



# BULLETIN

Westview's board of directors breaks ground in Weatherford, Oklahoma



## Breaking ground for Launch

Westview is celebrating! On Friday, July 21, 2023, the board of directors and a number of friends, celebrated breaking ground in Weatherford, Oklahoma, on our 2.2 million dollar independent living program for young men, Launch. Our general contractor is beginning construction of the neighborhood's entry road, Brookman Circle. To learn more about Launch, go to [www.westviewboyshome/launch/](http://www.westviewboyshome/launch/).

Ron Bruner, Westview's executive director, made a few remarks before the groundbreaking ceremony.

*Thank you for being here. You honor us with your presence, and we are grateful. We have much to be grateful for today. It is a warm Oklahoma day (thank goodness it's not any hotter!), but we are here*

*celebrating with friends.*

*Later this evening, we will have a bite to eat and then go home to be comfortable with a roof over our heads and air conditioning to keep us cool. These things for which we can be grateful are not available to everyone, though. Across the breadth of our great state, there are young people who aren't surrounded by friends, who don't have a plan for dinner, and who won't have a roof over their heads on this hot July evening. That is precisely why we are here.*

*Westview's board of directors has been challenged with a vision of the problem, and visionary, generous donors are blessing Westview with the resources to work on that problem. This neighborhood will be a safe home for young people who have aged out*

### In this issue . . .

- Westview honors Bev and Donnie Leigh - p. 2
- Pool time is cool time - p. 2
- Thin air, thin places - p. 3
- Network 1:27 honors Terry Owens - p. 4
- A path to their future - p. 4
- Birthdays - p. 4
- A message from home - p. 4

of the systems provided by the state and suddenly find themselves on their own in a challenging world. Here they will be able to imagine a way forward for their lives that brings hope that they can act on and achieve.

We are grateful to be here today to witness this act of hope.

After praying over the site, the board broke ground. The board members and a number of guests stayed to visit and enjoy refreshments provided by Sawatzky Catering. We remain thankful to God and to the donors who have shown the vision to see the importance of this work to the youth of Oklahoma. If you'd like to help create Launch as the next step for Westview youth, please call John Moore at 580-688-9281.

# Westview honors Bev and Donnie Leigh

In June, Westview Boys' Home was proud to honor Bev and Donnie Leigh with the Ed Deaver Service Award. This award is for exemplary service to the young men entrusted to the care of Westview Boys' Home. Westview's director of operations, Terry Owens, presented the award.

The Leigs have cared for young men at Mitchell House for nine years. Ron Bruner, Westview's executive director, observed, "Over the years, there is no counting the number of campouts, fishing trips, weeks of church camp, and visits to historical sites and museums that the Leigs have shared with our young men. We are grateful for their servant hearts and diligent care of their young men."

During their tenure at Westview, the Leigs helped young men get the grades needed to graduate and taught them healthy life skills. They have paid particular attention to good work habits. Donnie and Bev kept their youth engaged in work projects that put money in our young men's savings accounts and others that served less fortunate members of our community.

The Leigs came to Westview from Texarkana, Texas, where Donnie had served as an elder. After their years of service at Westview, the Leigs are retiring and returning to their native Arkansas. The Westview board of directors, team, and young men wish them the best in the years ahead.

*Terry Owens presents the Ed Deaver Service award to Bev and Donnie Leigh*



## Pool time is cool time

Summer can be a fun time when you're young. Being outside to enjoy nature is healthy for all, young and old. We are, though, at that time of year when being outside after lunch can be brutal. This summer in Harmon County, the highs have often ranged from 100° to 106° Fahrenheit. Those temperatures are not unusual for us this time of year, but this summer, we actually have humidity with the heat.

That's why, with the help of our generous friends, we go to the pool once or twice a week during the summer. Hollis has a great public pool we reserve in the evenings for our young men. We also sometimes visit the WAV (Wellington Aquatic Venue), another great cool spot.

Yes, there is swimming, and eventually, a football game will break out in the pool. You can always count on one thing: an uncountable number of cannonballs into the pool from the diving board.

When the evening's done, most of the water is still in the pool! Perhaps more important, everyone is cooler, better exercised, and ready to settle down and get ready for a good night's sleep.

We appreciate, even celebrate, the normal, mundane experiences of life on these long summer evenings.





Lexi, Eric, Ezra, Zeke, & Colton at the summit

## Thin Air, Thin Places

Eric Brandell, Westview's Manager of Central Oklahoma Programs, writes this report about a recent trip with some of our young men.

Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Jesus, and Peter. They all had special encounters with God on a mountain. A Team Ascend staffer called mountains like LaPlata Peak "thin places" where people continue to experience the presence of God in special ways. The close encounter is facilitated by: the beauty of creation, low noise/light pollution, the simplicity of sleeping in tents and cooking over a flame, and relative solitude.

I had the pleasure of accompanying three of our young men, Ezra, Zeke, and Colton, along with my daughter, Lexi, on a six-day Colorado mountain excursion hosted by Team Ascend. We were joined by a youth group from Duncan, making our party a total of sixteen including three volunteer guides.

