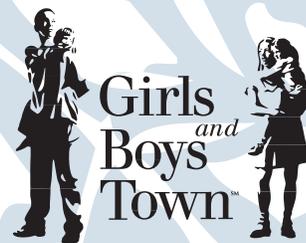




Alumni News

Winter 2002 – Volume 41, Issue 4

The Original Father Flanagan's Boys' Home



Girls
and
Boys
Town™

HELP • HEALING • HOPE

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters Alumni Recount Christmas Memories in Letters to Children

My brother and I came to the Home in 1929 after we lost our parents. It was about this time of the year and very hard to think of Christmas without my mom and dad. I was walking around the grounds and thinking of running away. But where would I go? Out of nowhere came Father Flanagan. He came up to me and said: "If you run away, Bernard dear, where would you go?" For a moment, I was speechless. All I could think of was this priest is reading my mind. I have never forgotten that moment, even though I am now 85 years old. - **Bernie Ament, 1933**

We celebrated midnight Mass that Christmas [1953] televised nationwide. I was chosen with some other small boys to play an angel before Mass started. There was a large, life-size manger set before the altar, and us angels, wings, halos and hands prayerfully held together in front, glided us to the manger and bowed to the Holy Family in reverence. Then we took a position on each side and stayed there during Holy Mass. My mother, who lived in Des Moines, went to a relative's house to watch us on television because we could not afford one. My first Christmas at Boys Town was the holiest Christmas of my young life ... Before Boys Town, I spent other Christmases locked up in juvenile homes. I came to know Jesus that night. - **Deacon Paul Eubanks, 1960**

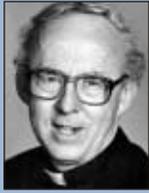
I spent six holiday seasons at Boys Town and each one was unique. I can't remember any of those seasons that didn't include snow. I can remember sledding down the hill in front of the chapel and what fun it was, we didn't mind the cold as we were young and full of energy. I can also remember the 12 days of Christmas, a function was planned for each day. Everyday included a movie (which in those days was a big deal). At the auditorium, where the movies were shown, I can remember a pig's head was hung over the entrance with the inscription either above or below which read "Boars Head Inn." Everyone pelted that head with snowballs until we gained entry into the facility. At the end of the 12th night we had a bonfire where all the Christmas trees were set ablaze. These are just a few of the memories that I will never forget, simple as they were at the time, they have significant meanings for me now. - **Larry Siebold, 1969**

Christmas was a wonderful, joyous time at Boys Town for me. It started off with the annual play *The Gift of the Magi* with all of my friends as the characters and afterward the lighting of the Christmas tree and cookies in the dining hall. After that night there was a more private celebration at home with my Family-Teachers and all the girls in my home. My FT's always found a way to make the holidays special for each and every one of us. Each year we went to see a movie and then had a special Christmas dinner. - **Mahrya Drummer, 1995**



This year Santa (an unidentified alumnus) and Mrs. Claus rode in on a fire truck to greet the children at the Christmas tree lighting ceremony.

Sweet Christmas Memories



Dear Alumni,

I wish you and your family a very, very Merry and Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. All the boys and girls and I will offer Mass next Sunday for your intentions asking the Infant Babe at Bethlehem to fill your lives with warmth and light and goodness of every kind.

Could you do the Home one very big favor? Write us a note and tell us your memories of the Christmas season you experienced at Girls and Boys Town. We want to share these with the boys and girls today and we would like to put them also in the Hall of History.

Also please pray for our boys and girls in this Christmas season. It's not easy for many of them. They need the light of the Lord to find joy in their lives.

May the Lord bless you and keep you through this whole season and into the New Year.

Sincerely yours,

Father Val J. Peter, JCD, STD
Executive Director

Reserve Your Brick Today Going Fast, Act Now!

Help build a beautiful, landscaped setting in which to place our Fr. Flanagan Statue.

