

**Fall 2023 Newsletter**

## Dear Boys Town Family,

This year we celebrate 40 years of bringing hope and healing to thousands of children and families in our community. This is a major milestone and we celebrate in it!

In 1983, Boys Town looked across the country to see how and where we might expand Father Flanagan’s mission. Boys Town’s assessment was not only informed by feasibility, but also by need. At the time, Florida was ranked at the bottom of the child welfare system and was in crisis. Boys Town and the Tallahassee community rose to the challenge to address this need and Boys Town North Florida was born.

Since that time, with your support, we have been able to do great things. We have not only been responsive to the unique needs of our youth and families but have grown in the number, type and quality of services to meet the needs of this community. We are, indeed, thankful for the innovation, creativity and support that provided opportunities and new ways to do our work. However, we are most grateful for the faith and grace bestowed upon us; sustaining and enabling us to continue to carry out our mission of saving children and healing families.

So, as we take time to reflect upon and celebrate 40 years and this major milestone, we send a heartfelt thanks and express much gratitude to our donors, partners and the organizations that have invested in our mission and

supported our most vulnerable children and families for four decades. We are also grateful for Boys Town’s foresight and strategic guidance in implementing national initiatives, as well as support for innovation and initiatives tailored to meet the needs of our local community.



Our faith in and commitment to each other and those we serve has truly been rewarded. We have had many successes over the decades, and will continue to adapt and redefine who we are to best fit the needs of the children and families we serve.

With sincere gratitude,



**Marcus Lampkin**  
Executive Director



# Be The *ONE*

## To Help Him Learn and Grow.

Boys Town North Florida is growing its Foster Family Services program so that more kids will have a safe place to live. As a Boys Town Foster Parent, you can make a difference in your community and in the life of a child in desperate need of a loving home.

**CALL US TODAY**  
850-575-6422

**VISIT US ONLINE**  
[boystown.org/north-florida](http://boystown.org/north-florida)

# A Night of Celebration

## Boys Town North Florida's 2023 Youth Awards Banquet



Once again, the eagerly awaited annual Youth Awards Banquet arrived, bringing an evening filled with joy and recognition for the incredible accomplishments of Boys Town North Florida's youth. The event, themed "A Night Under the Stars," took place at the prestigious Florida State University Alumni Center, adding a touch of glamour and excitement to the occasion.

The young attendees, dressed to the nines in elegant tuxedos and dazzling dresses, arrived at the banquet in style, chauffeured by Mike's Limousines. As they walked down the red carpet, the spotlight was all on them, and each youth received a personal introduction, making them feel like true stars of the night.



This year's banquet was made truly special thanks to the keynote speaker, Tryton, a remarkable youth alumnus who spent several years living on the Boys Town campus. He had a deep connection to Boys Town and his Family-Teachers, Aiysha and Wayne Longley, who continue their compassionate work on the campus – and Tryton's

words resonated deeply with all in attendance. His speech was nothing short of powerful and inspirational, sharing a resilient message that touched the hearts of everyone present. His personal journey, rising from challenges to triumphs, left a lasting impact on the youth and had them feeling inspired to overcome any obstacles in their own lives.

Throughout the evening, the air was filled with celebration and laughter as the awards ceremony unfolded. The youth were recognized for their individuality and unique abilities, with accolades like 'Youth Ambassador of the Year,' 'Most Imaginative,' and 'Most Resilient,' shining a light on their exceptional talents and achievements.



As the night continued, the dance floor came alive with energy and the youth danced the night away, celebrating their accomplishments with newfound friends and cherished memories. It was a true testament to the nurturing environment

that Boys Town North Florida fosters, where every youth is celebrated and given the opportunity to shine.

As Boys Town North Florida extends heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed to this year's Youth Awards Banquet, we also renew our commitment to empowering and supporting these remarkable youth on their journeys of growth and success. The banquet serves as a reminder of the transformative impact that love, care and unwavering dedication can have on the lives of these young individuals.

The event's success would not have been possible without the generous support of dedicated vendors. The Florida State University Alumni Center, Formals by Vince, Coca-Cola, Aveda Institute, Abernathy Entertainment and Mike's Limousine all played a significant role in making the evening unforgettable.

