



## Exploring a brave new world

Whatever else is true, the current pandemic has changed the world that we live in and in which our young men will grow up. Some experiences, like exploring our world at a museum, seem unwise at the moment. So, we substitute with the things that we can do, like exploring our world on a bike.

The pandemic has clearly revealed to all of us that some things are more important than others. The common denominator most people are missing right now is relationship. Hardly any of us is able to have enough substantial face-to-face time with people who matter to us. We are feeling the loss.

So, at Westview, we are working on our relationship skills with the people with whom we live. How can I work well with my co-workers? How

can I understand the problems my friend struggles with? How can I communicate well with my caregivers? How can I explain my hopes and dreams to my family?

The reality is, all of us can get better at our relationship skills. For the young men at Westview, though, the thorough development of relationship skills is a key to the restoration of relationships with their family and community. Those skills also empower their reunification with family.

The brave new world for all of us to explore right now is actually an ancient one made new by a new perspective: the nature of human relationships. We're proud of the courage with which our young men are exploring this complex and challenging world.

## Building habits for life

It's no great mystery; a life that is healthy physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually comes from building healthy practices that strengthen each of those areas of human life.

The reality is, though, that different practices work better for different people. Some people love to run, and so some of our guys choose to run the section lines around campus or Royal field in town. Others prefer biking to stay physically fit.

Others work on spiritual practices, like Bible reading or prayer, to strengthen the spiritual part of their lives.

We encourage our young men to choose wisely. Good practices build habits, habits build strengths, and strengths become virtues shaping the character of our young men.





Kanyon and his first complete project

## Boys and their toys

Kanyon is one of our young men living at Sweetwater House. Over the past couple of years, it has been a pleasure to see him grow in all kinds of ways, but watching his relationships flourish might be the most satisfying. He has wonderful relationships with his caregivers, his school teachers sing his praises, and he is well liked by his peers on campus. It is his relationships with those off campus that we want to spotlight here.

Over the past year, Kanyon has worked at Ray Highland Auto Body in nearby Gould, Oklahoma. Ray has skillfully handled Westview's repairs for some years now, and has helped us keep our vehicles running well and looking sharp. We appreciate that work so much, but it is his willingness to work with our young men that is extraordinary.

A few years ago, Ray asked if we had a young man that would be interested in learning his craft. Ray began working with one of our young men, River, and taught him basic repair skills but also the

values of hard work and responsibility. When River moved on from Westview, Ray stepped up again to ask for another young man to apprentice.

Kanyon began working with Ray last summer, and it has been an extraordinary partnership. Working with Ray has helped Kanyon build his confidence, helped teach valuable social skills, and instilled the idea that working hard pays off. As part of his job with Ray, Kanyon was able to use his new found skills to work on and restore his own pickup truck, a Ford Explorer that needed some TLC. You can see the pride Kanyon has in his work every time you ask him about his truck.

It's an understatement to say that we couldn't achieve successes like this with our young men without having special partners in our community like Ray Highland. Westview is blessed to work with wonderful neighbors and thoughtful business partners who make stories like these a reality.



Alumni at our 50th anniversary celebration

## Calling all alumni!

Since 1956 many young men have called Westview home. Young men from many different backgrounds and family situations have experienced living together and building lasting relationships.

Although it may be hard to number how many relationships have been formed over the past 64 years, we hope that many of them are connections that have stood the test of time. To help keep these relationships going we are excited to announce our Westview Alumni group.

The alumni group is for former residents of Westview Boys' Home from any era. A private Facebook group page has been set up for you to share your

memories, stories, and to empower you to keep in touch with each other. Only Westview alumni will have access to this group page.

This alumni effort is led by Westview Boys' Home alumnus, Doug Gonzalez. Doug has served Westview for over 25 years as a houseparent and as our ranch manager.

If you are a former resident, or you know former residents that would be interested in this group, please join us at: [www.facebook.com/groups/westviewalumni](https://www.facebook.com/groups/westviewalumni).



# Back to School - 2020

Westview's Terry Owens and Josh Birney write about parenting on our website. This monthly series is called **Becoming a Better Parent**. We believe every parent can become a better parent. In this article, Terry has suggestions for getting back to school.

