

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Boys Town Family,

As the heat of the summer wanes, a season of new beginnings has fallen upon the valley of Southern Nevada. As a former education administrator, fall reminds me of the hope and welcome change for the children and families starting a new school year. This is the first time in the past two years where we are witnessing the fruits of our labor in the community as our site embarks on a new journey of expansion.

Over the past year, we have seen steady growth with our partnership with CCSD schools, finishing the 2021-22 year with 28 schools. In 2014, we began partnering with high-need schools in Las Vegas to strengthen families of struggling students through our LIFT Together with Boys TownSM education model. Our LIFT Together program is designed to provide educators and administrators a digestible curriculum that incorporates our evidence-based model focusing on prevention and intervention to keep students in school and thriving. LIFT Together employs designated School Support Specialists to teach social and behavior skills that are identified as a barrier to growth and learning. Early outcomes show our students improved in their school attendance and reduced office referrals with improved parent engagement.

In January 2022, I met with CCSD Superintendent Dr. Jesus Jara with the goal of significantly expanding our LIFT Together program. On August 25, Boys Town Nevada was approved by the CCSD board members to expand LIFT Together to 65 additional schools – impacting more than 60,000

students and over 2,000 educators! Our program helps to create a calm atmosphere in schools, and our data shows a reduction in office referrals, higher student attendance rates and more parent communication with teachers.

I am proud of our team and the work they have been able to achieve! I appreciate the continued support of the Boys Town Mission to “Change the way America cares for kids and families.”

Sincerely,

John Etzell
Executive Director, Boys Town Nevada



Family Spotlight

Kaden has shown amazing leaps in his social and behavioral development over the past year while working with School Support Specialist, KellyAnn. His mom, Leela, notices he is happier, friendly to his family at home and excited to go to school each day.

Leela and Kaden (age 6) were introduced to Boys Town Nevada in 2021 through a referral from his kindergarten teacher. This educator asked School Support Specialist KellyAnn to redirect students during recess who were hitting each other. Leela said Kaden's kindergarten class experienced COVID restrictions during critical growth milestones and observed the students having trouble navigating authority in a school setting. In partnership with KellyAnn and the school's assistant principal, Kaden started to receive individualized education plans to improve his behavior and learn more social skills.

KellyAnn, in her role as School Support Specialist, creates specific curriculums based upon the Boys Town evidence-based model. These individual behavioral plans focus on improving students' social skills that are a barrier to learning. Based upon 16 core social skills in our LIFT Together program, KellyAnn began to validate his emotions and teach him ways to communicate anger without hitting. While working on this behavior, she identified an opportunity for Kaden to work with speech pathologists to help him improve speaking with confidence.



Throughout the course of the 2021 school year, KellyAnn became a navigator for Leela on how to advocate for her son and get the accommodations Kaden needed to support his education. Leela is very proud to see the growth and happiness in her son and grateful for the guidance of KellyAnn. Toward the end of the school year, Leela asked KellyAnn to attend

Kaden's kindergarten graduation to share in the joy of him learning and behaving at his appropriate grade level.

Next month, Kaden will receive the prestigious Role Model Award, recognizing him for exceeding expectations in classroom behavior. He has a group of friends he rushes in to see at the beginning of each class and Leela notices how much clearer he speaks and how kind he is to others. KellyAnn still works with Kaden, but not as often as she did last school year.

"Kaden uses the calm down techniques that I taught him and has blossomed into a social butterfly!" KellyAnn said.

The type of support offered by KellyAnn is critical for students to succeed and overcome social and behavioral barriers to learning. Boys Town's LIFT Together program is designed to provide educators and administrators a digestible curriculum that incorporates our evidence-based model focusing on prevention and intervention to keep students in school and thriving. To support life-changing programs like LIFT Together or other Boys Town programs, consider making a donation at boystown.org/donate.

Volunteer Development Committee

Starting this fall, Boys Town Nevada will be hosting monthly meetings for anyone interested in joining our inaugural volunteer development committee. We are looking for any member of the community that is interested in donating their time or talent to help with planning, coordinating and executing our events and fundraising efforts. Here are some of the expectations for the committee opportunity:

- *Monthly, in-person/virtual planning meetings*
- *Planning assistance with:*
 - *Festival of Hope (December 2022)*
 - *Top Golf Tournament (April 2023)*
 - *Back-to-School Bash (July 2023)*
- *Outreach support with volunteer coordination for above events*

If you are interested in joining a dynamic, hard-working and impactful team, contact: alex.shahady-dupree@boystown.org for details.

Board of Directors Highlight

Earlier this summer, Boys Town Nevada's newest board member, Orlando Gallegos, organized a fundraiser with artist, William Carr, during the unveiling of his newest project: *Tree of Life*.

