

Girls Use Teamwork To Overcome Challenges During Survivor Weekend



Girlstown survivor weekend participants construct their home away from home.

In early March, Girlstown's TLP (transitional living program for seniors and juniors) residents and staff participated in a special three day survivorship weekend that included camping out in tents on the Girlstown campus and participating in various games, challenging team activities, campfire meals and discussions. According to Girlstown's Stacy Lambright, organizer of the event, "The weekend mimicked the challenges of real life in a unique way. It was designed to let them know how truly capable and powerful young women they really are."

On Friday night, the thirteen girls and two female staff members divided into teams. Throughout the rest of their time together they worked towards accomplishing several interesting physical and mental challenges.

A combination of cold nights, hot days, no soft beds and no showers, campfire food, challenging activities and the stresses of living together under awkward conditions truly tested the girls.

The first challenge was a photo scavenger hunt that required the teams to take photos of specific objects around the campus. The catch was that there were more items to photograph than the film in the cameras would accommodate. The teams used their creativity to photograph groups of items in order to accomplish the goal.

The teams also participated in a timed bike ride, worked diligently to complete a very complicated puzzle, designed an obstacle course in the horse arena for the opposing team, braved the heights of the challenge course, and attempted to find the location of the campus "underground church" as staff members posing as deceivers, henchmen and jailers attempted to lead them astray.

Many of the girls did not want to participate in the weekend events.

"I wasn't looking forward to the weekend at all," Juanita said. "But on Saturday morning we went on a bike ride and that's when I knew it was going to be fun. It kind of opened my eyes and I quit being so close minded."

At the end of the three day event, Juanita admitted that she learned how to be a stronger member of a team. "I'm a very independent person. I like to work by myself and do things by myself. But during this weekend, it was

impossible to do things alone. You need other people to help you. And I learned I can push myself to do a lot of things."

The weekend may already be paying dividends in Juanita's home. She described her surprise in how one of the girls on the opposing team stepped up to the challenge. "She was the leader of every task on her team," Juanita said. "It surprised me because I didn't know she had it in her. I think now we all look at each other in a more respectful light than we did before. I know I do, because there are a lot of people that I didn't think could do the stuff they did."

"I believe that the biggest thanks and glory go to God as He blessed the weekend," Mrs. Lambright said. "He held the weather off so that we would be able to continue our weekend. He moved girls to tears at some points and even gave them strength to do things that they might not have thought they could do."

Bullfighters Bring Joy and Stuffed Animals to Sick Kids

Members of the Boys Ranch bullfighting team visited a local children's hospital in order to share the joy of Easter with children and found that the world is small after all.

"We're trying to build our bullfighter team," said Tammy Trevino, administrative specialist, farm and ranch operations. "We decided to give the kids an opportunity to give back to the community, as well as build

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Bullfighters, nurses and stuffed animals smile after bringing cheer to sick children.

Your Investment in the Future

President's Message
By Dan Adams



Graduation time is almost upon us and our graduating seniors are busy completing the school year and making final preparations to enter college, join the military, or begin their careers as members of the workforce. This Senior Class of 2008 will include graduates from Boys Ranch and Girlstown, U.S.A.

It has been extremely rewarding to offer these young people the support, love and guidance they need to make their way in the world. This important milestone is made possible by generous supporters like you. As a result of your friendship and prayers, they will soon be leaving their temporary "home" confident in their ability to move forward with their lives.

Collectively, they are a unique class made up of individuals as diverse and talented as any I've seen. Some have performed well in the classroom and served as leaders in their respective schools. Others have participated in our athletic programs, earning honors at local, regional and state competitions. They have all shown various degrees of character, hard work and determination that have led them to accomplish this huge goal.

When asked to describe this class of seniors, several staff members from both campuses used the same word: "resilient." I agree. Each one of the young people shown on the back page of this publication has overcome a variety of hurdles that life has tossed in their path. They have successfully bounced back from the adversities of personal and family stress, crises, and trauma. If they were not "resilient," they would not be anywhere near the threshold to a brighter future that high school graduation offers.

