

WE ARE

# BOYS TOWN NATION

BOYS TOWN NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2020  
Volume 59, Issue 1

The work  
continues...

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DEAR ALUMNI,

We Are Boys Town Nation! With Boys Town alumni stretching from coast to coast, we truly are a family across this great nation. As we begin the new year, your quarterly alumni newsletter is taking on a new look and a new approach in order to inform, inspire and bring our family closer together.

This issue features our work here at Boys Town continuing Father Flanagan's dream. You will see a story about Christina Trusler Ramirez, a 1995 Boys Town graduate who bounced from foster home to foster home before landing here. She used the skills she learned at Boys Town to continue her education, earn a successful job, and most importantly, raise a great family.

This time of year is always an exciting one for our youth at Boys Town. Not only does the earth reawaken after its winter slumber and give us the hope that new and warmer days are ahead, but our kids seem to become energized with the promise of their new future. This is especially true of our senior class as they continue to prepare for their lives after Boys Town.

We ask you keep in your daily prayers our dedicated staff and the boys and girls who have chosen to follow a path of healing at Boys Town.

I am excited about joining you at Boys Town Louisiana in New Orleans this summer. The Louisiana campus is a beautiful place and they are doing life-changing work with kids and families in the area. It will be a great time and I encourage you to make your plans now to join your brother and sister alumni and me this coming July 24-26 in Louisiana.

God's blessings on you and your families.

*Fr. Steven E. Boes*

Father Steven E. Boes  
President and National  
Executive Director

# AROUND THE 'TOWN AND THE Nation...

## 2020 Mini-Reunion Slated for New Orleans, Louisiana – July 24-26

New Orleans has been selected to host the 2020 Boys Town National Alumni Association Mini-Reunion the weekend of July 24-26. The weekend will feature a visit to the Boys Town Louisiana campus.

Registration will begin Friday at 1 p.m., at the Wyndham French Quarter Hotel. Alumni will receive a special rate of \$119.00 per night. Participants can guarantee that rate for up to three days before and three days after the reunion. Reservations must be made by June 23 to guarantee this rate.

The BTNAA® Board of Directors will meet from 8 a.m. to noon on Friday morning at the hotel and alumni are welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending, please call the Alumni Office so we can be sure to have the room for all attendees.

A welcome buffet is scheduled for Friday evening at 6 p.m., at the Oceana Grille near the hotel. Father Steven Boes, Boys Town's National Executive Director and President, is scheduled to give an update of Boys Town happenings and will be available to answer questions.

Saturday will feature a tour of the campus of Boys Town Louisiana. After the tours, the BTNAA will host a picnic for alumni, youth and staff. Father Boes will celebrate Mass after the picnic.

There will be a no-host breakfast Sunday morning at the hotel to close the weekend.

A registration form for the weekend is included with this mailing. You can mail, fax or email it to the Alumni Office or call 531-355-1151/800-345-0458 and register over the phone. You can also register safely and securely online at [www.boystownalumni.org](http://www.boystownalumni.org). Just look at the events column on the left side of the front page and click on the link to register.



SHAQUIL BARRETT, '10

## Boys Town's Own Leads NFL in Sacks; Voted to Pro Bowl

Boys Town's Shaquil Barrett, '10, now with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, led the National Football League with 19½ sacks this past season and was voted to his first NFL Pro Bowl after having one of the best seasons in Bucs' history.

Barrett recorded 3 sacks in the final regular season game of the season against the Atlanta Falcons to win the sack title. The 19½ sacks was also a Buccaneers team record. Barrett also set a team record with 6 forced fumbles this past season. In the Pro Bowl game, played in Orlando, Barrett recorded three

unassisted tackles for his NFC squad. The AFC defeated the NFC, 38-33.

Barrett becomes an unrestricted free agent on March 18 opening the door for him to sign with any NFL team.

*"All growth must come from inside – by starting with yourself, you should realize that within you, you have the germ of goodness, based upon faith in Almighty God."*

— SERVANT OF GOD EDWARD J. FLANAGAN



## BTNAA Seeks Deserving Alumni for Awards

At each Biennial Alumni Family Reunion, the BTNAA recognizes alumni who have made meaningful contributions to their community or supported the Alumni Association. It also honors non-alumni who have supported the BTNAA through the years.

The Awards Committee, co-chaired by Bob Matthews, D'71, and Jason Suibielski, '81, are asking for your help in identifying alumni who should be honored.

All you need to do is go to the BTNAA website, [www.boystownalumni.org](http://www.boystownalumni.org), and click on the BTNAA Awards Program link in the left column. It will take you to the awards page where you can read the criteria for the awards and fill out an online submission form with the deserving individual's name that will go directly to the Awards Committee.

## Scholarship Fund Accepting Applications

The Boys Town National Alumni Association Scholarship Fund committee is seeking applications for 2020.

We strongly encourage Boys Town alumni who are in school or are considering going to school to apply to the BTNAA Scholarship Fund at [www.boystownalumni.org](http://www.boystownalumni.org).

