




#### ALUMNI MISSION:

We exist to unite and grow our alumni family, and champion the dream and values of Father Flanagan through leadership.

#### IN THIS ISSUE:

From the Executive Director .....	2
Boyd-Johnson, '91, Alumni Profile...	2
Russell Excels .....	3
Mini-Reunion Memories.....	4-5



President's Letter.....	6
Senior Advisor's Letter.....	6
Auxiliary President's Letter.....	6
Missing Classmates.....	7
In Loving Memory.....	7
Board Reorganization .....	8

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*"Having a definite purpose or aim makes it possible for us to live more fully in the present. Only by doing the task immediately before us are we able to reach our objective. The person who dwells in the past, like the person who lives too much in the future, gets little done. He misses the significance of the present."*  
– Father Edward J. Flanagan



# ALUMNI NEWS

Boys Town National Alumni Association®

Fall 2016 – Volume 55, Issue 3

## Boys Town New England Hosts Alumni Mini-Reunion

Alumni from as far away as Seattle converged on New England to take part in the fourth Boys Town National Alumni Association®-sponsored Mini-Reunion to be held at a Boys Town campus outside of Omaha. Our hosts at the Boys Town New England campus in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, welcomed us with open arms.

Several alumni took the opportunity to make a family vacation out of the trip with side trips to places like Niagara Falls, Canada, and lakes in Upstate New York as they drove to the reunion. Others took in the sights of the historic Boston area, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

The BTNAA Board of directors arrived a day early and prepared themselves for an historic meeting where major changes were approved to restructure the composition of the board. (See separate article on page 8.)

Thursday night saw the early arrivals gather for what was to be, for many, a weekend of seafood heaven in an area well known for lobster and ocean fish. That, however, didn't deter a hardy band from striking out to enjoy pizza at a famous local restaurant – you can only eat so much seafood!

Registration began on Friday afternoon and old friends and classmates were once again together to share their memories of Boys Town and to make new ones. The BTNAA Auxiliary registration team of Lisa and Mary Abare, Ruby Fisher and Alex ('89) and Curtis Fischer-Oelschlaeger helped to make the arrival of more than 26 alumni and their families smooth and seamless. Each attendee received a welcome bag and a special t-shirt, designed and donated by 1964 alumnus Raul Parra, as they registered for the weekend.

Everyone gathered together for a delicious welcome buffet and an evening of fellowship and fun at Whites' of Westport, right next to the Hampton Inn where everyone was staying. The evening was kicked off with a benediction led by the Rev. Dr. Max Rittgers,



Boys Town New England Executive Director Bill Reardon accepts a \$1,000 check from the BTNAA.

'56, from Chiefland, Florida. Following the benediction, welcoming remarks were given by John Abare, '81, President of the BTNAA, who shared with the attendees the outcome of the board of directors meeting held earlier that day. Bill Reardon, Boys Town New England Executive

Director, then welcomed those in attendance. He also gave a short overview of the programs of care they managed for the New England area and let everyone know that the staff and youth of the campus were excited to be hosting this Mini-Reunion. Reardon was followed by Father Steven Boes, National Executive Director of Boys Town, who outlined the many activities and programs provided at Boys Town. He also shared with everyone plans for the upcoming celebration of Boys Town's 100th Anniversary that will be kicked off in October at the Boys Town campus. In addition, he gave an update on the state of child care in our country and shared what Boys Town is doing to effect change at a national level. It was an informative kick-off to the reunion weekend.

Friday was a rainy day and it looked like Saturday's picnic might be beset with foul weather, but Saturday morning broke with bright sunshine, clear skies and a balmy day for the event. Many suggested Servant of God Father Flanagan was once again watching over his Boys Town kids!

Everyone gathered at the hotel on Saturday morning and headed to the Boys Town New England campus in caravan. For most, it was the first time they had been to the campus and they were stunned by the beauty and peacefulness of the environment. The Boys Town New England campus sits on an 18-acre piece of property on the shores of the reservoir that provides water for the city of Portsmouth and across the street from a huge Raytheon plant that supports naval activities. Once you turn on to the Boys Town campus, you are met with a wide vista of beautiful homes and Revolutionary War-era stone fences made of stacked slate. It is as though you have been



## From the Executive Director

Dear Alumni,

Fall is upon us and we welcome the sounds of football practice, the Pep Band practicing for the big games ahead and the happy chatter of students walking to school. What a great time of year to be at Boys Town!

