

Healing & Hope News

"The work will continue..."
- Father Edward J. Flanagan,
Founder of Boys Town

Boys Town North Florida Hosts Fourth Annual Career and Resource Fair



Boys Town North Florida hosted its Fourth Annual Career and Resource Fair on Saturday, June 13. The event, held at ART Town, was designed to introduce youth to new careers and connect them to resources to support their growth.

Upon check in, youth were handed a "Career Fair Quiz" which could be completed by receiving the answers from exhibitors. Youth visited each table, quizzing exhibitors about their profession.

New to the event was Bite Marks, the band. Band members touted their instruments and allowed Boys Town youth to try their hand at the keyboard, guitar and bass guitar. Participants left with brochures, merchandise and hopefully a new sense of purpose.

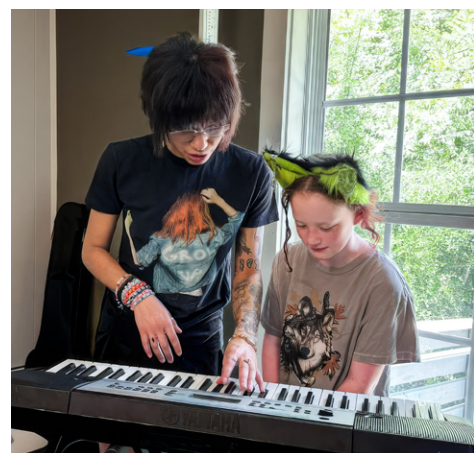
"The Career Fair is one of my favorite events," said Ellyn Scanlan, Volunteer Coordinator. "I love watching the joy on the youth's faces as they learn something new."

One of the most popular tables was represented by returning vendors from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Part of their display included a live snake, baby

alligator and several frogs. Brave guests used two hands to handle reptiles and amphibians at arm's length.

Boys Town North Florida wishes to thank the exhibitors who presented their role in helping shape the future of our Boys Town youth.

- » Keiser University
- » The Florida Lottery
- » Charlie Health
- » Dunlap Shipman Law Firm
- » Bite Marks, the Band
- » Florida State University
- » Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- » Tallahassee Police Department
- » The Florida Department of Law Enforcement





Crowns and Courage: A Royal Celebration for Boys Town North Florida Youth



Boys Town North Florida recently hosted a royal celebration honoring the youth in the Family Home Program and welcomed 20 youth as official Boys Town Citizens. The evening's theme, "Crowns and Courage," highlighted the strength, perseverance and achievements of the remarkable youth served by Boys Town.

The venue was transformed into a regal setting thanks to the creativity and generosity of Boys Town North Florida supporter Carrie Venclauskas, who decorated the room with elegant crowns, royal centerpieces and beautifully arranged tables fit for kings and queens. A special guest for the evening was Michael Venclauskas, a Boys Town alumnus whose inspiring journey served as a powerful reminder of the lasting impact of the Boys Town mission.

The celebration began long before guests arrived. Thanks to the generosity of Haute Headz Salon and World Class Academy of Beauty, each female youth received complimentary hair and beauty services. Formals by Vince provided tuxedo rentals for all male youth, ensuring everyone looked their very best for the occasion. Adding to the excitement, Mike's Limousine provided transportation for youth and Family-Teachers, allowing everyone to arrive together in style. As each youth stepped onto the red carpet, DJ Chelsea with Amplify enthusiastically introduced the evening's royal guests, creating a memorable and confidence-building experience for all.

After enjoying a delicious dinner and refreshments generously donated by Coca-Cola, guests heard from special guest speaker, Undersheriff Ron Cave of the Leon County Sheriff's Office. Sharing his personal story, he offered words of encouragement, hope and inspiration that resonated with everyone in attendance.

One of the most meaningful moments of the evening was the awards presentation. Every youth received recognition for their unique strengths and accomplishments. Honors included awards such as Most Courageous, Most Considerate, Character Counts, Youth of the Year and Ambassador of the Year.

What made the ceremony truly unforgettable was the way the youth celebrated one another. Their genuine enthusiasm and support reflected the strong sense of community that exists within the Boys Town family. Community members, mentors, Board of Directors members, supporters and friends gathered together to recognize and uplift these deserving youth.

The evening concluded with an unforgettable dance party led by DJ Chelsea. As the celebration came to a close, everyone left with a sense of hope inspired by the resilience and achievements of Boys Town North Florida youth.

This special event would not have been possible without the support of our dedicated sponsors and community partners:

- » Formals by Vince
- » Courtney Wahl Photography
- » Amplify
- » Haute Headz Salon
- » World Class Academy of Beauty
- » Mike's Limousine
- » Coca-Cola
- » Leon County Sheriff's Office
- » The Brodeur Family
- » Dr. William and Joyce Simmons
- » Carrie Venclauskas
- » Hawkeye Marketing



Through their generosity, Boys Town North Florida was able to create a truly memorable evening celebrating the courage, character and bright futures of the youth we are honored to serve.



