Faith and football are two things which describe Akia’s life as a running back for the Waller Bulldogs. He is a senior this year and strives to balance sports, a part-time job and homework. Life before Boys and Girls Country was chaos for this young man. “I was skipping school, failing my classes and getting into fights. There are 182 days of school, and I spent 112 days on In-School Suspension (ISS). Things were so bad I was failing gym class,” says Akia. Life was not easy when he first came to BGC. He was defiant and angry, but our counseling services provided the help he desperately needed.

The beautiful thing about Boys and Girls Country is that things do not stay the same. We want to see our kids thrive and achieve new heights. Akia has wonderful teaching parents, Steven and Adrianne Madden, who have walked with him through the valleys of his journey. They are the constant mentors in his life. According to Akia, “My teaching parents keep it real with me.”

People often thank me and Boys and Girls Country for “changing the lives of children.” Truthfully, we do not change anybody. We give children the opportunity and resources to make changes. We provide a safe and secure environment where teaching parents can help guide and mentor young lives. Akia has made these changes, and we celebrate his many victories.

Akia’s Christian faith has also inspired many of his peers as he attends weekly Bible Study at BGC.

He has volunteered at several youth events and has been asked to share his testimony at a youth retreat in December. Akia plans to step up and share how the power of God has changed his life! He will remind his fellow students, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13). Before coming to BGC, Akia was considered a “runner” or a “flight risk” because he ran away from home many times. The good news is that he is still a “runner.” But, he is now running to Christ and running to pursue his dreams as a young man filled with hope and purpose.

Thank you for standing with Akia with your generous support. His story starts with your financial gift which gives us the opportunity to help children from families in crisis. My five year-old son, Lucas, recently earned two dollars for completing some chores around the house. He was excited and anxious to put the money into his empty wallet. One hour later he came back and gave me the two dollars. I said, “Lucas, what are you doing? This is your money.” He said, “Dad this is for all my friends at Boys and Girls Country because I love that place.” I cannot think of any better way to describe Boys and Girls Country – a haven for children built by friends who love this place.

Make your contribution online! Give securely online at www.boysandgirlscountry.org/donate

Vincent Duran
Executive Director
Stories of Success From Our Young Adults

College and Career

Sending our kids back to school is an exciting time. Six of our children graduated from high school in May. All of them are on their way to further education!

In August, we had a dinner party at our College and Career campus for the college kids to share a meal before the new school year. It was a great time of fellowship with several friends from First Baptist Church - Cypress and Christ Family Church who joined us to pray over the students. This time of transitioning into adulthood comes with some anxiety, but we know God has special plans for our children.

Over the summer Carla and Jessica participated in dental assistant programs. They were eager to put their free time to good use. Currently both of them work while attending classes. Jessica was promoted to an assistant manager at Subway. After passing her Dental Assistant Certification test, Carla was immediately hired by a local dental and orthodontic office in Copperfield. They enjoyed their experiences, made important connections and gained valuable communications skills.

Robert received a very warm welcome at Oklahoma Christian University (OCU). His move-in day was full of fun and new friendships. We are so excited to see him grow in a new community. Robert was awarded a $32,000 scholarship to attend OCU, in addition to other scholarships he received. We know he has a bright future ahead of him as he pursues a career in the medical field.

Kelly currently holds a full-time job at a daycare center while pursuing full-time school. Kelly has one more year of classes at Lone Star College before she transfers to a 4-year university. She is excited to pursue a degree in wedding and event planning.

We are pleased to announce that Morgan, Naidi and Tracey were awarded $7,500 J.A. Knowles Scholarships for the 2018-2019 school year. Also, Korin received a scholarship from Interlinc Foundation for $4,000 towards her first year in college. These scholarships can be renewed every year if our young adults continue to maintain academic excellence. Please pray that they have exciting college experiences and keep up the good grades!

Cameron and Dora were excited to be at Oklahoma Christian University’s honors academy this summer! They both attended a Spanish immersion course. In addition, Cameron took a forensic science class, and Dora took a cellular biology class. We are blessed to have educational partners like OCU!

Please pray for our children as they transition into college life.

To read more stories about BGC kids, please visit our website at www.boysandgirlscountry.org
Our kids are hooked on fishing thanks to our friends at Bass Pro Shops Katy.

Jeremiah rededicated his heart and life to Christ and was baptized.

During career week, Trenegy took our kids on an exciting field trip that inspired them to dream big! Thank you!

Designing and launching a bottle rocket was a highlight of STEM week.

Some of our kids visited Colorado for summer vacation.
At the annual Children’s Awards Banquet, our children were recognized for their amazing accomplishments this past year.

The kids visited the City of Tomball, exploring the police department, public works offices, the fire station and city hall.

The kids had a great day at Southwestern Energy learning about career building, clean energy and leadership.

Our girls visited the MFAH exhibition “Big Bambu.”

