

WE ARE

BOYS TOWN NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

BOYS TOWN NATIONAL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION®

WINTER 2022 Volume 61, Issue 2

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FROM FATHER BOES

PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEAR ALUMNI,

The Holidays at Boys Town are a very special time of year. It is special because of our youth. From young to old, we are one large family. And, because many of our students may have missed out on traditional family Holiday celebrations in the past, it is a highlight of the year for everyone to join together and enjoy this special time. For our Christian kids, this means celebrating Christmas, and for our Jewish kids, Hanukkah. For all our kids, this means opening gifts beneath a lighted Christmas tree.

There is a uniqueness to the Holiday celebration here at Boys Town. Because we are a Village, we can transport ourselves back to the days when small towns celebrated the Holidays in a way that involved everyone.

In the past, Servant of God Edward J. Flanagan celebrated the traditions of the Twelfth Night or the twelve days of Christmas, concluding with the crowning of a "St. Wenceslaus," who was King for a Day. These days, our tradition is to have the kids star in a production of the play, "Gift of the Magi," by O. Henry that is attended by the whole community. Afterwards, everyone greets Santa, who arrives by Boys Town Fire Truck, and we share hot chocolate and cookies at the Great Hall. Please pray for snow, because that makes it really special!

This is my 17th Christmas at Boys Town and I look forward with the same sense of deep tradition, started by Father Flanagan, to the celebration of this holy time. I find the sense of family especially strong, and much credit goes to our dedicated Family-Teachers®. I encourage each of you to reach out to the staff that helped you have a wonderful Christmas at Boys Town and thank them, if you can, for the joy they brought into your lives. It means a lot for them to get that phone call, email or letter from the past to let them know you are thinking of them.

During this Christmas season, I pray that the joy of welcoming the infant Jesus will fill your homes with love and peace. I ask that you pray for our girls and boys. For many, this will be the first time they have experienced a Christmas without anger, violence, abuse or abandonment. They need your prayers. Make the time during this season to do something special for someone else. Find a way to give a gift of hope to someone in need.

I ask our Good Lord to bless you and your family and to watch over you throughout the coming year.

Merry Christmas,

Father Steven E. Boes
President and National Executive Director

AROUND THE 'TOWN AND THE Nation...

Boys Town Successful Futures Program Off to a Great Start

Boys Town's Successful Futures program is off to a great start with high participation rates among graduates from the 2022 class.

With a strong focus on senior planning, proactive support and workforce development, Successful Futures provides an invaluable resource for young adults as they transition to their new levels of independence.

Through the Family Home Program, Boys Town prepares students both in the family setting and in school with its senior planning. In cooperation with Youth Care, Successful Futures specialists guide and support the decision-making process on post-graduation plans, such as education or skilled employment, and transition to independent living.

After graduation, Trade Life Services extends family-style support and teaching for a successful transition to independent living and skilled employment or continuing education. Boys Town youth can apply for the service in their senior year or be invited to apply after graduation.

Housing Services at the Hilltop Apartments are a resource that supports Family Home Program graduates, ages 17 to 21, through safe and affordable housing, applied life-skills training, and independent-living skills coaching to facilitate the transition into actual independent living.

Thank you, Alumni and Friends

The Boys Town National Alumni Association® (BTNAA) strives to give back to Boys Town in ways that will meet the needs of today and continue to meet those needs into the future.

The Concession Stand Project was a success because of the generous support from alumni, friends and family. This long overdue update is an incredible contribution to Boys Town's campus and will serve youth, staff and sports fans for many years to come. The new concession stand is twice the size of the previous building, equipped with a popcorn popper, hot dog machine, and TV, with plenty of room for additional appliances in the future. This building will be the perfect hub for volunteers and is a welcome sight in the Alumni Sports Pavilion.

Thank you for your generous support in this project, and your willingness to continue contributing to this special place that has given so many of us a second chance. Please reach out to the Boys Town Alumni Office or a BTNAA Board Member regarding future project ideas and other ways we could collectively give back to Boys Town. **Go Cowboys!**



— THE BOYS TOWN ALUMNI OFFICE

At the end of August, the Successful Futures staff found that 42 of 48 2022 Boys Town High School graduates were doing what they had reported as their original senior plan that was discussed the February before they graduated.

The results have been encouraging. We will continue to keep you updated as this exciting new venture continues.

Work Continues on Education Center

The Boys Town Education Center is on schedule to open in August 2023. This innovative complex will house all Boys Town students, grades 4 through 12, and provide the

setting for the transformative work our students and teachers do each day and allow for the ongoing development and learning that can be used in schools and classrooms throughout the country.

Boys Town students will now have the opportunity to attend a state-of-the-art education center with cutting-edge science laboratories, a multilevel media center, modern-day technology and enriching learning environments.

» Scan the QR code to stay in the know on building progress from now until the Grand Opening!