A 4"x8" individual brick with your engraved name (2 lines, 14 characters per line) will cost \$50.00

An 8"x8" individual brick with your name (4 lines, 14 characters per line) will cost \$100.00

More than one brick may be purchased, but only one name is allowed on each brick. The same name can be used only once. **A limited number of bricks are available so contact the BTNAA now!**

1-800-345-0458

alumni@girlsandboystown.org

BTNAA, PO Box 2
Boys Town, NE 68010

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BOYS WILL BE BOYS

The memoir of Monsignor Francis Schmitt, *Boys Will Be Boys*, is still available! This story is a personal view of Boys Town as Msgr. Schmitt saw it through 36 years of his "boyhood."

It is the story of men, women and some of the boys, who along with a vast segment of a generous American public, made Boys Town a humanitarian icon.

This book can be purchased through the Boys Town National Alumni Office. The Hard Cover Edition is \$25 plus \$4 shipping, and the Soft Cover Edition is \$17 plus \$4 shipping. Mail checks or money orders to: BTNAA, P.O. Box 2, Boys Town, NE 68010.

No credit cards please.

The Mighty Cowboys

With 257 students from the high school and Wegner schools participating in the fall activities, Girls and Boys Town sports still create many lasting memories for the youth.

FOOTBALL

According to Athletic Director, Nolan Beyer, our varsity football team finished the season with 8 wins and 3 losses. For the fourth straight year the football team won the District Championship with an undefeated district record and for the sixth straight year the team qualified for the State Playoffs. They won their first two-playoff games before losing to Auburn in the third round of the playoffs. Seven players were named to the All District Team with four others receiving All District Honorable Mention. 28 players participated on the varsity roster with 75 players playing at the JV and Reserve level. Cheikh Fall, a senior was second in the state in tackles in our class. LaVell Smiley is expected to receive many post-season honors for his play at quarterback. Boys Town won the Homecoming game on October 4th vs. Valley High School by a score of 30 -7.

VOLLEYBALL

The girls volleyball team finished the season with a 5-15 record. 32 girls participated in volleyball this season, including seven seniors.

CROSS-COUNTRY

We had 31 youth out for cross-country. Top team finishes this year include the Nebraska City Invite in which the girls placed 2nd and the boys placed 3rd. At the Platteview Invite the boys finished 2nd and the girls finished third as a team. Kim Spencer has placed in the top 15 at every meet with the exception of one. On October 3rd we hosted the 12 team Boys Town Invite in which Dan Ocanto placed 15th in the boys race and Kim Spencer placed 9th in the girls race. The girls cross-country team qualified two girls for the state cross-country meet, Kim Spencer and Kayla Reynolds.

Athletic participation continues as the winter sports season begins. At this time, we have about 195 athletes out for winter sports. About 87 are out for boys' basketball, 51 for girls' basketball, and 57 in wrestling. We also have about 40 girls participating in the Flag Corp and 25 girls on the cheerleading squads.



The Girls and Boys Town Booster Club, a group of Omaha community leaders, presented a \$33,000 check to Father Peter, Dr. Dan Daly and other officials October 11 in support of Home Campus' athletic programs. For more than 40 years, the Boosters' have donated proceeds from the annual Booster Banquet to fund sports equipment, facility improvements, uniforms, and new programs. This year will see an added effort.

"The Boosters' donation is especially significant this year because the money will be used to train our coaches in a national Character Counts! Coalition initiative to build good character in our children through sports competition," said Girls and Boys Town National Executive Director Father Val J. Peter. "This is a great way of teaching and helping children develop skills and traits to become responsible citizens."

Thank you Boosters and all those who support our youth!

Alumni Director

Dear Alumni:



It's snowing outside as I write this short note to you. Our snow geese are back, the crèche is placed on the roof of the Music Hall, and the giant Christmas tree at the intersection of Flanagan and Heroes Boulevard is gaily decorated and colorfully lit.

