How does a 12-year-old cope as he struggles with his father’s substance abuse issues and his parents’ separation?

He argues with his parents, challenging their authority. Over time, he escalates his negative behavior, acting out, using alcohol and drugs, and getting into brushes with the law. And school becomes a major source of frustration because he’s failing and not learning.

That was Sloane Baxter’s life as he began the steady descent that would ultimately land him in a youth prison.

At 14, Sloane was arrested for attempting to steal a car. He was placed on probation, but repeated probation violations led to his incarceration at Oak Hill Youth Center.

“Oak Hill was a youth prison,” said Lisette Burton, J.D., Director of National Advocacy at Boys Town Washington DC. “It was an awful place with barbed wire; it looked and functioned like a prison for adults. It has since been shut down.”

Sloane spent several months at the center before his caseworker contacted Boys Town Washington DC about a possible placement in the site’s Family Home Program. After Boys Town staff visited with Sloane, everyone agreed it would be a good fit.

“Sloane is a very engaging young man,” Burton said. “He adapted quickly to the structure, skill teaching and family-style environment of the program.”

Besides providing a safe, nurturing home for the teen, Sloane’s Family-Teachers® worked with his caseworker, family members and others to place him in a school that better addressed his educational needs.

“This was a very big deal for him because he had not previously experienced any school success,” Burton said. “Once he was in the right environment, he began to thrive in school.”

Sloane also began to develop and pursue other interests that proved beneficial.

“The boys in the Family Home participated in a summer project called ‘Book in Day,’” Burton said. “This taught them the fundamentals of poetry, how to write poems and basic...
Dear Friend,

Christmas at Boys Town can be one of the happiest seasons, and at the same time, one of the saddest seasons for our boys and girls.

It’s a happy time because they are in a safe place where they can celebrate this joyous holiday as part of a caring family. For the first time, many of our youth get to experience the thrill of opening brightly wrapped gifts, the inner peace that comes from singing “Silent Night” during church services and the pure joy of sitting down to share a delicious Christmas dinner with caring people who truly want them to get better.

It can also be a sad time because our kids are realizing what they’ve missed during the past Christmases of their young lives. Before coming to Boys Town, they lived in homes where their parents couldn’t afford to buy any gifts or food for a special dinner. Some kids suffered terrible abuse and neglect. For many, Christmas was just another day, with no celebration, no singing, no church and no happiness. While other families were creating holiday memories, these kids sat alone, trying hard to forget their misery.

At Boys Town, we turn that sadness into hope and healing, not just at Christmas, but every day. We provide children with a sense of family and belonging, bringing them into the light of kindness, love and warmth they have been missing.

As we prepare for Christmas at Boys Town, many of our new children are just beginning to understand the joy and wonder of the holiday season. Our boys and girls who have been with us for a while are excited and full of anticipation. Much of their enjoyment comes from helping the newer kids get involved in putting up the tree, shopping for the holiday feast, making Christmas cookies and wrapping presents.

Come Christmas Eve, a quiet calm will descend on our little Village and our homes at sites across the country. Our boys and girls will sing carols, drink hot chocolate and just enjoy being part of a family where each person is loved and respected. On Christmas morning, they will wake up to open gifts and then go to their place of worship to celebrate the birth of the Savior. When they come home, they’ll gather around the table for a special Christmas dinner they all helped prepare.

Happy and sacred holiday traditions have been part of Boys Town’s Christmas celebrations for nearly 100 years. We fill our kids’ lives with fun Christmas memories that will stay with them for the rest of their lives, memories they can draw on to create holiday traditions for their own families someday.

For myself and all of our girls and boys, I want to wish you the happiest of holiday seasons and thank you for your heartfelt generosity in everything you do to bring a smile to the face of a child.

God’s Blessings and Merry Christmas,

Father Steven E. Boes
Boys Town National Executive Director
For Children at Boys Town, Christmas Is the Greatest Gift of All

At Boys Town, we create lasting Christmas traditions and happy holiday memories for our boys and girls that can replace the sad, painful ones they’ve experienced in the past. We start by welcoming children into a caring environment and giving them the confidence and ability to change their lives. This is especially important at Christmastime, when every child wants to know he or she is loved and valued.