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## Boys Town North Florida's Inaugural Chopped Competition

Boys Town North Florida was thrilled to host a special Chopped Competition this summer, where our Family Home youth showcased their culinary talents in a fun-filled, high-energy event! Each house on our campus went head-to-head, putting their culinary skills to the test as they prepared appetizers, main entrees and desserts.

After much deliberation, we are proud to congratulate the Hudson-Black Home for their outstanding and unique dishes, earning them the well-deserved title of CHOPPED champions!

We are immensely grateful to our Boys Town North Florida Family Home kids for their participation and enthusiasm, as



But here's the exciting twist – our young chefs had to incorporate surprise ingredients into their dishes, including olives, cream cheese, Ritz crackers and the mystery ingredient revealed that very morning: pineapple!

Our esteemed panel of judges, consisting of professional chef Leon Brunson, restaurateur Eric Pounders and two incredible non-profit leaders, Monique and Larry, added to the excitement and taste-tested each dish with meticulous consideration. They scored based on presentation, taste and creativity, making the competition even more challenging and rewarding!

Throughout the event, the atmosphere was filled with joy and camaraderie, as our youth showcased their culinary prowess and passion for cooking. It was truly heartwarming to witness their creativity and dedication in the kitchen.

well as to our esteemed judges who lent their expertise to support our mission.

Together, we're making a difference and inspiring our young chefs to embrace creativity while making unforgettable memories in the kitchen!

### *Special Thank You's*

**Leon Brunson:** Owner of Leon's at Lake Ella

**Eric Pounders:** Marketing and Training Director of For the Table Hospitality

**Monique Ellsworth:** CEO of Second Harvest of the Big Bend

**Larry Stevens:** Assistant Warehouse Manager of Second Harvest of the Big Bend

**Sevin Wilson:** Representative of Millcreek Financial Consultants





## Boys Town North Florida Hosts Fifth Annual Back to School Supply Drive

Boys Town North Florida recently partnered with the Florida Bar Administrative Law Section and Pennington Law Firm to host the highly anticipated Fifth Annual Back to School Supply Drive.

In the lead-up to the event, supporters rallied to secure essential school supplies. Many individuals donated directly or utilized the school registry on Amazon, ensuring much-needed items would find their way into the hands of the children and families Boys Town serves.

Boys Town North Florida remarkably received over 100 backpacks and an abundance of school supplies from kind-hearted donors who recognize the importance of empowering students for academic success.

This year's event took place at Miller's Ale House. The Florida Bar Administrative Law Section and Pennington Law Firm, along with the generosity of attendees, ensured the provision of Back-to-School essentials not only for all 30 of the Family Home Youth, but extended to impact almost every youth across each of Boys Town North Florida's five programs.

Boys Town North Florida extends heartfelt gratitude to its sponsors, supporters and attendees for their dedication to shaping a brighter future for our youth. With each backpack and every pencil, the organization takes confident steps toward ensuring students embark on their educational journeys equipped with the tools they need to thrive.



Each year since the beginning of the event, school supply donations and the number of participants has grown to promote the academic success of our Boys Town program youth.



# A Journey of Resilience

## The Greene-Howard Family Story at Boys Town North Florida



This summer, Boys Town North Florida had the opportunity to work with a family facing significant challenges. Within a month of beginning services, the Greene-Howard family encountered an emergency when their son, Omarion, was struck by a car.

Through the partnership with Boys Town, the family is now thriving and working together to overcome their difficulties.

In May 2023, In-Home Family Consultant Damien and Intern Nye'Dra conducted an admission visit with the Greene-Howard family. The family was referred to Boys Town to address ongoing struggles involving parenting skills and substance use. Kiara, the mother, has had a unique journey and was happy to accept help from Boys Town. Having spent nearly two years incarcerated, she was recently released from prison and sought to leave behind her past in Panama City. With determination, she relocated to Tallahassee, working full-time at McDonald's to build a better life for herself and her children.

Despite the challenges they faced before engaging with Boys Town, Kiara's commitment to change and her family's well-being persisted. The family's close-knit bond and efforts to overcome difficulties, such as addressing Omarion's self-harm concerns and past incidents, demonstrated their resilience. However, unforeseen adversity struck one Wednesday afternoon in June when Omarion was hit by a car while leaving a family outing. Despite the tragedy, the Boys Town North Florida community rallied around Kiara and the family, offering empathy, active listening and support. The team ensured she had access to the resources and informal support she needed while staying by her son's side during his recovery.