Many of us will have children or grandchildren home from school over the holidays. Please seize this opportunity to spend time with them. Just as when you were a youth here, we are a plural society composed of many ethnic groups and religions. Attend church as a family, and take the time to share and instill your family traditions so that your children will have something to share with their children. This is part of the glue that holds families together.

Our children across the country still carry on the tradition of writing Christmas Reflections each and every year. Here are a few I would like to share with you about the best Christmases they have ever experienced:

Christmases at Girls and Boys Town because they are always filled with so much love. There is always enough food. Everyone gets gifts. No one is left out. – Misty

All the Christmases I've had here. We celebrate Christ, the true meaning of Christmas. – Noah

Being here because I have a real family and have people there when I need them. – Melanie

Remember how Christmas was for you at Boys Town. Please pray for our children, and, if you can, share your bounty with the Home so that we may make all their Christmases memorable, too.

Have a wonderful and blessed Christmas holiday season and New Year!

Stan Grubbe

Christmas Celebrations For The Ages

85 Years of Girls and Boys Town Holiday Joy

Christmas creates wonderful memories that warm the heart, especially here at Girls and Boys Town. Father Flanagan began the tradition of making the holiday season one where the children would receive spiritual fulfillment and love. As you may all remember in your own Christmas memories, there have been times of great struggle over the past 85 years of Christmas at Girls and Boys Town. But, the Christmas memories also show times of great plenty in hope, love and family.

1917



A few weeks after opening his home for children, Father Flanagan and about 25 first residents celebrated Christmas. Since funds were scarce, Father and the boys' first holiday meal was a barrel of sauerkraut donated by a local grocer.

1927



Ten years after opening the Home money was sparse. Father Flanagan asked for donations to ensure the boys received special toys and treats at Christmas.

One of the boys wrote "All that Christmas ever meant for me was cold and snow, and many times hunger. Gee, it'll be fine spending Christmas at the Home, instead of shivering in the alley..."

Above is an appeal from Father Flanagan in his Boys' Home Journal, December 1928.

1937



At the height of the Great Depression, many families lost hope. Father Flanagan's boys organized the Gloom Killers Club whose aim was to dispel the gloom of the Great Depression. During the Christmas season, the Boys Town radio hour brought the Gloom Killers club good news and uplifting music into homes across America.

1945



During World War II, hundreds of Father Flanagan's boys were serving in the armed forces. He was named America's #1 War Dad because so many of his former charges listed him as their next of kin.

Father Flanagan began his annual Christmas Day radio address in 1944 with these special words, "I am very grateful for the privilege of carrying Boys Town's Message of Peace to a world that is at war, weary, confused and sad."

1953



Christmas 1953 found former boys once again answering the call of duty to serve their nation in Korea. The boys looked forward to the annual Twelfth Nights celebrations, which included plays, movies, and boxes of candy. At the Midnight Mass prayers were offered for those serving in the cold battle fields of Korea.

1967



The Christmas of 1967 found America in turmoil over the country's role in the Vietnam War. The boys celebrated the holiday traditions as they had during Father Flanagan's time. To remember the Prisoners of War, the boys in one cottage made a life-size display of a POW's cell amongst their holiday decorations.

1977



As American society exploded with radical changes in family structures, the nation's children faced a number of challenges. For the first time, the boys celebrated Christmas in their new family style homes with Family-Teachers rather than in dormitory style living.

1986



The 1980s found America experiencing a period of peace and prosperity. Christmas celebrations now included girls who began arriving in the late 1970s.

1998



While America experienced an unprecedented economic boom, the problems confronting the children of America continued to grow. In an effort to help more children, the organization expanded. Children were now enjoying the spirit of a "Boys Town" Christmas at sites across America. Above, children put on a play, "The Gift of the Magi."

2000



As the new millennium dawns, so too does a new name and mission to change the way America cares for her children and families. Thousands of children at Girls and Boys Town sites across America celebrate the Christmas holidays in a safe and loving atmosphere. The food is more plentiful than the first barrel of sauerkraut the children shared with Father Flanagan in 1917, but the holiday traditions remain the same.