We teach children that Christmas is about giving back. It’s a season of remembrance, hope and love, and a time our girls and boys will always cherish as one of their favorite childhood memories. The Christmas traditions our youth learn at Boys Town are gifts we hope they will pass on to their children someday.

Boys Town provides children and families with reasons to celebrate the holiday. The words of our children tell how Boys Town truly is a family and a community, focused on making a difference in the lives of young people who need and deserve another chance. For many of these children, it’s the first time they’ve experienced being part of a family at Christmas.

Christmas at Boys Town is so good because you have a family that loves you and they teach you what Christmas means. It felt good just to spend time with my Family-Teachers and the other kids and to know they were there for me. We went to church first. This was nice because the day is not all about gifts, but more about the gift of God and family and love.

— Amy, 16

There is a void in the lives of most children who come to Boys Town for help and healing. Boys Town fills that void with good things, big and small — unconditional love, words of encouragement, a willingness to stand by even the toughest child — that give children a solid foundation for the future. We help children find healing in body, mind and spirit by showing them a different way of life and giving them the confidence to live it. When they realize they are capable of changing their behaviors and building caring relationships, they are able to put the past behind them and move forward.

Christmas reinforces those feelings like no other season. In all the activities that surround the holiday, our kids see what a caring family is and understand they are valued members of that family. At Boys Town, Christmas means children laughing and smiling as they decorate their trees and homes, bake cookies, sing carols and learn the true meaning of sharing and caring.

The best Christmas ever was last year. It was the first Christmas that I could feel and say I had a family that was there for me in the Christmas season. It was my first Christmas at Boys Town. I felt that all my friends and those who cared about me stood by me and gave me a Christmas I’ll never forget.

— Christian, 15

Christmas truly is a special time at Boys Town because it reminds us that family, faith, having fun together and following traditions are among the necessities of life.

As families across our great nation follow their cherished traditions this Christmas, we hope they will say a prayer for all the kids at Boys Town who are just beginning theirs.
Former BT Youth Now Giving Back as Advocate for Kids in Need of Help

Continued from Page 1

“Sloane’s testimony about being incarcerated as a young person and then thriving in a family-style, community-based program like Boys Town’s Family Homes had a big impact on the committee — and that impact is ongoing.”

— LISETTE BURTON, J.D.
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL ADVOCACY,
BOYS TOWN WASHINGTON DC

Sloane’s life experiences also have made him an ideal advocate for at-risk children.

In October 2015, Boys Town was advocating for a federal juvenile justice bill with the Chairman of the House Committee on Workforce and Education, Congressman John Kline.

“Chairman Kline previously visited Boys Town in Nebraska, and his staff knew young people from Boys Town had given valuable testimony before. They requested a Boys Town youth to speak at a hearing on juvenile justice,” Burton said. “We asked Sloane if he would be willing and he readily agreed. He was still young enough for his experiences to be fresh and relevant but also older and mature enough to be able to independently determine what he wanted to share and how.”

Burton helped Sloane, then 22, shape his story and experiences into his formal testimony to Congress.

During the hearing, Sloane spoke alongside a judge, a vice president of a large nonprofit organization and a leader who advocates for justice reforms. Sloane was asked pointed questions about his experiences and his opinions on juvenile justice issues.

“Sloane’s testimony was fantastic,” Burton said. “He was actually highlighted in Chairman Kline’s comments after the hearing because it was so impactful. Sloane’s testimony about being incarcerated as a young person and then thriving in a family-style, community-based program like Boys Town’s Family Homes had a big impact on the committee — and that impact is ongoing.”

In May 2016, Chairman Kline and his staff, along with ranking-member Congressman Bobby Scott, contacted Boys Town Washington DC to arrange a visit to a Family Home so they could learn more about it and see the program in action.

In addition, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan recently published a Republican Party policy brief called “A Better Way.” One of the policy’s major initiatives is to lift young people out of poverty and onto the ladder of opportunity.

“In this policy agenda, Sloane’s name and story are highlighted as an example of a young person who participated in the right kind of program that led to long-lasting success,” Burton said. “Also, there is a quote from Sloane where he talks about the fact that things could have gone a lot different if it wasn’t for a place like Boys Town, and that it still serves as a lifeline for him when he needs it.”

Today, Sloane continues his work as an advocate for Boys Town and at-risk children.

“There is an upcoming youth justice symposium that Sloane wants to attend,” Burton said. “He is a great example of someone who benefited from residential care. And because of that, he wants to give back and continue to help those in similar situations.”