The Scholarship Fund board meets three times a year to consider scholarship applications from members of the Boys Town National Alumni Association. Up to \$4,000 per year can be applied to support academic or vocational training. Deadlines for applying for a scholarship are **January 1, April 15, and July 1.**

Please share this information with a fellow alumnus who might be in school and in need of additional scholarship assistance.

### BOYS TOWN NATION

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Christina Trusler Ramirez, '95

# Thriving: Parent, Wife, Professional

**W**hen she was 15, Christina Trusler Ramirez's main goal in life was to be old enough to get a job, get her own place and be on her own.

"I had moved between foster homes with little structure and nowhere to call home," Christina said.

"I lived out of a duffle bag and no one cared if I went to school, if I had clothes on my back or if I had anything to eat. I was a number in a system that rotated kids through social workers and probation officers."

Christina's goals, and life, all changed when her last set of foster parents told her about Boys Town.

"With their support, I wrote to Father (Val) Peter (then Boys Town's National Executive Director). I was really scared because I knew this was not a temporary stay — this was permanent. In the summer of 1992, at age 15, I arrived at Boys Town. I had finally found a real home!"

Starting over at Boys Town wasn't easy for Christina. She struggled with the structure and rules that were part of living in a Family Home with her Family-Teachers® and a family of roommates.

"For example, following directions, listening, problem solving, accepting feedback — they all sound so easy," she said. "But for me it was a challenge. Thank goodness there were other people going through the same experience."

As Christina settled in, she began to make new friends and enjoy new experiences. She went to school, participated in cheerleading and flags, and kept stats for the Boys Town football team. With each passing month,



**Christina Trusler Ramirez, '95**

her goals and plans for the future became more ambitious and positive.

Christina proudly graduated from Boys Town in 1995. Today, she lives in Omaha and works at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Nebraska as an actuarial product owner.

She has been with her husband, David, for 23 years and has five children, ages 3 to 21 (four boys and one girl).

Christina said she is so thankful for the lessons she learned at Boys Town, especially when it comes to parenting.

"Boys Town prepared me to be the best mom I can be. Being a mom is the hardest job a person can have, and it doesn't come with a manual. Many things I learned at Boys Town, I have taught my own children — they are my greatest achievement. I want to be the best role model for my children. This is so important to me."

Christina is driven to achieve more. After graduating from the College of Saint Mary in 2015, she earned her MBA from Midland University in 2018. Her future plans are still ambitious and include earning a doctorate in business or finance.

"Boys Town was there for me at the exact time I needed it," she said.

"I am so thankful for that miracle in my life."



*For Christina Trusler Ramirez, Boys Town prepared her to be "the best mom I can be." She and her children recently visited the Boys Town Hall of History.*



For more Boys Town Nation news, visit us online at [www.boystownalumni.org](http://www.boystownalumni.org)



# IN MEMORIAM



John Sing

## JOHN SING (NOV. 28, 1952–NOV. 11, 2019)

Boys Town was shocked and saddened on November 11, 2019, at the sudden death of beloved Fire Chief, John Sing. He had just returned from an early morning call when he passed away at the Boys Town Fire Station.

Sing, who began his employment with the fire department in 1971, was the longest tenured active employee at Boys Town at the time of his death. He had followed in the footsteps of his father, Paul Sing, a long-time Boys Town employee and a member of the Fire Department and Emergency services division during the 1950s and 1960s.

Sing was instrumental in developing the vibrant Fire Cadet program at Boys Town and hundreds of Boys Town youth were part of this skill and character-building program. Many Boys Town alumni credit Sing with encouraging them to become firemen or volunteer firemen in their communities. He was always willing to help out with alumni reunions, giving children of alumni rides on the fire truck. And every December you could find him delivering Santa, atop the fire truck, to the lighting of the Boys Town Village Christmas tree.

In addition to his primary duties with the Fire Department, Sing was the Director of Safety for Boys Town. He was recognized across the state of Nebraska as a leader in the fire protection community.

Sing is survived by his wife of 48 years, Sharon (Lee) Sing; children, Jamie McCarty (Todd) and Jason Sing (Tymaree); and his grandchildren: Daniel, Colton, Caleb, Simone, Isabel, Iyla and Londyn.

**JOHN J. ANTHONY, D'43**, passed away on June 13, 2018, in Lincoln, Missouri.

**KENNETH ARNOLD BURKE, D'45**, passed away on February 1, 2018, in Normandy Park, Washington.

**WALTER E. NIERZWICKI, '45**, passed away on July 28, 2018, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Nierzwicki was a Lifetime Member of the BTNAA.

**ROBERT DANIEL MOWERY, D'47**, passed away on August 20, 2017, in Arcadia, California. Mowery was a Lifetime Member of the BTNAA.