A recent salutatorian at Boys Ranch offered her fellow graduates some sage advice. "Graduation is like a railroad crossing," she said. "You are about to cross the tracks. Your goal is before you, and the striped bar is finally raised. But before you step out, look both ways. Those of you who make it across, congratulations, I wish you the best of luck and future happiness." She was also realistic that not everyone would avoid getting hit by one of life's trains. "If you continue to stand on the track, life will send you another train to run you over. I simply hope that by the third or fourth train, you have developed enough sense to get out of the way."

The comments of a recent valedictorian echo her thoughts. "Learn from the mistakes that you have made," he said. "Don't let your past keep you from accomplishing what you want to be in the future."

Our graduation ceremonies will be held May 30th (Girlstown) and May 31st (Boys Ranch). Please keep these seniors in your thoughts as they walk the stage one final time in their high school careers to receive their well-earned diplomas.

Although we can't be there with them every step of the way to avoid getting hit by "one of life's trains," we can be confident that we have given them a solid foundation to build on. They deserve to be proud of their accomplishments and we wish them the best in their endeavors. I hope you will share in their accomplishment as one who has invested in their future.

Senior Named "Student of the Year"

John, a senior at Boys Ranch, was recently honored as the Oldham County Male Student of the Year. John was recognized for this honor at the Oldham County Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet held at Boys Ranch on March 8, 2008.

Before his arrival at Boys Ranch two years ago, John attended a large public high school with over 7000 students. He admits that at the time he was not a good student. But John has blossomed at Boys Ranch. He currently serves as President of the Student Council and is a member of National Honor Society. John enjoys athletics. He plays varsity baseball and he has participated in cross country and tennis. Last summer he re-ceived his SCUBA certification. He is on the yearbook and newspaper staffs and has received a literary award from the University of Texas.

According to Michael Hughes, Boys Ranch High School journalism teacher, "John has been involved in journalism for two years now and he's made a lot of progress. Last year he won third at UIL State Contest for feature writing and he's proven indispensable in getting our publications published on time."

John has also volunteered with the Adopt-A-Highway and Special Olympics efforts, as well as with various charitable church projects. He works in the horticulture department at Boys Ranch and he plans to attend Angelo State University and study business law and

economics.

John was introduced at the banquet by his house parent, Kenneth Mantooth.

"He's certainly been successful academically," Mr. Mantooth said. "His record stands pretty much on its own. I know what he's done in sports. He's been successful and he's had some good achievements. I know what he's done in the community because I've served with John. He's always done it with a good heart and a good mind. Those things are just a snapshot of the person behind those things. John has grown into a young man that a father wishes his son to become. He works hard, he's dedicated, he's loyal and he's respectful. He's also a young man that a mother



John accepts the Oldham County Male Student of the Year Award.

prays that her son grows into. He cleans his room and he washes his own laundry."

John joined Mr. Mantooth at the podium to humbly accept his award.

"I came to Boys Ranch not really knowing what to expect," he said. "I quickly found out that there are a lot of opportunities out here. I got involved in a lot of things and they made me a better person. Ultimately, I want to thank Boys Ranch for everything they've given me and everything they've done for me that's led me to becoming who I am today."

"Remember his name," Mr. Mantooth encouraged the audience, "because I think someday he's going to be Governor of Texas or a Congressman."

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Bullfighters

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their own self-confidence in performing for our audiences at Boys Ranch. We brought stuffed animals to share that little bit of Easter with the children in the hospital. It was a combination of kids and staff."

The stuffed animals were donated by employees at Cal Farley's.

Becky Ringlbauer, Northwest Texas Hospital child life specialist, escorted the bullfighters and introduced them to the children and their parents. According to Ms. Ringlbauer, "It's important to have members of the community come out and basically say 'Get Well' to these kids and spread smiles on their faces."

"Our intention was to give the kids a sense of hope and a little joy," said Jade, a junior. "Coming and spending time with the kids was special."

"I like to make people laugh," said Cade, 10. "We came and got to make people smile. It felt good to make people feel better when they didn't feel good."

