Parenting and discipleship are terms that cannot be easily differentiated, which is why we use a “teaching model” to raise children at Boys and Girls Country. All teaching has a purpose with a desired outcome. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6). This scripture is one of the most widely quoted verses about Christian parenting. The idea behind this verse is that parents have the responsibility to instill Biblical values and principles into the lives of young children. As children become older, the sacred teachings of scripture become the compass of many life-changing decisions. This verse is the foundation of everything we do in caring for children at Boys and Girls Country.

As the leader of Boys and Girls Country, I embrace the high calling of raising our children to become followers of Christ. In my office is a group photo of boys from the early years of Boys Country, long before the merger with Girls Country. The photo is framed with a letter from founder T. A. Robinson to Jack Brewer, the first executive director. Mr. Robinson writes, “I would like very much for you to guide the staff in its spiritual activities, which you and I both consider to be the most important effort at Boys Country. I want our children to leave us as strong dedicated Christians, and they could never find a better teacher than you.” These words are a constant reminder that taking care of children at BGC has an eternal purpose!

Discipleship is the process of training believers to become dedicated followers of Christ. Our Teaching Parents are committed to the ministry of discipleship as they guide our children in their spiritual and academic development. Not only will they grow as believers, but they will grow as students of life.

Erick has lived at Boys and Girls Country for six years. Like many of our students he was behind two grade levels at school and desperately needed the discipline and structure to turn things around. Earlier this year, Erick’s grades plummeted to an average of 50 and below. Some grades were in the 20s and 30s. He credits his Teaching Parents for giving him the guidance and support to get through a very difficult time. According to Erick, “Mr. Cliff and Ms. Jayna really motivated me to do better. They wanted to help me set goals and pursue my dreams. They are very understanding, and I like the way they communicate with me.”

I want to thank you for giving us the chance to help Erick. With the motivation of Mr. Cliff and Ms. Jayna, he drastically turned things around. All his grades now average 75 and above. Victor Hugo once said, “He who opens a school door, closes a prison door.” Your love and support have done more than open a school door. You have given Erick a home where he can thrive and continue to pursue his dreams. ♥

Vincent Duran
Executive Director
New Program

First Day at The Transitional Living Cottage

In 1997, Boys and Girls Country established the College and Career Program (C&C) to continue offering a family for our kids to come home to - beyond high school graduation - as they follow their own, individual paths to adulthood. Since that time, 111 of our kids have graduated from high school, and 26 have graduated from college or a technical program.

While the C&C program has been amazing for our children, we recognize the challenges of transitioning from a structured environment, with Teaching Parents directing their daily lives, to a life after high school which is independent. The Boys and Girls Country Transitional Living Program, implemented this year, is designed to help equip students with the skills needed for independence and life on a college campus or a less structured environment. The program utilizes a three-phase approach with staff support, curriculum learning, and practical application of independent living skills. This holistic approach promotes the emotional, spiritual and behavioral stability required for successful independent living. It also teaches our kids how to adjust to becoming independent adults.

This spring, all of our high school graduates transitioned from living with their cottage family to living independently through this program. Transitioning from the structure of cottage life to independence has made them even more aware of the balance needed to be successful in life.

The first day in the Transitional Living cottage was very eventful. During the first family meeting, the students established house rules, chore assignments, and a laundry schedule. When Mr. Malcolm, program manager, asked what was for dinner the students had no response. That’s not something our kids typically worry about, and it took a moment for that sense of responsibility to sink in.

“The next 20 minutes were amazing to see,” shares program mentor Cassie Parkin. “The students went from being very hesitant at first to taking inventory of the pantry and the fridge. They wanted to figure out what they needed and what they actually wanted, and make a weekly meal plan based on that. This was a good lesson for the students as they were reminded that independent living does not mean the pantry would be magically stocked for them!”

By the end of that meeting, our students had meals planned for the week, a commissary list filled out, a grocery list ready for shopping, and an ownership of the kitchen that can only come from getting together and making a plan. The Transitional Living Program creates a bridge which helps our students build confidence towards becoming self-sustaining contributing adults and fulfilling the ongoing mission of Boys and Girls Country.

To learn about events and activities at Boys and Girls Country, please visit our website at www.boysandgirlscountry.org
Deven’s Story

When Deven came to live at BGC, his experiences were similar to many of the Boys and Girls Country kids. At age 14, he had been diagnosed with both dyslexia and ADHD but he was not receiving services or accommodations at school for his learning differences. Inside, he struggled with his learning challenges, and he had never healed from the trauma of domestic abuse and his parents’ divorce. Outside, he was overly energetic, very angry and headed down the wrong path. A family therapist suggested BGC could provide Deven with more structure and accountability. He came to live in Cottage 9 as his eighth grade year began.

The Education Program played a critical role in helping Deven turn the corner. His mother had been trying to qualify him for special services but was denied each year because of miscommunications with the school. Teachers assumed he was a bad kid because they didn’t have any more information.