“We asked Sloane if he would be willing and he readily agreed. He was still young enough for his experiences to be fresh and relevant but also older and mature enough to be able to independently determine what he wanted to share and how.”

— LISETTE BURTON, J.D.
DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL ADVOCACY,
BOYS TOWN WASHINGTON DC
Father Edward Flanagan’s mission is now commemorated in currency.

Designs for coins celebrating the 100th anniversary of the founding of Boys Town were unveiled Tuesday.

Rhett Jeppson, deputy director of the United States Mint, joined Boys Town officials and other dignitaries for the ceremony at the Boys Town Music Hall. Students, families and staff filled the auditorium.

“This literally took an act of Congress to get done,” said Dr. Dan Daly, executive vice president and director of youth care at Boys Town.

Last year, Congress authorized the U.S. Mint to produce a series of coins commemorating Boys Town’s 100th anniversary in 2017. The legislation was sponsored by current and past members of Nebraska’s congressional delegation.

U.S. Rep. Brad Ashford attended Tuesday’s ceremony, along with Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert and former lawmakers Ben Nelson and Lee Terry. Ashford praised Congress’ bipartisan efforts to allow the coins to become a reality.

“There are a lot of issues that divide Congress, but when you tell them about Boys Town, there is no divide,” he said.

In 2015, a team of artists traveled to Boys Town to gather ideas. Three designs were selected by the mint and will be featured on gold, silver and clad (layered metal) coins.

“Each time a person looks at any one of these unique designs, it will spark an interest in learning about the history of Boys Town, acknowledging the extraordinary efforts made by this organization to give comfort and purpose to children in need, and recognizing the significant contributions of Father (Edward) Flanagan,” Jeppson told the audience.

The heads side of the $5 gold coin features a portrait of Flanagan, Boys Town’s founder. Inscriptions include “Boys Town Centennial,” “In God We Trust,” “Fr. Edward Flanagan,” and “Liberty.” The tails side, which says “The Work Will Continue,” depicts an outstretched hand holding a young oak tree growing from an acorn. This design represents “the potential of each child helped by Boys Town to grow into a productive, complete adult,” Jeppson said.

The gold coin was designed by artist Donna Weaver.

The heads side of the silver $1 coin depicts a young girl sitting alone under the branches of an oak tree, looking up. The empty space around the girl is “deliberate and meant to show the child’s sense of loneliness, isolation and helplessness,” Jeppson said. Inscriptions include “When You Help A Child Today....”

The tails side depicts an oak tree offering shelter and a sense of belonging to the family holding

See “U.S. Mint Unveils”: Page 6
At Boys Town, we teach girls and boys citizenship through class elections. Each year since 1935, the youth of Boys Town elect a Mayor and Vice Mayor from the upcoming senior class. In order to run for mayor, there are guidelines a candidate must abide to, including:

» Respect all other candidates
» Campaign can only last two weeks
» Don’t make promises you can’t keep
» Items can’t be used as campaign incentives or gimmicks
» Candidates can post only a certain number of flyers and posters

This year, the girls and boys elected Cordell Cade of Atlanta, Ga., who was elected the 116th Mayor of the Village of Boys Town on Tuesday, May 3, 2016. Kymani Bell of Jacksonville, Fla. was elected Vice Mayor.

Cade is 17-years-old, and says he wants to take on a bigger leadership role on campus. “I want to be the face and the voice of campus. I want to make a difference.”

Cade is on the football team, basketball team and runs track. He is also a National Honor Society member. After graduation he plans to go to college and medical school to become a doctor. His Family-Teachers are Ryan and Shani Meehl.

Kymani Bell is on the basketball team, football team and runs track. He has been student of the quarter five times and is on the honor role. After graduation, he plans to attend college and pursue a degree in business. His Family-Teachers are Aaron and Kendal Robertson.

Boys Town founder Father Edward Flanagan once described his work as “building good Americans.” He believed that being a good citizen required active participation in the political process and voting. To give his boys a chance to experience and experiment with these activities, he set up a system of self-government at Boys Town.

In 1935, Boys Town residents went to the polls to elect their very first mayor and Village commissioners. The elections allowed all the boys to have a voice in running the Village.