The kids learned coding to operate drones and robots and to customize computer games. Thank you Code Ninjas Cypress!

Albert learned how to drive!
Heritage Award Dinner

The Heritage Award Dinner is the largest annual fundraising event supporting Boys and Girls Country. The first dinner was held in 1992 when our faithful friends and supporters, Tom and Mary Steele, were honored and the event raised a net of $85,000. The event has grown significantly since that time and features top-notch comedic entertainment.

On Thursday, November 8, Boys and Girls Country celebrates our 27th annual Heritage Award Dinner at the Hilton Americas! The evening’s guests will have the pleasure of hearing from our kids firsthand about how Boys and Girls Country has impacted their lives and will be entertained by none other than legendary comedian Jay Leno.

Boys and Girls Country is pleased to have Kim and Robert Marling as our distinguished honorees for the 2018 Heritage Award Dinner. The Marlings have been chosen to receive the Heritage Award because of their generous and far-reaching support, not only for Boys and Girls Country but also for the Houston community.

Robert is the Chairman and CEO of Woodforest Financial Group, Inc., a community bank with a corporate culture of community service and giving back. In 2005, the Woodforest Charitable Foundation was created with an initial gift of $1,000,000 from Woodforest National Bank. Kim became the first Executive Director of the foundation and continues to oversee its growth and donations today as its Executive Vice President. Both Woodforest National Bank and Woodforest Charitable Foundation have been steadfastly committed to providing funding for Boys and Girls Country.

The Marlings’ achievements, both professionally and in their personal lives, have made a tremendous impact on the lives of so many in the Greater Houston community, across the country and for the kids of Boys and Girls Country.

To learn more about this event, visit www.boysandgirlscountry.org/heritage-award-dinner/
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Boys and Girls Country News

Join the
BOYS & GIRLS COUNTRY

Family tree

“For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the LORD will take me up.” Psalm 27:10

Boys and Girls Country is incredibly blessed with friends who give of their time and treasure to ensure that our children have a safe and loving home in which to grow up and thrive. The Boys and Girls Country Family Tree is our newest opportunity for you to help our kids.

The Boys and Girls Country Family Tree is our compassionate group of monthly donors. Members of the Family Tree are very important to BGC; their monthly gifts sustain our work. These generous friends also know that monthly giving allows us to spend less time fundraising and more time caring for our kids. In the end, that’s what it’s all about. Collectively we make the greatest difference for kids like Alyssa.

Alyssa is a bright and warm-hearted 13-year-old who loves her teaching mom and cottage sisters. She has received awards for service, and she is the most compassionate and kind girl in her cottage. But Alyssa’s early life was full of very hard times.

When she first came to BGC, Alyssa only had boys clothes. She had been wearing a cousin’s hand-me-downs and was often mistaken for a boy. She was embarrassed about it, but her grandpa refused to buy her new clothes. She initially struggled with hoarding food and household items because she didn’t have these things consistently at home.

Alyssa and her brother Jeremy have been through everything you can imagine: abuse, food scarcity, losing both parents to drugs and jail, being passed from relative to relative and witnessing terrible violence. Alyssa has been abused by most of the men in her life. They have met few trustworthy adults before arriving at Boys and Girls Country.

Jeremy and Alyssa lived with their grandparents for several years before coming to BGC. Their grandparents found it increasingly difficult to care for them. Although they did the best they could, they created a situation where Alyssa was the parent to Jeremy and Jeremy was the favorite. The children resented each other, and their relationship was strained.

“Essentially, they have been abandoned,” explains Victoria Sharp, their Program Manager. “The grandparents don’t come to see them or call, and they have not been home for Christmas in three years. Without Boys and Girls Country they would be in CPS custody with the rest of their siblings.”

It took over a year for Alyssa to open up to an adult at BGC. One weekend she was by herself in the cottage and her teaching mom decided to make it a “full mommy/daughter” weekend. They got their nails done, saw a movie and spent a lot of time talking and bonding. Once Alyssa realized her teaching parents were trustworthy and weren’t going anywhere, she began to blossom.

Jeremy and Alyssa now enjoy spending time together and often have dinner at one another’s cottage. They trust each other now that Alyssa doesn’t have to be the mom. Alyssa’s motto is “Always smile, no matter the situation. Keep smiling and it will get better.”

When you join our Family Tree, you provide loving parents to a child who has been living in crisis. Will you join the Boys and Girls Country Family Tree?

Visit bit.ly/bgcfamilytree for more information.
BGC Young Professionals

A Year of Success

The BGC Young Professionals group has grown tremendously since its inception in 2014. The group consists of young leaders from the Greater Houston area who successfully raise funds and awareness for the Boys and Girls Country mission. Every year the BGC YPG committee puts together an array of educational, networking and volunteer events which help them grow as leaders. These are highlights from their favorite experiences this year.