Fortunately, our incredible supporters ensure that Boys and Girls Country offers children targeted educational support. Education Program Manager Kristi Pierce reviewed Deven’s records and administered an assessment. She was able to partner with Waller ISD to get him accommodations as he was starting his freshman year.

“When a student gets the services they need, the playing field gets leveled at school so they can be successful. They are still challenged academically but their learning differences do not get in the way. Also, the accommodations documents give the teachers a recipe to help the child succeed,” Kristi explained.

Deven quickly became a leader in the cottage and on the BGC campus. He loved the positive feedback and privileges he received and learned to work within the Family Teaching Model system to achieve his goals. He also realized that he had to tell the truth and self-report.

“Deven has a great work ethic and strong morals,” says his Teaching Dad Jim Stuckey. “He stood for what was right and wanted his cottage brothers to do the same. You can understand why he was so successful in ROTC.”

Always exploring career opportunities in law enforcement and the military, Deven was a Patriot Detail Command Officer in ROTC and also participated in the Harris County Sheriff’s Department Junior Officer Program. When a donor approached Boys and Girls Country in 2017 to inquire if we had a student who would be a good fit for Hargrave Military Academy in Virginia, Deven was the natural choice.

Today, Deven’s title is Battalion S2 Security and Intel NCO. He works with the military police on the Hargrave campus. This summer he is retaking a few classes to improve his grades and has been accepted into the highly competitive United States Naval Academy Seminar. This is the first step to becoming a naval officer, and we are thrilled for him. It’s amazing to see how much his life path has changed in just three and half years. Deven recently sent this to Jim: “God has a perfect timing, never early, never late. It takes a little patience and a whole lot of faith, but it’s worth the wait.”

“Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. Do everything in love.”

1 Corinthians 16:13-14
Dear Friend,

By the time you receive this newsletter the new school year will be fast approaching. Our kids will stop by the education lab to pick out their backpacks and school supplies, our education team will enroll kids in classes, and our Teaching Parents will start getting everyone used to the idea of an early bedtime and even earlier wake up time for the 5:45 a.m. bus.

We will also have brand new students coming to live with us, kids just like Deven who need special services, tutoring, and extra homework help. We will have new kids who have not been to a dentist or received regular vaccines. Some of our new children will have never had their own bed and some have not known when they would eat again.

Deven’s story shows us that with the right support and structure, children who learn to believe in themselves can achieve awesome results. Boys and Girls Country is honored to partner with you to provide over 100 children and young adults every year with tailored educational and emotional support to help them succeed.

Your donations to support our kids as they begin the 2018-19 school year make a HUGE difference in their lives. Some of the things your gifts fund include:

- After school tutoring
- Additional educational resources
- Teaching Parents, a mom and dad, who care for our kids and model a Christian marriage
- Regular, healthy meals, housing and basic needs
- Counseling services and medical care

We receive no government funding to care for our children, and 85 cents of every dollar donated goes directly to giving kids a better life. This is our 47th year of preparing our children for going back to school, and every year, we rely on friends like you to help.

Please consider making a gift today. It costs $147 to care for a child per day. Your gift of $25, $50, or $100 or more will help give our kids the things they need in order to go back to school prepared for the year. You may give using the enclosed envelope or securely online at www.boysandgirlscountry.org. (Choose “Back to School” as the “Purpose of Gift”.) Thank you for loving our children!

Sincerely,

Vincent Duran
Executive Director

P.S. School starts August 27, 2018. Gifts received will help feed, clothe, and buy supplies and books for our children.
Event Wrap Up

Boys and Girls Country

SPRING FESTIVAL

The 40th Spring Festival, held on Saturday, May 5, 2018, 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 Michael White, 2018 Spring Festival Event Chair, and his team for all of their hard work in making the festival one of the best to date!

Festival goers enjoyed carnival rides, activity and craft booths, and delicious food including barbecue, hamburgers and hot dogs as well as funnel cakes, nachos and sno cones. Special treats this year were pancake art by Dancakes and piggy races in the Porkchop Speedway. Attendees were able to sit on the lawn and enjoy musical entertainment by Almost Heaven Bluegrass Band, Roelant and Josh Grider.

Many thanks for coming out, seeing the campus, and enjoying the day with us. Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 4, 2019, for the 41st Annual Spring Festival!
Thank you!

Boys and Girls Country thanks our 2018 Spring Festival sponsors for their incredible support! We are so blessed by your generosity.

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Save the Date

**SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2019**
The education program at Boys and Girls Country is – next to God and family – the most important part of our kids’ lives. Children often come to us two or more grades behind their peers due to frequent moves, undiagnosed learning challenges and instability at home. Children living at Boys and Girls Country have demonstrated a rise in grades, school attendance and continuing education.

The Boys and Girls Country Education Program is critical to the success of every child calling our campus home and includes testing, tutoring, enrichment, arts, college preparation and the Transitional Living and College and Career programs. These programs are funded by many wonderful donors. Earlier this year, we were thrilled to present a Friend of Children Award to the Wayne Duddlesten Foundation for their generous support of the educational program at Boys and Girls Country.