As of recently, Omarion is out of the hospital and is recuperating at home. He is engaged in physical therapy and other services to get better soon. Since the initial accident, he is doing much better physically and mentally. Through love, compassion and dedicated efforts, the Greene-Howard family's journey exemplifies the transformative power of resilience and community support. Boys Town North Florida continues to stand by them, providing a sanctuary of hope and healing for those facing adversity. As the family embraces the challenges ahead, their story serves as a poignant reminder of the profound difference that love and support can make in the lives of vulnerable children and families.



# A Summer of Inspiration

## Boys Town's Unforgettable Partnership with FSU Athletics

Boys Town North Florida had a truly remarkable opportunity this summer to partner with the distinguished athletes of Florida State University (FSU). This partnership forged an inspiring connection between our resilient youth and the spirited FSU Seminole champions.

Our youth were privileged to spend time with several of the Seminole teams including both the men's and women's basketball teams, as well as the football team. The kids were first introduced to the teams at a summer recreation kick-off party. It was there they had an opportunity of a lifetime when they were given the chance to play basketball with the FSU men's basketball team. Beyond just the game, our kids and the players chatted about going to college, figuring out life paths and the importance of staying focused. These athletes became mentors, sparking hope and inspiration in the hearts of the youth they connected with at the event.

Shortly after the visit with the men's basketball team, it was the women's basketball team's turn to make a memorable

visit to our campus. They spent time with the youth, engaging in their favorite games and emphasizing the team's commitment to community service. During their interactions, the kids discovered shared birthplaces with some of the team members and connected over common interests such as art, music, games and sports.

As the summer progressed, the youth at Boys Town were thrilled to hear the players on the FSU Seminole's football team also wanted to spend time with them. Over the course of a few weeks, players from the team came out to engage with the youth in various activities and conversations. From designing Nike shoes to sharing lunch and participating in art sessions at ART Town, the football players connected with the kids on a personal level. Conversations delved into topics including resilience, kindness and the pursuit of excellence. The mutual understanding and shared interests created a unique bond that resonated throughout the summer.



As the end of summer approached, the team wanted to think of a unique way to send the youth back to school. The coaches and players invited Boys Town to watch a practice as one of their final joint activities. Everyone was thrilled to be able to go to FSU and watch the players, in their own environment, engage in pre-season practice to prepare for an awesome college football season. The kids and staff were so excited to have a chance to go inside of the Seminole's Indoor Practice Facility and watch the team practice and run drills with Coach Mike Norvell.

At the conclusion of the practice, each player greeted the youth to thank them for coming and offered words of encouragement and well-wishes for a good school year. After the players had the chance to speak with the youth, Coach Norvell shared his appreciation for the team and Boys Town's partnership and stressed the power of positivity to the Boys Town youth, reinforcing the importance of showing up, being kind and striving to be the best version of yourself every day. His resonating words reminded the youth that their

aspirations are within reach. All they need to do is try.

Our youth and staff that had the opportunity to work with the FSU athletic teams were impressed by their positivity and were grateful for the time they were able to spend together. Many youths made statements surrounding these encounters, expressing how much of a lasting impact these athletes had on them and how inspired they felt to attend college and pursue college athletics in the future.

Through sports, conversations and moments of inspiration, the youth were shown a path forward and were reminded that with dedication and effort, they can achieve and succeed.



CHEERS TO  
**40**  
Years!



*Proud Past, Promising Future!*

**Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 | 6 - 10 P.M.**

Goodwood Museum & Gardens  
1600 Miccosukee Road | Tallahassee, FL 32308



## 40th Anniversary Celebration Save the Date – Honoring Sheriff McNeil

Walt McNeil has served as the Leon County sheriff since 2016 and has enjoyed a 42-year career as a public servant. A Boys Town North Florida board member since 2017, McNeil has been a committed advocate of our organization and community, and we look forward to expressing our gratitude with this special award.

For more great stories, visit

**BOYSTOWN.ORG/north-florida**

The first of Boys Town's national sites, Boys Town North Florida has been serving children and families since 1983.

We partner with area agencies and businesses to constantly enhance the quality and variety of care we provide in the community. Every year, our services touch the lives of more than 5,000 people in North Florida.



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