We have new students who replaced those who graduated last spring or left over the summer and they are settling into their new lives at Boys Town. The transition struggle for them is real but they have made a commitment to improve their lives and I'm pleased to say that they are adapting to the Boys Town program quite nicely. Our new seniors are looking forward to becoming alumni in about nine months and they will be working hard over the coming year to become the 100th-Anniversary graduating class – what a distinct honor for them and for all of us.

I had a wonderful time at the BTNAA Mini-Reunion at our Boys Town New England campus. As usual, the staff and youth rolled out the welcome mat and made everyone feel at home. Thank you to the staff of Boys Town New England and to the Convention Committee for setting up this memorable event.

The work your BTNAA Board has undertaken to make your association viable long into the future is the kind of leadership and foresight you should expect of them. They are to be commended for not taking the easy path of the status quo and for recognizing there needs to be an inclusive leadership structure in place that will provide for the future of the BTNAA.

Many of you have seen the articles about the sale of the west farm property in news reports. This effort has been underway for more than a decade and was developed as part of the strategic plan for Boys Town's future. In preparation, we moved all of the farm operations that were at the west farm to the southeast farm, just to the west of 132nd Street (the

old horse farm). The kids have been working there for several years now in preparation for the eventual sale of the property and it is working out nicely.

The sale of the property, one of the most highly sought-after pieces of real estate in the state of Nebraska, will allow us to continue to fund and expand our treatment programs throughout the country. With the sale, Boys Town's property will remain one full section of land (640 acres or a square mile) that is the Village of Boys Town.

When Father Flanagan bought Overlook Farm, it was only a quarter section (160 acres) at the corner of 144th and Dodge Streets. Boys Town expanded to over 1,200 acres over the years when the area was primarily agricultural, and during subsequent times, sold off land to the north and west when needed to continue to fund and expand Boys Town's program of care to meet the needs of the time. The Village of Boys Town, a National Historic District, will remain an inspiration to generations of Americans to come as we continue our mission of caring for children and families.

We'll be sending you information about events and activities over the next year as we enter a year-long celebration of our 100th Anniversary. Don't forget to attend our 33rd Biennial Convention, July 11-16, 2017, at Boys Town. Your BTNAA Convention Committee is planning a great and expanded reunion for you.

Please keep our kids and our dedicated staff in your prayers as they work hard to provide healing and hope.

God's Blessings on you and your families,

Father Steven E. Boes  
National Executive Director

Boys Town National Alumni Association®

## ALUMNI NEWS

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## Alumni Profile

# Stephanie Boyd-Johnson, '91

Stephanie Boyd-Johnson, '91, took the unconventional and historic route to Boys Town.

She was a runaway from a very difficult home situation and after seeing the Boys Town movie on television, decided that Boys Town was for her.

"I thought I would give it a try in the hopes that I could get a new life start – to get to have an opportunity to survive," she said. "I remember when I showed up at Boys Town on a Friday afternoon, someone called Father (Val) Peter to tell him this girl (me) showed up looking for help. He came right over and we talked about what my life was like and what I was escaping. I'll never forget how he was a part of every step of my way in my journey at Boys Town. I still email him today!"

Boyd-Johnson has fond memories of her Family-Teachers®, Ric and Trish Ariza. She tested them as she worked through her anger, but the Arizas never gave up.

"Both of them were the most patient, honest people I had ever met and they never stopped believing there was a good kid underneath just waiting to grow," Boyd-Johnson said.

She continues to use her Boys Town skills in all aspects of her life.

"Simple things like having a confident



Boyd-Johnson, '91

handshake have been useful to me in business," she said. "The ability to say 'OK' or how to respectfully disagree has won me praise from bosses I have worked for over the years. Coping skills are always good to have – I have used them a lot over the years."

Boyd-Johnson's life has been filled with twists and turns. She has been an artist and has spent time as a photographer and hairdresser. She was married but became trapped in an abusive relationship for many years. She finally broke free of the abuse only to be challenged with breast cancer at the age of 38.