A life-long Houstonian, Wayne Duddlesten was well-known in Houston real estate circles. He was also an extremely philanthropic man and was very specific about the mission of his foundation, which he created to “help the least served people – people with serious needs, limited resources, and few alternatives.”

Today, Karen Duddlesten ensures that her late husband’s mission continues. Mrs. Duddlesten paid a visit to our campus last fall and was able to see firsthand the difference she and the foundation’s trustees are making through their support. Two of our College and Career students proudly took her on a tour of our Education Lab and a cottage home. Our kids were excited when they received individually addressed thank you cards from Mrs. Duddlesten for the handmade cards and photo collage they presented to her.

Friends like the Wayne Duddlesten Foundation make dreams a reality for our children, and we can’t thank them enough for their generous support, which helped provide over 2,200 hours of tutoring help to our kids, administer valuable educational assessments to better address educational needs and provide a robust summer enrichment program. We are grateful for their investment in our children.

Donor Spotlight

The Duddlesten Foundation - A Friend of Education

Charlene Slack, Executive Director of the Duddlesten Foundation, receiving Friend of Children Award for The Wayne Duddlesten Foundation

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Thank You to Our Corporate Sponsors: EVAN Your IT Guy, Trenegy.
Guess Who’s Moving On!

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” - Jeremiah 29:11

The Boys and Girls Country family is extremely proud of our six recent high school graduates, all of whom have big plans in place. Your investment has made it possible for them to hope, dream and achieve. Please keep them in your prayers as they go through this next transition in life.

**Carla:** I plan to earn my certificate to be a Dental Assistant and then work my way up to be a dentist. I want to go to Lone Star College for two years and then transfer to a 4-year college. I come from a big family and will be the third of eight kids to go to college. I have faith in myself and I also want to make my mom and siblings proud! I love working with people and want to make a difference. I wish to give back to those who helped me get to this point in life!

**Jessica:** I plan on attending a Dental Assistant Program after graduation. I already earned a Cosmetology License and would like to learn several different trades. Powerlifting was my favorite activity in high school. I will be the first in my family to graduate from a trade school/college.

**Morgan:** I will attend Blinn College and Texas A&M in the upcoming semester. My goal is to study Business Administration of Industrial Engineering. I am excited to enlist into the Army Reserves since they started accepting people with diabetes. My future is bright and large and I know that no matter where I go my light will shine.

**Robert:** I am attending Oklahoma Christian University in the fall of this year to study biology. I hope to become a doctor or earn a degree in the medical field. I graduated in the top 10% of my class and received the Horatio Alger National Scholarship. I am always dedicated to working hard and achieving the best results.

**Korin:** I plan on majoring in business and minoring in social work. I will attend Blinn College in the fall. While I was in high school I worked two jobs and still maintained good grades. I enjoy giving back to the community as well, so I volunteered to help the victims of Hurricane Harvey. I see myself as a very hard worker with an independent personality which will help me achieve great results.

**Brianna:** I plan on attending Lone Star College to get my basic courses and then transfer to the University of Houston. I dream about being a Graphic Designer and UH has a great program. I will miss my teachers from Waller High School but I know there are many new friendships ahead. I enjoy drawing a lot and I have been told that my artwork is very good.
Beyond the Barrier

More than half of the children who come to live at Boys and Girls Country speak a different language at home. Our population of bilingual kids is 41 percent which brings great diversity as well as new challenges to our cottage homes.

Firezer came from Ethiopia three years ago. Amharic is the language she spoke most of her life. She needed a lot of support to be able to do well at school in Waller. When she came to BGC she was very reserved and had little hope of achieving good results due to her language barrier. Our Education Program Manager Kristi Pierce recognized Firezer’s struggles and created a plan to help her become more proficient in English. Kristi paired her with our volunteer librarians to ensure consistent language immersion, secured necessary accommodations at school and engaged a tutor to get her up to speed in various subjects.

Firezer was very surprised when she received her SAT scores this spring. Her results were higher than anyone expected and surpassed the scores of many kids whose native language is English. During the few years that she has been here, Firezer felt empowered to take advantage of the opportunities around her.

Our program at Boys and Girls Country is always adjusting to meet the needs of our children. Thanks to your investment, we can offer bilingual services to a large population of our campus. Cultural adaptation is very challenging for children and it requires emotional, educational and spiritual support.

Next year Firezer will be a senior. She has maintained A’s and B’s while playing sports and was invited to join the National Honor Society. She was very proud to make the soccer team playing the forward position and also enjoyed running track. Firezer secured her first job and has made huge strides in time management skills. She is interested in trying new things every year, and it fills our hearts with joy to see her using her talents.

This summer our kids will participate in the World Culture Expo as a part of the BGC Summer Education program. The expo will help kids learn more about different countries and the cultures of other kids at BGC. We want our kids to take pride in their traditions and values and share them with their BGC family.

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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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January 1 - May 31, 2018

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There is no need to wait until the end of the year to make an IRA Charitable Rollover. To learn more, please give me a call at 281-290-6102 and I will be happy to guide you through the process. I look forward to hearing from you.❤️

Melissa Simon
Director of Development

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 and they will be there far into the future.

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