The ground under my half-inch sleeping pad was cold and hard, which meant it was the worst week of sleep I'd had in a long time, but I enjoyed every minute of it. There was frost on the ground some mornings, and we all looked forward to the warmth of a mesmerizing campfire each evening. Our week started with an outdoor church service surrounded by the Rocky Mountains, followed by a 200' rappel to warm up our trust and bravery—a leap of faith. We then transferred to the trailhead and made the 20-minute hike to low camp. Our group had two crews, divided mainly at mealtime, with Ezra serving well as my crew's leader. We ate traditional backpacking food including granola bars, oatmeal, fruit snacks, pudding, ramen, tinned meat, and strawberry cheesecake (hey, we had to celebrate making the summit!).

Day 2 was a two-hour hike to high camp, where we would stay for the next three nights. We crossed streams, tripped over rocks, and sweated, all while marveling at God's majestic creation. High camp was in the evergreen trees near a picturesque meadow, just below an expansive boulder deposit and beside a creek flowing with snowmelt. The guys and I braved a bath in those chilly waters once, and there were a lot of whoops and hollers. A highlight of Day 3 was "solo time"

wherein each camper spent three hours in solitude singing, praying, and reading Scripture. For many, this was the high point of the entire trip.

We rose at 3:30 am on Day 4 to attempt to summit LaPlata Peak. It took seven hours to traverse the snow-capped mountain, with low temps, high winds, and thin air serving as adversaries. There was blood, sweat, and tears, but we summitted the 14,336' peak and basked in the glory of viewing the world from that high vantage point. It took another three hours to get back to high camp, making for a ten-hour roundtrip. Most people collapsed into a nap, but I soaked my swollen ankles and hands in the cold stream, and saved my tiredness for a good night's sleep. Zeke noted that evening that it was the hardest work he had ever done. We were all reminded that we can do hard things.

We hiked out the next morning, filled with gratitude and awe. A shower and pizza never felt so good. That evening, Team Ascend hosted a banquet, awards ceremony, and a final devotional. Ezra was given the Barnabas Award for being a consummate encourager during the week, and Lexi won the TEAM (Trust, Encouragement, Attitude, Motivation) Award.

It was a long drive home to Oklahoma, but our hearts were full and our relationships stronger. We learned that climbing a mountain is a microcosm of life – a beautiful trek wherein we need to encourage and share one another's burdens. It was an honor to spend this special week with these youth. They represented Westview very well.

Ezra with the Barnabas award



# Network 1:27 honors Terry Owens

At its annual conference, Network 1:27 honored Terry Owens with the Distinguished Service Award. One of the highest honors bestowed by this organization, this award honors exemplary service in the field of child and family services of more than twenty years. Network 1:27 is a sixty-nine-year-old association of agencies affiliated with Churches of Christ that serve families in a host of ways.

Ron Bruner presented Owens with the award, described Terry's numerous accomplishments, and went on to say:

*We cannot measure what are, perhaps, the most important results of Terry's ministry: hurting families restored to health, young men set firmly on a sustainable career path, children who saw what a godly parent looks like, caregivers with years added to their careers, legislators who were shown a wise choice to make, young adults who were kept from homelessness, generations who have come to know God.*

*For decades, Terry Owens has worked alongside God to care for children, who are clearly at the center of God's heart. Today we stand to honor Terry and the good God has done through him.*

God has blessed Westview with a wonderful team, and we celebrate the many honors bestowed on our team and team members.

*Ron Bruner presents the Distinguished Service Award to Terry Owens in Lubbock*



## A path to their future

For decades, the Westview Foundation has collaborated with Westview Boys' Home to help our young men go to college. College isn't for everyone, but for some of Westview's alumni, college is part of the essential path to the career of their dreams. The Foundation helps our college students pay their tuition and avoid having too much debt.

Westview alumni proudly serve their communities as social workers, teachers, preachers, accountants, business owners and in many other noble professions.

You can help the Foundation help our young men who go on to college. To find out ways how, contact the Foundation at: The Westview Foundation, P.O. Box 714, Hollis, OK 73550; (580) 688-3608.



## A Message from Home

**Hope** - At Westview Boys' Home, hope is more than wishful thinking. Hope is having a vision for the future, believing that God has made us capable of achieving that future, and imagining a workable path from where we are now to where we are living in the future we've imagined and hope for.

What about truth? Yes, truth can describe what happens in our past, good and bad. Truth, though, is intended to set us free, not hold us prisoner. Our mistakes are not meant to be gravestones but launching pads. The truth is that God created us in God's image and that God persists in working with us to live up to that. That is a solid foundation for hope.

For the young men at Westview, our hope is that they will be able to move from grief and despair to a hope rooted in truth. When they do that, they truly learn how to flourish in the way God intended, as do we.

Blessings to you and yours,



Dr. Ron Bruner  
Executive Director

## BIRTHDAYS

Alex Sosa ..... 7/14

Zeke Campbell ..... 8/12

A. J. Brown ..... 9/11

**Westview is supported by its many friends, and local congregations of the Churches of Christ**