She is now focused on her education and applied for and was awarded the Erin Tierney Kramp Scholarship in the Dallas Community College District to complete her community college education. This scholarship is awarded to students who have overcome tremendous personal challenges.

"Once I got through breast cancer, I knew I had to pursue my dream – it wasn't going to sit there and just wait for me," Boyd-Johnson said.

She has big plans for her future and is confident she can achieve her goals.

*See 'Boyd-Johnson' page 7*

# Boys Town Helps Russell Find Her Way After Difficult Times

*This story appeared July 11, 2016 (Reprinted with permission) in the Lincoln Journal-Star.*

Sirens startled the young partygoers that hot spring afternoon.

Mikahla Russell knew the sound of police sirens. These weren't police sirens.

The 8-year-old stuck her head out the window of her friend's Lincoln apartment, where she was attending a birthday party. Down the street, a fire truck pulled up to her apartment building.

She could see her mother standing outside beside her two younger sisters and brother – but not her youngest brother. She knew something was wrong.

She ran down the apartment's stairs, out into the street and to her mom.

"Where's Jordan?" she asked.

Her mother, who was drunk, didn't answer and didn't even seem to remember her children's names.

Mikahla ran to a firefighter and tugged on his coat. "There's someone else in there," she said. He told her the apartment was empty.

Without a second thought, Mikahla ran inside.

She could see smoke from underneath her mother's door. She ran into the back bedroom and found her little brother, still asleep in his crib, buried under some blankets and stuffed animals.

She grabbed him and ran back outside, into an uncertain future.

\*\*\*

Mikahla can finally tell her own story.

For most of her life, the 18-year-old has listened as others have shared the details of her life in courtrooms. She's had to listen as they inform her where she'll be living next.

First removed from her mother's home at the age of 1, Mikahla estimates she's been moved 40 to 50 times in her life, both by the state and by her mother.

She'll soon be able to decide for herself where to go next.

And, boy, does she have plans.

In May she graduated from Boys Town, where she spent most of the previous five years.

At a year-end booster banquet, Mikahla received four awards, including one for outstanding female athlete of the year and most outstanding player in volleyball, basketball and track.

Sports taught her leadership and discipline and gave her the eloquence to speak for herself, she said.

While at Boys Town she broke three school records in shot put and discus, including two of her own, and three records in volleyball – for single blocks, double blocks and attacks.

She also led the small schools in the Omaha area this past year in rebounding in basketball.

But her greatest accomplishment, she said, was becoming the first in her family to graduate from high school.



Mikahla Russell, '16

In May, she joined 86 other graduates from across the world walking across the stage at the Boys Town Music Hall.

When the ceremony was complete, news reporters stuck cameras and voice recorders in her face and asked her to share her story. Later, friends and teachers gave her gifts and hugs.

"It was really like overwhelming but an exciting overwhelming," she said.

But it was also a sad day as she reflected on her past life and on a future away from the place she had come to know as home.

\*\*\*

The oldest of her five siblings, Mikahla often had to be the parent as her own mother went to jail, got out and went back again.

Even when her mom was home, she was often too drunk or high to take care of her children.

"It kind of left me to take care of them," she said.

Mikahla would have to ask neighbors for food.

Her family would move into neighbors' homes, live with relatives or her mother's friends. Her younger brothers and sisters suffered from malnutrition at times and often would walk around without shoes or clothes that fit.

Then her apartment caught fire.

Her 4-year-old brother had started the fire while playing with a lighter he had learned to use by watching his mother.

The day of the fire wouldn't be the last time in her mother's home, but a few months later the police arrived and removed the children for good. "All of us kids were crying, and we couldn't do anything about it," she said.

Eventually, all her younger brothers and sisters found permanent homes – everyone but Mikahla, who had begun demonstrating behavior problems.

Stealing, lying and being disruptive led to her being moved around over and over.

"I tried to push every limit that I could," she said.

She knows now she was angry at not having been adopted, angry at having her childhood stolen from her. But even deeper than that, she was hurt and scared to let someone else in to her circle only to see them leave again.

So she built walls to protect herself, and in doing so ensured no one would get too close.