Even to this day in Boys Town’s mayoral elections, the residents create political parties, hold debates and have campaign rallies. The elections have drawn national attention, and Boys Town has become famous for having the youngest “voters” in the country.

The mayor’s duties include welcoming special guests to the Village and representing Boys Town and its young residents at official ceremonies.

Congratulations Cordell and Kymani!
Julie knew that what her grandpa’s friend had done was wrong.

The 13-year-old girl lived with her grandparents. The friend would come over often to visit with her grandpa or go hunting with him.

One day, as Julie was sitting on her bed, the friend came into the house saying he was looking for a tool. Then he sat down next to her, lifted her dress and touched her. Before he left, he warned her not to tell anyone.

Julie had noticed him staring at her during earlier visits. Now, besides being frightened for herself, she also worried about her siblings and cousins, who also lived in the grandparents’ home.

The problem was Julie didn’t know where to go for help.

If she told her grandpa what had happened, she was afraid he would confront the friend. She wasn’t sure her grandma would believe her.

Later that day, Julie saw an ad on television. It caught her attention because the announcer said there was a number kids could call for help. She grabbed a pen and wrote it down.

It was the number for the Boys Town National Hotline®.

Julie decided to make the call.

Youth just like Julie have been calling the Hotline for more than 20 years to seek help for problems such as school pressures, being bullied by classmates, thinking about using alcohol or drugs, feeling isolated by their friends — and sexual abuse.

Parents, grandparents and other caregivers across the country also depend on the Hotline for advice on a variety of child behavior issues, including not following rules, being disrespectful to others, throwing tantrums, self-injury, drug and alcohol use and others.

Julie reached a trained Hotline counselor and told her what had happened. During their conversation, Julie tearfully asked the counselor if she would talk to her grandma. The counselor calmed the teen and asked her to put her grandma on the line.

After explaining the situation, the counselor told the grandmother the Hotline would be making a police report. Julie’s grandma was very understanding and grateful.

Police investigated and, as a result, the family friend — a convicted sex offender — was arrested, found guilty of indecency with a child and sent to prison.

When she didn’t know where to turn, Julie found the courage to tell someone she was being hurt. The Boys Town National Hotline was there to make sure it didn’t happen again.

The stories provided about the children and families in our care are real. In some cases, names and details may be changed, and stock photos may be used, to protect their privacy and therapeutic interests.
Giving Stock for a Good Cause

Shelly, a retired nurse, inherited a significant portfolio of securities from her father. Over the years, Shelly became interested in investing. She sold some of her stock just as the market peaked and then bought again when it was at a low. Last year, she wanted to unload some of her low performers, but before selling at a loss, she learned about the benefits of giving her stock to charity.

Shelly contacted Boys Town and was excited to learn that she could make a gift of her stock and receive an income tax deduction this year. “I loved the fact that I didn’t have to sell the stock at a low or continue to hold onto it while it possibly fell even lower in the market,” Shelly said.

Best of all, she was thrilled that her gift would help Boys Town touch even more lives.

The Benefits of Year-End Giving

Consider the many ways you can enjoy tax and income benefits while helping to further Boys Town’s mission of saving children, healing families and strengthening communities.

Gift of Cash or Property

Would You Like to Save on Your Taxes?

For a gift of cash, you will receive a charitable deduction for the full cash value. If you make a property (real estate or stock) gift to Boys Town, you avoid any tax that would otherwise be due upon sale. We then sell your property tax-free and you enjoy the benefits of a charitable tax deduction.

Charitable Gift Annuity

Are You Looking for Secure Future Income?

When you make your gift of cash or appreciated property to Boys Town, we promise to pay you fixed payments for life (with rates based on your age). You will receive a charitable deduction for the value of your gift and a portion of your payments could be tax-free!

Charitable Bequest

Make a Future Gift Now!

Boys Town would be pleased to send you our helpful guide on planning your will or trust. You will want to contact your attorney about how to include a bequest in your estate plan. Once your bequest is made, please let us know so we can recognize and thank you.

For more information about these types of charitable gifts, please visit our website at boystowngift.org or contact our Office of Gift and Estate Planning today at 888-332-3219 or giftplanning@boystown.org.

INQUIRE TODAY!

The information contained in this briefing does not constitute legal or tax advice, and it is recommended that you seek the advice of your attorney, professional tax advisor and/or financial planner prior to making arrangements for a planned gift.