Orlando is the gallery director for the artist's exquisite photography on display at the William Carr Gallery in Caesar's Forum Shops. A longtime resident of Las Vegas, Orlando is a founding board member of the Nevada Hispanic Business Group and makes it his philanthropic mission to give the youth of Las Vegas opportunities to find success and rise above their circumstances and environment.



We are proud to welcome Orlando to the board this year and grateful he orchestrated a successful fundraising opportunity in his art community to save children and heal families in Southern Nevada.



On June 24, art enthusiasts enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres to the sound of piano music while getting to know the mission of Boys Town Nevada from Development Director Charlene Blackstone. During the event, the artist donated proceeds from his latest photobook, *World Focus Images Vol. II*, to Boys Town Nevada. *World Focus Images Vol. II* offers 160 stunning images from around the world along with experiences from this modern master of photography.



Boys Town Nevada Hosts Back-to-School Bash

Boys Town Nevada hosted their second annual Back-to-School Bash at Gary Reese Freedom Park in Las Vegas. On Saturday, July 30, many community partners, corporations and volunteers from across the Las Vegas valley came together to prepare 1,200 children and families for the upcoming school year. Event partners and sponsors provided more than 4,200 school supplies and 800 backpacks to relieve the back-to-school burden for families in Southern Nevada. Some community partners offered mobile dental exams and cleanings to anyone that attended. During the event, the youth played sports games, enjoyed a scavenger hunt, took photos and created



art projects. Boys Town Nevada provided food and hosted giveaways for bikes and gift cards donated by event partners.

Overall, \$19,290 was raised to go towards Boys Town's LIFT Together initiative. LIFT Together is an evidence-based model that improves problems in the local school district such as absenteeism, low parental engagement and disruptive classroom behaviors. Thank you to our generous sponsors – Anthem Health Care, Southwest Gas, SilverSummit Health Care and Molina Healthcare – for their continued support of Boys Town Nevada and improving the lives of children and families in Nevada.

Staff Spotlight: Keane-Maritess Talledo, Common Sense Parenting® Trainer

Keane holds a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Nevada-Las Vegas and is currently pursuing her M.A. of Social Work in their graduate program. She joined Boys Town Nevada back in 2020 after a colleague introduced her to the organization and saw that her determination and kind demeanor would be a great fit for the role.

Keane explains the favorite part of her job is when she is in front of parents teaching a core element of Common Sense Parenting®: positive discipline.

“Parents are their children’s first and most important teacher,” she says. “I feel honored to give parents a few more tools to praise and set behavior expectations that work for their family.”

She carries the weight of helping others break generational trauma with ease as she finds time to balance her job with self-care and awareness.

“Helping teachers, parents and everyone affecting our children is my passion because they are our future,” Keane said.

On the weekends, you can find Keane on a run or at the gym recharging for the week ahead.

Her upbeat personality and willingness to help in any situation makes

her a valuable part of the Boys Town Nevada team. Here at the site, she co-leads our employee engagement resource group offering creative ideas on how to connect all verticals of the organization. Last month, her team hosted a welcome party for our new staff with trivia, prizes, food and entertainment. There really isn’t anything Keane can’t do and she makes it fun and exciting for the audience she is leading. This month, stop by our virtual parenting classes at: boystown.org/cspnv to say “Hi” and introduce yourself to Keane. She’ll be happy to meet you.



Festival of Hope Volunteer Opportunity

This December, Boys Town Nevada is bringing back our sixth annual Festival of Hope for the children and families we serve in our programs. We will be transforming our venue into a holiday extravaganza where parents and children can experience the magic of the holiday season. Santa, Mrs. Claus and the elves will be stopping by to greet the children and give all families a holiday affair to remember. We are seeking community partners to help make this special holiday event a memorable one for those who could use some extra holiday cheer!

How can you help?

- Organize a toy drive in your neighborhood or workplace to collect toys (September-December)
- Help decorate the venue, creating the magic of Christmas
- Donate your time as a volunteer elf during the Festival of Hope event
- Join the volunteer planning committee

Please reach out to charlene.blackstone@boystown.org to sign up today!

For more great stories, visit

BOYSTOWN.ORG/NEVADA



Development Office

Charlene Blackstone
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

702-724-8406

charlene.blackstone@boystown.org

Connect with us @BoysTownNevada



For 30 years, Boys Town Nevada has positively impacted and changed the lives of thousands of children and families through its transformative care and services. Boys Town believes today, as our founder Father Edward Flanagan did over 100 years ago, that every child deserves a future, every family deserves to stay together and every community deserves to thrive. Boys Town offers hope. But we offer hope as more than just an abstract concept; we substantiate it with programs and solutions grounded in our deep experience and supported by our decades of research.

Boys Town Nevada has brought life-changing care to tens of thousands of children and families in Nevada since opening its doors in 1991. Every year, the site’s services impact the lives of more than 4,000 people in Nevada.