Eventually, her behavior led her to Boys Town.

\*\*\*

It must have been raining.

She knows because later that day she said to her caseworker and foster mother: "All sad things happen on rainy days."

Around 3 p.m. that day in July 2010, her caseworker arrived at her foster family's home in Wahoo.

Mikahla could see the caseworker and her foster mother, Jayne, speaking in the kitchen. Jayne was crying and her face was red.

Her caseworker delivered the news. Mikahla would go to Boys Town.

Mikahla pleaded with the women to let her stay and promised to be better. She didn't want to leave her younger sister, who was still living in the same home.

"I can do better this time," she told them tearfully.

Two days later, Mikahla packed her belongings and went to visit her younger sister at her daycare center for the very last time.

The drive to Boys Town was a long one.

"I thought it was something much worse, like I was going to be sent to a little jail or Geneva or something like that," she said, referring to the Geneva Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center. "I knew nothing about Boys Town."

Despite her misgivings, she was welcomed warmly. Strangers shook her hand and smiled, and girls she'd be living with sat with her at a dining room table and told her their stories.

"It was a good first day."

\*\*\*

Mikahla's road to redemption was a long one, and she can't say exactly when or how it began.

It was an incremental process, fed by the long talks she would have with her house parents and her love of sports.

She knows at some point she started listening. She listened to the teachers who told her she could use her past experiences to forge a brighter future.

She listened to the ministers who shared biblical stories with her, stories that eventually began to ring true.

And she listened to those who told her to let go and let God take over. She began to realize how poor her own choices had been.

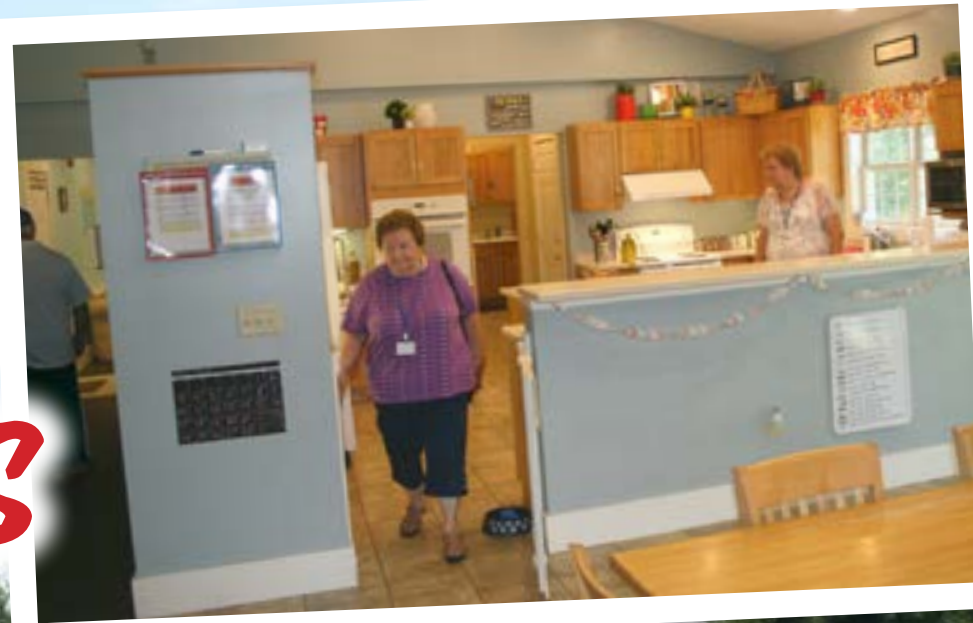
"You can't have control over everything," she said. "You can't fix everything."