Boys Town North Florida's Foster Family Services Program Helps Breall Find a Loving Home



Breall entered Boys Town North Florida's Foster Family Services program in July 2020. At the time, she was navigating significant trauma and displaying intense behaviors, including aggression toward herself, peers and adults. She had no contact with her birth siblings and moved through several therapeutic foster homes over the years.

In 2023, Breall was placed in what was hoped to be an adoptive home. However, as her trauma responses escalated, the placement could not continue and Breall once again found herself in transition.

Everything changed the day she went to stay with the Lara family, licensed therapeutic foster parents through Boys Town North Florida, who were providing respite for her then current placement. From the very first day, the Laras felt a connection. They knew Breall was meant to be part of their family.

Over the next year, Breall flourished in their home. Her aggressive behaviors decreased, her school performance improved and she began participating in extracurricular activities. With the support of the Lara family, she learned essential life skills and found healthy ways to express her emotions. She even began learning the martial arts, giving her a safe and empowering outlet to process anger and trauma.



As time passed, Breall began thriving at school, at home and in her relationships. She reconnected with her birth siblings and embraced her role as a big sister to the younger children in the Lara home. She truly became a member of the family.

On May 18, surrounded by her parents, family, her birth sister and Boys Town North Florida staff, Breall officially became a Lara. The courtroom was filled with joy and celebration!

Boys Town North Florida's therapeutic foster care program is honored to celebrate Breall's adoption and the Lara family's unwavering commitment. Even more inspiring, Mr. and Mrs. Lara plan to remain licensed therapeutic foster parents and continue opening their home to children who need safety and healing.

Stories like Breall's are possible because of families who open their hearts and homes. Boys Town North Florida is actively seeking more adults willing to provide the same safe, loving and life-changing environment for children in need.

If you feel called to learn more about fostering, please reach out today. Your home could be the place where a child begins to heal and thrive. Learn more about becoming a foster parent at boystown.org/north-florida/services/foster-care.



A'ohe pau ka 'ike i ka hālau ho'okahi.
("All knowledge is not taught in just one school.")
— Hawaiian Proverb

Boys Town North Florida's 7th Annual Book Fair Saturday, July 18, 2026 | ART Town, Tallahassee, FL

Just as this proverb reminds us that wisdom comes from many sources, reading opens the

doors to many worlds. On Saturday, July 18, Boys Town North Florida held its 7th Annual Book Fair, greeting youth from campus and community programs with a "Aloha!" and lei. This year's theme, "Summer Reading Luau," invited children to step into a whole new world through reading.

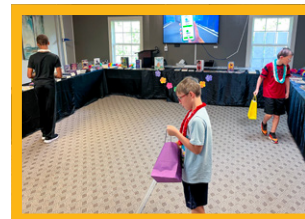
Once again, this year's fair featured diverse books from an array of genres available for browsing and selection, but it also invited youth to submit personalized book requests ahead of time. As a result, every child received a *makana* (special gift) in the form of one of their requested personalized books -- one that reflected their specific interests and reading level, creating a unique and meaningful experience tailored just for them. Honoring their special requests could not be underestimated as youth openly expressed joy and excitement when opening their *makana*. One youth shared, "I have been reading this series and now I finally have the next book!" Another youth gasped when seeing their favorite book in the gift bag.

Dr. Latara Lampkin organized and planned the event, which was co-facilitated by Daria Longley, BTNF Summer Recreation Specialist. Special thanks to Jonathan Whitfield, Loma Garland and Dr. Ellyn Scanlan, other BTNF staff, who helped bring the gift of reading to our BTNF youth.

Executive Director Marcus Lampkin noted, "The annual book fair has become a shared vision of celebrating reading in a fun way. It has truly become a summer tradition. Each year, our youth, families and staff look forward to this event."

We are also deeply grateful to our 2026 sponsors, Eduprehd Research & Development Partners, Color in STEM and Maya's Book Nook, whose generous contributions helped make the event a success. Their support reflects a shared commitment to literacy, education and empowerment.

The annual book fair continues to be a key part of Boys Town North Florida's Literacy Initiative, an ongoing effort to foster a love of reading, improve academic outcomes and ensure that every child in our care has access to the stories that can change their lives.



Mark Your Calendar!

34th Annual Christmas Classic Golf Tournament on December 7th

Dust off your golf clubs, bring them out on the green, and celebrate over 100 years of saving children and healing families at the 34th Annual Christmas Classic Golf Tournament on Monday, December 7!

Teams of four will enjoy a day in the sun while competing for the top score, but the real winners are the hundreds of children and families Boys Town North Florida programs serve each year.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Thompson, Development Director, at 850-933-0283, or michael.thompson2@boystown.org.

Date: Monday, December 7th

Time: Registration and Breakfast begins 8:30 a.m.

Shotgun Start: 10:00 a.m.

Location: Golden Eagle Golf and Country Club



**Register
Today!**



Development Office

Michael Thompson
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

850-933-0283
michael.thompson2@boystown.org

Ryleigh Egros
DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

850-504-5015
ryleigh.egros@boystown.org

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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our mission
Changing the way America cares
for children and families.