It's that time of year when families face "back to school" challenges. Those challenges are even more intense this year because of Covid-19. Some school administrations are keeping face-to-face instruction, but others are developing a blended learning plan which combines personal and virtual classes for some children. Some children will only have virtual classes. Any of these options are going to be challenging for parents and their children. Here are a few ideas to help normalize your world during abnormal times.

Our first suggestion is to do the normal school shopping. Take your child shopping for school clothes, school supplies, and a new backpack, even if they will be going to school in a virtual classroom. Make it a fun trip;

go to lunch or get ice cream. This can be fun even if you choose to shop online. Because children love to get mail, make sure that all their orders are addressed to them. Also plan a special lunch for the first day of classes, maybe ordering from their favorite place to eat. This can be a time of connection and relationship building.

Get organized. Most parents already have routines, such as morning and bedtime routines. Even if your child may be going to class virtually, their schedule should reflect a normal school year. Getting up, getting dressed for school, and eating a healthy breakfast are vital for the emotional and mental health of your child. During the school day, schedule routine breaks every two hours for physical activities like going for a nature walk, playing outside, swinging, or playing ball. Physical activities promote a balanced brain chemistry that will enable your child to learn and organize information more effectively. Along with physical activities, be sure to provide healthy snacks and water. Dehydration affects the ability to learn. By the time a child feels thirsty, they've already lost 15% of their ability to learn.

Take time for yourself; schedule alone time for your own mental health. You are going to feel the stress of the day as much as your child. You can't be there for your child if you aren't taking care of your emotional and mental health. Designate a quiet place you can go and collect yourself. Meditate, read, enjoy aromatherapy, or go for a nature walk. Find something that works for you and empowers you to find emotional balance. Eat healthily and share a healthy snack with your child at snack time. Don't forget to get plenty of sleep. You should get at least seven hours of sleep to be prepared for the next day. It's okay if you have a bad day but be sure to communicate to your child that you are struggling. Kids learn by example and will in turn communicate to you when they are struggling.

Inevitably, we will make mistakes. We will speak or react in a way that is not our true nature. Deal with your own humanity with patience and grace. We are all human and imperfect, so remember to own those mistakes and apologize. Use those episodes as teaching moments with your children.



Would you like to know when these articles are posted online? When you're on Facebook, "like" Westview Boys' Home and you'll be notified about these articles and kept abreast of activities on the ranch.

Steve Young and the young men at Overstreet have a back to school celebration

# Did you know?

**Westview Boys' Home can accept publicly traded stocks as a charitable gift** – Corporate stocks can be directly transferred to Westview Boys Home and make an excellent charitable gift. If stock you've held for more than a year has appreciated in value, you may deduct the stock's fair market value at transfer while

avoiding capital gains taxes. Because we are a 501(c)(3) public charity, you receive the maximum tax benefits for your charitable gifts.

If you would like to make a gift of corporate stock to care for our young men, we can help. Please contact Ron Bruner or John Moore at 580-688-9281.



The goal of going back to school: successful graduation, whether from middle or high school

## Stewards of the land

One of the focuses of the Westview Foundation is its funding of our farming and ranching efforts. The Foundation's work has increased our farm's hay growing capacity to well provide for our beef herd, even in years where we've experienced drought.

That stable herd is the source of many livestock projects for our young men, a protein source for our growing young charges, and a stream of revenue for their daily care. On top of that, a well-tended farm and ranch make our campus a beautiful place we're proud to show our friends and the friends of our young men. To find out more about how you can help, contact the Foundation at: The Westview Foundation, P.O. Box 714, Hollis, OK 73550; (580) 688-3608.

### BIRTHDAYS

Landon Frye.....9/23  
JT Tallman.....10/27  
Brezlyn Johnson.....11/21

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



### A Message from Home

Whatever the level of public response to the current pandemic, the work at Westview Boys' Home has continued without a moment's lapse. Every day our good young men continue working on their lives alongside their skillful mentors, our caregivers.

Such is the strength of the program that some have completed their work and have been able to return to their families. This has allowed us to carefully and prudently make room for new young men who need the safe and healing care that Westview offers.

Frankly, though, we could have never done this without the constant support that the many friends of the Home continue to provide for our young men. So many friends and families that have begun their support of this work have stayed steadfast with us. I thank each of you for that commitment and for each one of those gifts of love for our young men.

Please take good care of yourselves; you are making a difference in our world.



Dr. Ron Bruner  
Executive Director