After nearly a year at Boys Town, she moved in with house parents Roberto and Leslie Lucero-

*See 'Russell' page 8*



# 2016 New England Mini-Reunion Memories








## From the BTNAA President

Brothers and Sisters,  
What an incredible Mini-Reunion we had in Rhode Island! We had a rather small but quaint group of alumni who were welcomed by an incredible staff at the New England Boys Town campus. We enjoyed a great tour from the students and had a wonderful picnic getting to know everyone.  
During our face-to-face board meeting, we were able to hammer out all of the fine points of the board restructuring. We are in the process of getting everything together now to present to you at our 2017 Biennial Convention.  
Speaking of the convention, remember that our dates will be July 11-16, 2017. The change in dates allows us to work in unison with the Home to fully benefit from all of the things planned for the 100th Anniversary of Boys Town. We are expanding the original convention by adding several different activities, some of which will include an event with the students and the Family-Teachers®. If you recall, last year the board voted to give all currently employed Family-Teachers a complementary BTNAA membership for the duration of their employment in that position. The intention was to engage with the Family-Teachers who interact with the students (the future of our Association) and maintain communications with them after they graduate. We welcome the Family-Teachers

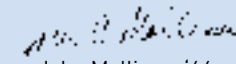
into our Association, look forward to building our relationship with them and hope they will remain members long after they have finished their jobs at Boys Town.  
If you haven't been to our new and exciting website, I encourage you to do so. While we have some things to update, the site is incredibly interactive and is packed with great information. The address is [www.boystownalumni.org](http://www.boystownalumni.org). The database is extensive and should prove to be a great tool in connecting with some of your old friends.  
In closing, I would like to ask each of you to consider inviting an old classmate or perhaps a newer alum to join us for the 2017 convention and centennial celebration. Let's make this the most incredible convention to date. If you know of someone who would like to attend but face circumstances that make it difficult, please contact us at the Alumni Office and perhaps we can see what we can do to help out.  
Thanks and God Bless.

  
John Abare, '81  
BTNAA President



## From the Senior Advisor for Alumni Matters

We tip our hats to the great folks at Boys Town New England for showing us a great time during our Mini-Reunion at the end of July. The campus looked great, the youth and staff were welcoming and New England in July is the place to be. What we found there was a program of care that helps children and families heal and is a great and wonderful asset to their community. We'll have fond memories for years to come of the fellowship with the youth during the tours of their homes and during the family picnic on Saturday.  
Now is the time to start planning your trip to Boys Town in July 2017 for the 33rd Biennial convention and for the alumni celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of Boys Town. It is not too early to begin planning and saving up for the trip. The Convention/Boys Town family reunion will begin on July 11 and run through July 16. Your BTNAA Convention Committee is hard at work planning a very special reunion that will center around Father Flanagan's birthday on July 13. We are encouraging you and your classmates to make this the once-in-a-lifetime trip you shouldn't miss. Get your classes and cottages/homes together and come back home for this very special reunion. Don't put it off until the last minute! We hope to see you next summer when we all come home to celebrate.  
The new alumni website is up and running and I encourage you to log on to our "window on our world" to see what is going on with classmates and friends. There is a lot of information and ways to communicate on the website so I hope to see/hear from everyone as you experience the new alumni website.  
Your board of directors is going to be hard at work over the next year to put into place the newly approved

board structure for the future of the BTNAA. They are to be commended for their vision and foresight in developing a board structure that is designed to be more inclusive of all generations of alumni.  
Membership in the BTNAA has been for many years the main ingredient in helping to keep the association active and thriving. The costs for membership have been kept purposely affordable for decades and remain so. I am asking you to think long and hard about becoming a member if you have not been in the past, or your membership has lapsed. We want you as part of this great association! We want you to have a voice in your BTNAA! On our new website, joining has become very easy. You can join safely and securely online and you will immediately be activated as a member. Additionally, the website will notify you each year when your annual dues are coming up for renewal. I highly recommend you consider becoming a Lifetime Member of the BTNAA. The price is right and you won't ever have to worry about letting your membership lapse. We are waiting for you with open arms.  
Give us a call, email us or give us feedback on the alumni website to let us know how we can best serve you as Boys Town alumni.  
Your Boys Town Brother,  
  
John Mollison, '64  
Senior Advisor for Alumni Matters



## From the Auxiliary President

What a great time we had at the Mini-Reunion in Rhode Island with everyone! It was great seeing all of you! I am so excited for the new things that Boys Town has done for the boys and girls. I love attending these reunions so I can learn more about the programs that provide care and healing for so many kids and families.  
There isn't much new happening on the auxiliary front at the moment but we will be picking up the pace soon. We are looking forward to celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Boys Town with all of our brothers and sisters in 2017.  
The biggest contribution we can make to the Alumni Association is our presence and support during the convention. I encourage all of you spouses and family members of alumni to join us for what will be an incredible week.  
One of our key fundraisers is, of course, our silent auction. In the past we have had some incredible items to be auctioned off, and I am sure that next year will be no different. If you have something in mind, please let me know so we can get it on the billing. It's never too early to start planning for this. If you are not sure about an item, again, let us know and we can talk about it.