“Our kickoff event is always exciting for the YP group, signifying a new year and new opportunities for both the members of the YP group and the kids of Boys and Girls Country. It’s our first event after the holidays, and it’s exciting to get back together after a busy holiday season. We try to keep it informal, so we all have a chance to mix and mingle with each other and first time guests who are interested in finding a community of volunteerism, “ shared Brittney Ellis about the kickoff event at Christian’s Tailgate.

“Becoming birthday sponsors for the Cottage 11 boys has been a wonderful experience for our YPG group. This is the second year, and we wouldn’t miss it for the world. I absolutely love seeing the children excited about the birthday celebrations and socializing with the young professionals. After the celebration, we play some sort of game with the kids like soccer, basketball or football. It warms my heart to see the children light up with excitement to be able to interact with the young professionals in this way,” shared Emily Cherry.

“The ‘Cheers for Children’ event at Eureka Heights brewery in April was a wonderful drive of summer supplies for the kids. Approximately 30 professionals across several industries enjoyed a happy hour event, making new acquaintances and building upon established relationships. The feedback was very positive as the attendees learned about the mission of Boys and Girls Country. This event got everyone excited about future opportunities of involvement in on-campus events including birthdays, Spring Festival and more,” shared Blake Ziober.

The group’s summer event took place at the Memorial Park where YPG members and their friends gathered for a Back-to-School BBQ. They enjoyed food, drinks, cupcakes and yard games. The YPG members organized the event to collect school supplies for the BGC kids. They were able to provide a huge shopping cart full of supplies. In addition, almost $700 was raised. The group was especially thankful that James Wu, BGC’s newest board member, was able to attend with his family.

The most recent event was the Annual Black and White Soirée in October. This formal event brings YPG members and their guests to the home of one of our board directors to enjoy drinks and appetizers, have a small auction and connect with passionate leaders while making an impact on the children of Boys and Girls Country.

Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors: EVAN Your IT Guy, Trenegy.
Every year our children participate in a variety of projects which help them build skills while giving back to the community. Our kids recognize the value of volunteering and seek ways to get involved. Our volunteers and teaching parents set a great example of how to make a difference in the world. Whether it involves manual labor, words of support or putting gifts together, BGC children are eager to show love to those in need.

One Boys and Girls Country service project has been awarded the Youth in Philanthropy First Honorable Mention and a $1,000 prize from the Greater Houston Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Diversity and Outreach Committee! Led by Jayna Harris, a BGC teaching parent, about 30 girls participated in a project with Days for Girls International. This organization makes reusable, sustainable feminine hygiene kits and provides them to girls who would otherwise miss school during their monthly cycles. Living in a home which emphasizes the importance of education, our girls were inspired to help and ensure that girls around the world would not miss school because of a lack of monthly hygiene supplies.

Our Cottage 7 family, in partnership with Second Baptist Church - Cypress, participated in a community service project at Miracle Farms, a children’s home in Brenham. Our boys worked cleaning flower beds, replacing mulch and planting new plants for two of their cottages. The boys also learned to mix concrete and lay pavers.

Our Cottage 5 boys participated in a beautification project at The Cramer Center, a Christian resort. They painted benches and tables and repositioned bricks in the Labyrinth garden. The boys enjoyed chili dogs, potato salad and cold beverages after they finished. Not only did they enjoy themselves, but they were able to give back to the community.

We could not be more proud of our young men who volunteered at Resale for a Purpose. Starting at 7:00 a.m. they worked for 3.5 hours with positive attitudes. The guys reorganized an offsite shed which was full of Valentine, Easter, Halloween and Christmas decorations and clothing. Mark and Estifanos were asked to join the Resale for a Purpose staff the next day because the managers were so impressed with their skills and work ethic. God is good, and we are blessed to see His work in our children.

Cottage 2 enjoyed volunteering with Champions Forest Baptist Church during an event to support “Feed My Starving Children”. The girls were able to set up tables and equipment for filling thousands of bags of rice and seasoning to feed the hungry around the globe. The next day, girls worked in different stations: filling the bags with rice, adding the seasoning, sealing the bags and packing the tubs, taking refills of rice to the stations to do it all again. Tirzah said she was “struck by the impact this ministry has on truly needy children.” Esme enjoyed how the girls in her cottage all worked side by side doing the different jobs. “It was really cool how people who didn’t even know each other all came together to pack food for the hungry,” commented Penny.
‘In Memory of’ Gifts

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

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P.S. Your gift to the Endowment is invested – never spent – and each year, a distribution, like a dividend on a mutual fund account, can be made from the Endowment to Boys and Girls Country. These funds are used to feed, clothe and nurture the children in our care today and tomorrow. 🌼

*Not intended as legal, tax or investment advice*

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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.

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.

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

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

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Connect with us!

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Fax: 281.351.4978

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