mey

Travis Overall
Robert O. Pierce
Sally Ramsey
Karen Rosales
Dick Scott
Paul C. Sorensen
Mark Taylor
Kristie Trice
Howard L. Wagner
William J. Way
T. Michael Young

Honorary Lifetime

Leonard A. Bedell
Bennis G. Butler
Doug Church
Larry Gardner

Philip L. Leggett, MD
L. Janette McDonald
Charles M. Rampacek

R. Allen Schubert
Jack I. Tompkins
Peter S. Wardenburg, Sr.
Reed G. Wood



Prayer Requests

We invite you to partner with us in prayer for our Boys and Girls Country community.

Please lift up the following in your prayers:

BGC Staff - for guidance, energy and wisdom

Kids navigating the holiday season - for joy, safety and support

School year - for a smooth, successful school year

Potential families discovering BGC - that children may find our warm and welcoming home

Strengthening our community relationships - that BGC's bonds with neighbors and partners grow deeper

Thank You To Our Corporate Campaign Partners



Find Us Online @boysandgirlscountry



supportkids@boysandgirlscountry.org | Phone: 281.351.4976