Thank you again and I look forward to seeing you next summer.  
  
Mary Emily Abare  
President  
BTNAA Auxiliary

## Convention (continued from page 1)

transported away from the very busy world just a few hundred feet away. The Boys Town New England campus was donated by the Bazarsky family with the intent it be used as a place where children receive help. The site celebrated its 25th anniversary this year.  
Boys Town New England has five Family Homes that serve adolescents and young children at its Bazarsky Campus. The site also offers Foster Family Services, In-Home Family Services and Community Support Services. For children who have completed Boys Town New England out-of-home programs, Reunification Services are available to help them make a smooth transition back to their families and maintain and improve their treatment gains.  
The Boys Town New England staff kicked off the visit by gathering everyone under a huge picnic tent where Reardon and his staff presented a detailed view of the many programs they manage. Following the staff presentation, Abare presented Reardon and the Boys Town New England campus a check for \$1,000. Steve Postert, '69, treasurer of both the BTNAA and the BTNAA Scholarship Fund boards, made a pitch for the Boys Town New England youth to consider applying for financial assistance for their educational needs after leaving Boys Town. Youth at the Boys Town New England campus have already been the recipients of an annual \$1,000 cash award to a graduating senior.

## Boyd-Johnson (continued from page 2)

"Obviously, the big one is to get my bachelor's degree," Boyd-Johnson said. "I'm currently at community college doing the core work. I'm hoping to get to transfer to SMU (Southern Methodist University) in Dallas for my last two years. They have a recognized, outstanding fine arts program that I would be completely honored to get to be a part of."  
Boyd-Johnson has remarried and has two grown sons, 21 and 18. The youngest is planning to major in computer science and programming at the University of North Texas. Her oldest son works

After the presentation, everyone broke off into smaller groups and the Family-Teachers and youth led tours of the beautiful and spacious homes in which they reside. The youth were excited to share their stories and their dreams and hopes for a new future. Each youth was proud to show their rooms and explain how each of them has specific responsibilities in the day-to-day chores while living together.  
After the tours, everyone reconvened at the picnic tent for a catered meal of Italian favorites and light sandwiches. Alumni, staff and youth spent time meeting each other and sharing stories of the past and present. It was as though everyone was old friends.  
Following the meal, Father Boes celebrated an outdoor Mass. Communion was served to the Catholics in attendance and with a final blessing from Father Boes, everyone said their farewell to the Boys Town New England campus.  
On Sunday morning, everyone gathered for breakfast at the hotel and to say their goodbyes. It was another rewarding and fulfilling BTNAA family reunion. Promises to see each other again in one year at the Boys Town campus to celebrate the Centennial reunion were made.  
Many thanks are due to the leadership and staff of the Boys Town New England campus for hosting such a successful event.

and is also a creative person. Boyd-Johnson and her husband, Jake, live and work in the art and music district of Dallas.  
"We're urban dwellers and love our walkable community," she said. "We have one adopted dog who rules our life. Outside of work, I enjoy being a part of my community. I enjoy live music and going to galleries and art shows."  
Boyd-Johnson says she and her husband enjoy trying new foods and she enjoys cooking with him.