BTNAA President



We're On a Mission...

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of my brothers and sisters in the Girls and Boys Town family! I hope and pray that all of you enjoy a blessed holiday season.

I want to thank Father Val Peter and everyone at Girls and Boys Town who made the dedication of our Father Flanagan statue gift to the Home in October, a success.

The BTNAA board at its annual meeting in October achieved a significant milestone in the current management and future direction of the alumni association. We established clearly defined organizational statements and attainable goals for the BTNAA. They are outlined to the right.

The common thread running through these statements are Family and Unity. Without these, what is the real point for the BTNAA to exist?

Having a modern mission statement and these other definitions for the association are very important for our membership and greatly assist the board of directors in properly managing and leading the BTNAA. These statements were formed to remind us what the association is, what it does, and where our family is going.

The board and I are confident that you will see yourself reflected in the association's mission and values. We are equally sure that our goals and vision are attainable. To achieve these goals and vision will require hard work by the board and by you. Communicate with your alumni family and get involved in the association.

Make plans now to attend our family reunion - the biennial National Alumni Convention this summer. At the convention and general assembly we will be unveiling several new initiatives and some by-law changes to achieve our goals and realize our vision. Our association is nothing without you...so be there!

Your Brother,

Steven Wolf '80
BTNAAPresident@cox.net

Boys Town National Alumni Association ORGANIZATIONAL STATEMENTS

Developed October 3, 2002 Annual Board of Directors Meeting

VISION STATEMENT

Encourage a positive effect on our alumni family throughout the world

MISSION STATEMENT

*We exist to unite and grow our alumni family;
champion the dream and values of Fr. Flanagan through leadership*

VALUE STATEMENT

Respect one another and celebrate the diversity of our alumni family

We are committed to:

- ❄ God, Family, Country
- ❄ Trust, Honor, Integrity
- ❄ Communication, Team Work, Service
- ❄ Kindness, Courtesy, Recognition
- ❄ Accountability, Ethics, Responsibility

Our Goals:

- ❄ Add value to membership
- ❄ Double the number of paid members in three years
- ❄ Improve our financial viability

Chapter News

Omaha

The Omaha Chapter sponsored a golf benefit on September 14, 2002. Thirty-five alumni and friends of the Home participated in a Texas Scramble (best ball) at the Knolls Golf Course. Alumnus Larry Berray, '73, and three friends finished 1st with a score of seven-under-par. Some say Larry hit from the Ladies Tee Boxes, but we don't believe he would do that. There were two 2nd place teams at seven-under-par; one led by alumnus Robert Mitchell, '49, and the other by brothers Cameron and Claude Ourada, '79. Len Koets and James Fay, '54, came in at six-under-par. Lenny Koets traveled all the way from New Jersey to play, distinguishing himself as the Most Dedicated Alumnus.

The Omaha Chapter also sponsored a very successful Potluck Social after the Fr. Flanagan Statue Dedication on October 5th during the Homecoming Weekend. Approximately 50 alumni and friends of the Home attended.

Southern California

The Southern California Chapter awarded the Jo Marshall Memorial Award For Achievement 2002 at the Las Vegas site to resident Wendy Meyers. Tom Waite, Site Director says, "Everyone in the Alumni association knows what these kids are going through and how much it means to know there are people out there who understand and care. Your support and compassion is very much appreciated."

Also, on Aug 24th, the Southern California homes at Trabuco Canyon, the Long Beach Shelter, and the Price Family Campus had a festival at Recognition Park, Long Beach, California. Program Specialist Traci Beam of the Long Beach Shelter put the Festival together. The Southern California Chapter was invited to participate. They provided Sony Walkman's, stuffed animals, and refreshments. Many Thanks to Alumni Raul Parra, '64, Bob Nelson, '53, John Kopack, '43, and Julianne Libbea.

Where Are They Now?