"A life without discipline is like a ship without a rudder. It is subject to every whim. Contentment comes from knowing what to do and in doing it."

— FATHER EDWARD J. FLANAGAN



Visit us online at boystownalumni.org for story updates, In Memoriam, and more Boys Town Nation.



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Boys Town Helps Youth Find Her Way, Become a Success in Medical Field and Life

A *s a youth, finding your way can be a challenge. Complicating that even more, finding your way through foster care, and without parents, can be life changing. For Carley (Kaufman) Rupert, it was both.*



Carley (Kaufman) Rupert, '07

But thanks to Boys Town, she was able to not only find her way, but also find the life stability she had been missing for much of her youth. And, thanks to supportive staff and teachers

who could help Carley pursue a nursing career she desired, today she is married with a beautiful family and a job she loves.

Carley grew up in Omaha but was placed into foster care when she was just 3 or 4 years old. With her mother battling illness and her father absent from her life, Carley moved around the “system” but was eventually reunited with her mom. Those were some of her happiest times, she said, but she still struggled.

Carley’s mother died at the young age of 43. Now, at just 14, Carley was without parents and without a place to call home. Her actions landed her in Boys Town’s Intervention and Assessment (I&A) program at Grand Island. It was a temporary placement, but it gave Carley a glimpse of what Boys Town’s mission was, and what it could possibly do for her.

It was there she first experienced the love and belonging Boys Town could offer. By this point, Carley, and those around her had struggled with her behaviors and unhealthy ways to cope. Her early placements

focused on her problematic behaviors but did not provide her help toward healing. This short but meaningful experience at Boys Town’s I&A stuck with her, and when she was given a choice for her next placement, Carley chose to move to Boys Town’s Home Campus and the Family Home Program.

The summer of 2005, Carley moved to Boys Town and was introduced to many new opportunities. She began to work through her trauma with the assistance of therapy and began to connect to many positive people. Carley experienced a sense of community and belonging at Boys Town that made her feel like she had finally found a home. Staff still share stories about how Carley showed leadership to housemates and modeled the program for others.

Carley then had a life-changing experience being enrolled in Boys Town’s Certified Nursing Assistant class. She said it was her first time taking something so seriously. She met an instructor,

Stevie Gass, who she grew close to, and Carley appreciated the firmness Stevie provided to help her make the right decisions.

The lessons learned within the course made her feel like a grown up, realizing she could carry the skills into her future. When meeting with her therapist, something clicked, and a deep desire set in for Carley to become a nurse. She shared these desires with her Family Home Consultant and Community Director, and she was encouraged to continue working hard within the program and Boys Town would be supportive of her continuing her education to make her dreams a reality.

After graduating from Boys Town in 2007, Carley began the nursing program at Nebraska Methodist College. Carley continued stopping

“My patient population often consists of people who others are done dealing with, very similar to the children of Boys Town, prior to coming there.”

— Carley (Kaufman) Rupert

SPOTLIGHT



Carley (Kaufman) Rupert with husband, Derek, daughter, Charlie, and son, Jack.

by Boys Town to share her success and progress with the program. Whether it was books, tuition or groceries, Boys Town continued to support Carley’s dreams and provided opportunity that has lasted into her years as an adult. Nothing about this journey was easy. She had hard days, at times wanting to give up, but the support and encouragement she received pushed her to complete the courses. Carley graduated with her BA of Nursing in May of 2012 and walked the stage debt free.

Carley has continued to shine in the nursing field the last 10 years, becoming a Director of Nursing by the age of 27. During this time as a director, she found herself drawn to helping more in the areas of wound care. Her interest and desire to heal the most complex, debilitating wounds led her to continue her education with the help from the Boys Town National Alumni Association Scholarship Fund. Within nine months she earned her Wound and Ostomy Certification and is a specialty nurse in that area.

“My patient population often consists of people who others are done dealing with, very similar to the children of Boys Town, prior to coming there,” she said. She enjoys showing love to her patients and

facing the challenges that come along with improving their lives.

Carley is married to Derek Rupert. They have a daughter, Charlie, 4, and a son, Jack, 2. She’s told her family all about the love and sense of family she received at Boys Town and how she’s been given so many opportunities that she can continue to be thankful for. She sees how her parenting style is influenced by her time at Boys Town and is thankful for the lessons and many skills she’s learned.

“Boys Town taught me so much,” Carley said. “I can’t tell you how appreciative I am for everything. And they are still helping me today.”

As a parent, she’s proud of the moments where she can teach her children to take time to work through big feelings rather than reacting right away. There’s always time to go back and work through the hard issues and choices later when we’re ready. She finds her abilities to work through tough details, while maintaining composure and being able to lead others as something she’s learned from her many mentors.

“So many times, people make bad choices in life,” she said. “Rather than burning the entire trail, you make the next right choice without losing progress in life.”