The bullfighters found out how small the world is when they met a graduate of Boys Ranch in the pediatric intensive care unit. His six-month-old child was one of the children who received a stuffed animal. When the boys realized that the young man was a Boys Ranch graduate, they agreed to join together in prayer. Colton, 9, volunteered to pray.

"I thought it was pretty cool to see somebody from Boys Ranch, and he was one we got to give a bear to," Cade said afterward.

Colton echoed Cade's comment.

"I enjoyed making people smile and bringing joy to their faces," Colton said. "I especially liked the one that was a graduate of Boys Ranch. Having his child in the hospital made my heart burst with tears."

"I think they did an awesome job," Mrs. Trevino said. "I'm really proud of those boys. They went in there and introduced themselves and brightened those kids' faces. I think the parents appreciated it as well. It was really neat for those kids to interact with someone else besides staff at Boys Ranch."

"The bullfighters did fantastic," Ms. Ringlbauer said. "Their costumes definitely won over the hearts of some of these patients. And the families were also very appreciative."

Travis, 13 summed up the bullfighters' feelings about the experience. "Today was pretty cool," he said.

BR and GT Competitors Earn Success

Music Contests

BRHS choir members returned from the UIL solo and ensemble contest with seven first divisions and three second divisions. Mason, Josh, Daniel, Tyler, Hailey and Natalie received first division ratings in the solo contest. Mason, Josh, Daniel and Tyler also sang as a quartet and received a first division. First division recipients qualified to participate in the state contest in May.

Girlstown choir and band members also performed well. Four Girlstown choir students sang in the solo and ensemble contest and Lacy earned a first division, qualifying her to attend the state contest. Nadine earned the privilege of performing in the all-region band concert.

State Wrestling Competitors

Katie, a junior, and Anthony, a senior, qualified to participate in the state wrestling tournament. Anthony lost two tough matches. Katie won her first two matches and proceeded to earn the fifth place medal in her weight division. Katie is the first BRHS girl to accomplish the following: to win district in wrestling, to place at the regional tournament and qualify for state, to compete at the state tournament, and finally, to place at the state tournament.



Katie wins fifth place at state competition.

Basketball Co-District Champs

Congratulations to the Boys Basketball Team for earning the co-district championship title. Last year, the BRHS varsity boys' basketball team won the district crown. It was the first time ever for the team to win the district title outright. This year's team wanted to repeat as district champions, but they went into their final district game in third place. According to Coach Chuck Bailey, "If we won the last game, we would be in a three-way tie for first." The pivotal game was played

at Boys Ranch's home gym against a strong team and resulted in an exciting overtime win. They were co-district champions. Their season ended after a tough loss in an area round playoff game. The team finished with a 16-11 record and five players -- Terrance, Julius, Johnathon, Sam and Jason -- were selected to the All-District team.

Boys Ranch and Girlstown Stock Show Success

According to Lance Wann, Ag Teacher at BRHS, "Our students have made leaps and bounds since last year. They are figuring out what responsibility and dedication is and it is paying off. We have been successful at every stock show we have attended this year."

Fifteen Boys Ranch students placed with their animals at the county stock show. Tyke's steer earned the reserve grand champion award and he also won the steer showmanship award. Kristen and Blake earned breed champion awards with their pigs, and Zac earned the reserve breed champion pig award. Four students went to the Fort Worth Stock Show. Garret's pig won reserve breed champion and made the sale, earning Garret more than \$2000 for his efforts. At the San Antonio Stock Show, Heather placed fourth with her pig and Sarah's pig placed seventh. Tyke placed eleventh with his steer. Heather's pig made the sale and sold for more than \$1000.



Vicki (left) and her Cochran County Stock Show Grand Champion pig.

At Girlstown's county stock show, 13 girls earned ribbons for their efforts. Vicki's pig earned the grand champion and breed champion award. Vicki, Kayla and Kalyn also earned first place ribbons with their respective pigs. The exhibitors from Girlstown earned approximately \$16,000 in prizes and auction proceeds with their 4-H animal projects.

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