## Classmate Search – Looking for Missing Members of the 25- and 50-Year Reunion Classes

<b>1966</b> Armando Almanzan James Anquoe Luis Bernal David Calderon Douglas Charlie Thomas James Gerald Kline Julio Martinez John Mccaffrey John Mcgrath George McIntyre Marten Moore John Myers John Novario Thomas Podgorny James Schutt John Smith	<b>1967</b> Raymond Allen David Delucantonio Richard Dickey Duane Jensen Erwin Johnson Lawrence Kennedy Raymond Kinney Raymond Menard Eddie Mendia John Novak Meron Solonyinka Levi Webster	<b>1967</b> Raymond Allen David Delucantonio Richard Dickey Duane Jensen Erwin Johnson Lawrence Kennedy Raymond Kinney Raymond Menard Eddie Mendia John Novak Meron Solonyinka Levi Webster	<b>1992</b> William Arias Sonya Baldwin Bemen Baptiste Amanda Boston Jason Brown Michael Brown	Lawton Collie Latoyin Davis Melissa Delehant-Ranney Alicia Eckert-Alexander Clifford Franklin Gabrelle Franklin Monte Haines Shamarr Holyfield Raymond Howell Risa Hulen Antoine Ingram Benjamin Johnson Thomas Keatts Theodore Keller Dawn Klineschmidt-Williams Lisa Ludwig Christopher Martin Rachel McKamy Cheryl Moffitt	Jason Myers Holly Nelsen-Zvolanek Mia Paradis-Berry Matthew Read Tanya Ream-McKinley Jennifer Schamp-Welch Nancy Springeman Melissa Stewart John Thompson Eugenio Venegas John Warren Darrell Wynne	Jeffrey Bundy Gina Collison Michael Compton Wayne Cummings La Keshia Finley Maureen Folts Heather Francisco Tammie Fredrick Gregg Harpin Lauren Hennessee Carla Jackson Michael Kowal Howard Lacy James Lopez Clarissa Martel Diablo Mcfarland Kimberly Mckeone Lori Means Greg Miller Juanita Montez	Jerry Morgan Clifford Nejo Mary Nelson Kermit Owens Elinair Petitphait Jamie Purcell Marie Riggins-Gilchrist Angela Ross-Thompson Subena Schmidt Krystal Schroder Kelly Sharrow Rex Smith Jack Turnbow Amber Vanstrom Shannon White Keith Williams Derrick Willis
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## In Loving Memory

<b>DONALD JOSEPH BURK, '50</b> , passed away on May 9, 2016, in Murrietta, California. Burk was a Lifetime Member of the Boys Town National Alumni Association and a longtime officer and member of the BTNAA Southern California Chapter.	Hall was a Lifetime Member of the Boys Town National Alumni Association.	<b>JAMES RUSSEL GALLEGOS, '62</b> , passed away on July 30, 2016, in Aurora, Colorado. Gallegos was a Lifetime Member of the Boys Town National Alumni Association.	<b>DARRIN "DUSTY" RUSSELL MCLEOD, D'91</b> , passed away on July 6, 2016, in Sarasota, Florida.
<b>JOHN THOMAS CAMPBELL, D'55</b> , passed away on April 19, 2016, in Holyoke, Massachusetts.	<b>RONALD JOSEPH LEIF, '56</b> , passed away on July 7, 2016, in St. Paul, Minnesota.	<b>ROBERT VINCENT BUCKLER, '68</b> , passed away on February 22, 2009, in Newton, Massachusetts.	<b>CLARENCE STEVENS</b> , brother of Father Clifford Stevens, '44, passed away on April 25, 2016, in Dallas, Oregon.
<b>HAROLD C. HALL, '55</b> , passed away on June 14, 2016, in Crossett, Arkansas.	<b>MICHAEL W. HUBERT, '58</b> , passed away on August 30, 2006, in Byron Center, Michigan. Hubert was a Lifetime Member of the Boys Town National Alumni Association.	<b>GARY WALTER MUHS, D'74</b> , passed away on August 4, 2016, in Orange, Florida.	<b>JEANNE BURNES</b> , widow of Tom Burnes, '50, passed away on June 28, 2016, in Omaha, Nebraska.
	<b>DONALD LYNDON MCKAMY, '59</b> , passed away on May 9, 2016, in Omaha, Nebraska.		

# BTNAA Board of Directors Looks to the Future with Restructure Proposal

The Boys Town National Alumni Association® Board of Directors made a far-reaching and bold decision during the 2015 Biennial Convention to restructure the composition of the board to better reflect the makeup of our current and future alumni constituency. The board directed the formation of a “Restructure Committee” to study and recommend various options to consider that would move the composition of the board from a geographically based representative board to one based on years of graduation or departure from Boys Town.