**GERALD RIEPER, '48**, passed away on May 1, 2018, in Santa Ana, California. Rieper was a Lifetime Member of the BTNAA.

**ARTHUR M. "ART" PALRANG, MD, '51**, passed away on December 12, 2019, in Tucson, Arizona. Palrang was a Lifetime Member of the BTNAA.

**JOSEPH ANTHONY, D'54**, passed away on August 27, 2019, in Frisco, Texas.

**RICHARD BADILLO, '56**, passed away on December 12, 2019, in Rowland Heights, California.

**JAMES LEO BOLITA, '57**, passed away on November 10, 2019, in Omaha, Nebraska. Bolita was a Lifetime Member of the BTNAA.

**JAMES WALTER MEANS, D'59**, passed away on May 21, 2019, in Vacaville, California.

**THOMAS J. CHESIRE, '60**, passed away on January 9, 2020, in Victorville, California. Chesire was a Lifetime Member of the BTNAA.

**WILLIAM D. MORGAN, '61**, passed away on December 21, 2019, in Hastings, Nebraska.

**WALTER S. CAZJKOWSKI, '70**, passed away on February 21, 2019, in Denver, Colorado.

**FREDRICK D. THOMAS, D'91**, passed away on January 7, 2020, in the state of Washington.

**RAHEEM HUNTER, '99**, passed away on January 30, 2020, in Columbus, Georgia.

## FROM TONY JONES



### Welcome to the new **Boys Town Nation!**

I hope all of you enjoy this new adaptation of the Alumni News. Last fall, our Alumni News editor, Brent Robinson, approached me about looking at a new design for the quarterly newsletter. In today's modern world, with all the technology we have, he suggested we utilize the publication as a way to still get our message out, but drive people to our website, [www.boystownalumni.org](http://www.boystownalumni.org).

Full-length content of stories and up-to-date information will be available at the website night and day, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Boys Town Nation will give you shorter versions of this information along with a timely feature story and letters from Father Boes, myself and BTNAA President Phil Dauterive, throughout the year on a rotating basis.

We hope you enjoy this new look as we move into the 2020 decade. Exciting times lie ahead, starting with our Mini-Reunion in New Orleans this summer.

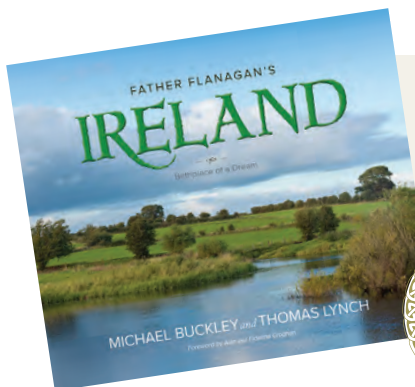
Your Boys Town Brother,

Tony Jones, '88  
Alumni Director

## Father Flanagan Sainthood Update

On Sept 17, 2019, Archbishop George J. Lucas of the Omaha Archdiocese announced another milestone on the road to sainthood for Father Edward Flanagan. Reading a letter from the Holy See in Rome, he stated that beginning Oct 22, 2019, "...the Position on the Heroic Virtues of the Servant of God will be evaluated by the Historical Consultors of the Dicasterio..." Such notification means the Catholic Church will now officially evaluate the cause for sainthood for Father Flanagan and make recommendations to the Pope on whether to proceed to next steps.

The formal beginning of the sainthood cause began on March 17, 2012, when the Archdiocese of



## Father Flanagan Photo Book Available Soon

Boys Town photographer Michael Buckley and Hall of History Director Thomas Lynch have co-authored a fascinating and revealing new book about Father Flanagan.

*Father Flanagan's Ireland: Birthplace of a Dream* is a photographic journey through the lush landscapes and ancient edifices that shaped the great priest's early life. Available in March from [www.BoysTownPress.org](http://www.BoysTownPress.org).



Omaha proclaimed Father Flanagan as "Servant of God." The cause is now in the Roman phase which requires formal review by the Holy See on the documentation of his life, his work and his heroic virtue. If successful, this review would designate him as "Venerable."

The final steps are Beatification and Canonization which require documentation of at least one miracle. The Catholic Church's criteria for a miracle is very strict. It requires prayers directly to Father

Flanagan to intercede with God in order to restore a person's life or health. Father Flanagan's immense positive impact on Boys Town Alumni and other children is evidence of his heroic virtue but does not necessarily meet the church's criteria for miracles.

The cause began in 2000 when a group of alumni, including Steve Wolf and Omaha Catholics, formed a sainthood group. The group known as the Father Flanagan League Society of Devotion became a registered 501(c)3 not for profit in 2010. The League's sole

purpose is to promote the sainthood of Father Flanagan.

Currently, the League is working to raise funds to develop a documentary of Father Flanagan's life to air nationally on network and educational TV. Alumni who want more information on the cause or who would like to donate should go online at [www.fatherflanagan.org](http://www.fatherflanagan.org) or go on Facebook to the Father Edward J. Flanagan "go fund me" campaign. Donations should go to the Father Flanagan League Society of Devotion as the League has no formal affiliation with Boys Town.