Colin (Ed) Brady, '60

Ed Brady wrote to tell us that he lives in Springfield, Mo., with his wife, Norma. They have four children, Steven, Scott, Charity, and Seth. In 1998 Ed was promoted from Director of Sales and Marketing to President of Redneck, Inc., the leading distributor of trailer components in the United States.

After graduating from BT in 1960, he worked as a distributor of oil field equipment until joining the Army in 1962 where he worked as a Military Policeman. He was stationed in Washington D.C. and did three tours of Europe on security assignments. Ed earned a B.S. degree from LaSalle University and held a series of sales and management positions before joining Redneck, Inc. He credits his 7.5 years under the tutelage of Frank Hart in Eagle Hall and Len Fralick in Cottage 31 for his success. Says Ed, "I always figured the best way to say thank you is to do what they would have done in like circumstances. I hope that I honor God and them by how I live my life."

Marcel Chalmers, '86



Marcel Chalmers, '86

This summer, Marcel Chalmers wrote a wonderful letter to Father Peter. Here are parts of his letter: "Times have changed and I'm always thankful for my Boys Town experience. For several years [after Boys Town graduation], I worked in group homes and eventually was in charge of a home myself. I graduated from college after 4 years of working full-time and schooling: Criminology with a certificate in '92 and General studies with a diploma in '93.

By fall 1993, I made a transfer into Employment Counseling for youth and

young adults and graduated again with an Employment Counseling Certificate in 1995. In 1996, I was working for the United Chinese Community Enrichment Services Society SUCCESS.

By 1998, I joined the Open Learning Agency as a Supervisor and Instructor. I then became their Counselor for their Welfare Training Programs and have been here ever since. I taught the Canadian Pre-Apprenticeship Trade and First Aid courses as a Red Cross Instructor for a few years. I am now a program facilitator for a pilot project for Federal Employment Insurance HRDC Canada.

The personal side is where I am the most proud. On May 24, 1997, I married my girlfriend of five years, Linda. On Jan. 9, 1999, 12:31 a.m., we had our daughter Jan Chong Wai Ming Chalmers. Linda's mom moved into the guest quarters and is now a part of the extended family. I am also taking care of two boys from Hong Kong. One starts college this year and the little one still has three more years of high school.

When I think back, I would never have been able to fathom this lifestyle and level of happiness. If you ever have the chance to come to Canada and the western provinces BC, I would be honored to show you some real Canadian hospitality."

Art Ludwig, '52, and his wife Jo Ann, were chosen as Family of The Year by the South Carolina Knights of Columbus.

Art Metzger, '53, retired in 1996 after teaching science and math for 37 years. He lives with his wife Linda in Cedar Springs, Michigan.

Stephanie Boyd-Peete, '91, is married, has two children, and works as the Director of Sales for the Marriott Fairfield Inn in Dallas, Texas.

David Nees, D '67, lives in Norman Oklahoma. He recently completed his M.A. in Sports Administration.

Barney Hill, '73, and his wife Mindy, recently adopted a child. Barney is a steamfitter for Omaha Public Power Department.

Ken Christensen, '93, is an over-the-road truck driver who lives in Creston, Neb.

Jamie Keatts, '90, is a Deputy Sheriff for Washington County. He lives in Ft. Calhoun, Neb.

Beau Mannering, '93, works in a ski shop in Sandy, Utah.

Joe Jones, D '89, owns and operates his own barbershop in Biloxi, Miss.

April Harper-Aschman, '93, has three children and is a stay at home mom in Grant, Neb.



Wegner children put a Santa hat on Fr. Flanagan after they decorated the inside of the house for Irish Christmas. Merry Christmas Fr. Flanagan!

In Loving Memory

William Chapman, '67, died October 10, 2002 in Pompano Beach, Florida

Joseph Howell, '45, Former BT Mayor, passed away November 22, 2002 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin



*Happy
Holidays*

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“Happy 85th Girls and Boys Town”

Founded December 12, 1917