Holiday Memories

Throughout Boys Town's history, the best memories of Christmas come from the Home that Father Flanagan built. It's often a story that comes to life because of the efforts to make everyone feel welcome, especially during the Holiday season.

The more things change, the more they stay the same – especially at Christmas time. Many alumni have shared their warmest memories about Boys Town at Christmas. For some it was the food; for others the gifts, and for many it was the warmth of a home and friends. A few of these Christmas reflections from the past may jog your memories of the holiday homes at Boys Town.

BOYS TOWN, 1921 – *On their first Christmas at Overlook Farm (the present site of Boys Town, NE), 125 Boys of Father Flanagan's Boys Home celebrated Christmas in a temporary shelter. They were eagerly looking forward to the 1922 building project that would house 500 boys. Although poor equipment, inadequate facilities and lack of funds made the battle of caring for so many boys heartbreaking at times, Father Flanagan shared there would have been no jollier or happier crowd of boys to be found throughout the land.*

NORMAN, 1930 – *“My favorite memory was Christmas Dinner in 1929 with Father Flanagan at the table in the main hall... Back when we ate plenty of turkey and all other sorts of good stuff. It was a nice dinner; believe me it was.”*

ROBERT, 1943 – *“The thing I remember about Christmas was a tin of chocolates we'd always get from some company in Chicago. It never lasted very long as we never got too much chocolate in those days, but we always looked forward to it.”*

ALLAN, 1953 – *“I always remember Christmas at Boys Town. It started with Midnight Mass. It was only then that the lights were lit, and the decorations were unveiled. These were the happiest days of my life. God has been good to me, and I have done well because of what I learned at Boys Town.”*

DENNIS, 1965 – *“I remember the decorating competitions between cottages and apartments during the Twelve Days of Christmas celebration. We always thought we'd win, but never did. We'd also catch a movie every night, and then spend the rest of it playing cards and use the candy bars we were given as chips.”*



MARTY, 1978 – *“When you didn't have a chance to go home, they had a movie everyday and then a bonfire out in the field... They put a Boars Head up on the Music Hall for the 12 Days of Christmas.”*



STEVE, 1987 – *“Being from Texas, I always remembered looking forward to the snow. Since I was one of the biggest kids, I would usually get the job of shoveling when it piled up around Christmas time. Even though I wasn't Catholic, I loved going to Mass during Christmas to hear the choir sing. A large group singing in the chapel always sounded very pretty.”*



JANELLE, 2003 – *“My first year at Boys Town, I remember having a girl from Louisiana living with me. The first snow of the winter was a couple weeks before Christmas. Our Family-Teachers® woke us up at 2 a.m., as the snow was falling, for a snowball fight. It was the first time she had ever seen snow and kept rolling around and playing in it.”*

DEVIN, 2022 – *“My favorite memory of Boys Town was coming together as a family and opening presents with everyone. We had a good time.”*

TYLER, 2022 – *“Boys Town Christmas is so special because some kids back at home had never had the opportunity to receive presents. It is also something amazing because it shows a sense of family, love and care.”*



FROM
RICH TAPIO

BTNAA PRESIDENT

DEAR ALUMNI,

I wish you a very Merry Christmas and holiday season on behalf of the Boys Town National Alumni Association Board of Directors.

A special Merry Christmas to all our Alumni service men and women serving around the world on land, in the air and at sea.

2022 has been a remarkably busy year for the Alumni Association, with much to reflect on: Coming out of COVID restrictions; planning for an off-year reunion this last July; construction of the new Boys Town Concession Stand at the sport complex, a new school rising from the foundations of our old high school and reengagement with one another as alumni and family. We are indebted to you for your continuing support and contributions to the BTNAA which makes our success possible.

Christmas and the Holidays mean so many different things to many of us as alumni whether we are from my generation in the mid-60s or the 70s, 80s, 90s and into the new century. But of all the memories we share, it must be the peace and beauty that surrounded us during our time at Boys Town when the Christmas season came upon us. I remember the snow deep and even across the campus, Dowd Chapel with its soft glow, the songs coming forth from our wonderful Boys Town Choir, and the Twelve Days of Christmas. As alumni I am sure we all carry a bit of this with us to this day.

During this holy season, please remember the folks in our communities that may not have the means to enjoy all the trappings of a warm holiday season. One of the ways that we as alumni can respond to this is through our local food banks. This one kind act can bring forth such joy to a family so that their Christmas table is set.

Over 100 years ago a young priest opened a door and what came forth reflects who we are. Men and Women of Boys Town.

So, during this holiday season please hold your family and friends close. Celebrate the season as we know the young men and women of Boys Town will do on campus. The BTNAA is warmly thinking of each of you and wishing you and your family an extra measure of comfort, joy and hope this Christmas.

Rich Tapio

Rich Tapio, D'67, President