This committee, chaired by John Fox, '82, an at-large member of the board, began meeting to formulate a set of recommendations that would be given to the board for consideration during the face-to-face board meeting at the Mini-Reunion in Portsmouth, Rhode Island. The committee, comprised of



Father Boes meets with the Restructure Committee during Mini-Reunion.

alumni from all generations, developed proposals that were studied by each member of the committee. Then a consensus set of options was arrived at by surveying each member individually. The results of the survey were then consolidated and two primary options were presented to the board. The board of directors then debated and ultimately approved the options, which were turned over to the By-Laws Committee.

They are to be incorporated into the by-laws of the association for final approval by the board. They will then be communicated to the membership at the General Assembly scheduled during the 2017 Biennial Convention.

The following is a general overview of how the BTNAA Board of Directors will look after the recommendations are finalized by the By-Laws Committee.

## Current Board Structure

Eight regionally elected members and two appointed at-large positions for a total of ten voting board members.

**Region 1:** Central US

**Region 2:** Ohio Valley

**Region 3:** Northeast US

**Region 4:** Mid-Atlantic

**Region 5:** Southeast

**Region 6:** Southwest/Rocky Mountains

**Region 7:** Southern West Coast

**Region 8:** Pacific Northwest/Hawaii/Alaska

**At-Large:** Two appointed positions

## Previous Other Criteria for Board Membership:

1. Must be a dues-paying member
2. Nominated by Chapter or by five dues-paying members of the region
3. Elected by members of the appropriate region
4. Term of office is four years
5. Terms are staggered so only half of the board turns over every two years

## Future Board Structure

Ten elected and one appointed member for a total of eleven voting board members.

Membership by Years Post-Graduation/Departure:

5-15	One Member	36-45	Three Members
16-25	Two Members	45+	Two Members
26-35	Two Members	At-Large	One Member

## New Additional Criteria

1. Must have graduated or departed five years before becoming eligible to become a board member and be 21 years of age or older
2. Must be an active due-paying (annual or lifetime) member for at least two consecutive years and current with dues while on the board
3. Term of office will be four years
4. Terms will be staggered so only half of the board turns over every two years

*Note: By-Laws Committee will determine the exact process/procedure for nominating and electing a board member under this structure.*

## Russell [continued from page 3]

Miner. Their connection was almost immediate.

The couple taught her faith, talking with Mikahla each Sunday after church services about the sermon. Mikahla began reading the Bible and would read scripture late into the night.

One verse in particular, Jeremiah 29:11, has become an anthem to her: “‘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.’”

But even with the Lucero-Miners, Mikahla struggled at first. When she would misbehave at school, the couple would meet with her and tell her they loved her and there was nothing she could do to change that.

Others had said similar things to Mikahla, but the Lucero-Miners backed up their words. Rather than sending her to live with someone else when she acted out, they let her stay and even let Mikahla help watch their two daughters, who Mikahla now considers sisters.

When she refused to tell them what was wrong, the couple would sit for hours with her, waiting until she finally vented.

“I was able to take a deep breath and realize they weren’t going anywhere,” she said.

The couple had worn down her defenses, and Mikahla realized she was tired of fighting.

She tells her story while sitting beside Leslie Lucero-Miner at their dining room table at Boys Town.

Leslie Lucero-Miner reminds Mikahla to let herself be a kid, to stop taking on so many responsibilities.

When asked about Mikahla’s future, the two women become quiet. Leslie Lucero-Miner describes the squirrely eighth-grader she first met who was just starting to notice boys and the young woman she has become who taught Lucero-Miner’s daughter to walk using fruit snacks.

“We look at her as a daughter,” she said. “We have really loved having her.”

This fall, Mikahla will exchange her room at Boys Town for a dorm room at Doane University in Crete, where she’ll play volleyball and compete in track and field.

Her college tuition will be mostly paid through a variety of scholarships, including several from Boys Town, as well as sports and academic scholarships from Doane.

She plans to study nursing and hopes to one day join the Navy or attend law school. Maybe both, she said, because the future will be what she decides to make of it.

“I want to set myself up for so much success,” she said. “I want to help people.”