



## More than ornaments

Every year my wife and I begin the holiday season by getting out the Christmas ornaments to decorate the tree. It's amazing that a few boxes can awaken memories from so many years. None of these bits and baubles has any real monetary value; they are priceless because we have gathered them over the years as reminders of Christmases past. The sight of them stirs hopes of wonderful Christmases yet to come.

When children see the tree, they are full of questions. Each piece of wood, glass, yarn, or plastic becomes a prompt to tell them the beautiful and challenging parts of our family history. Once the stories start, they remind us of ornaments that didn't survive the years and the dear family members who no longer gather around the tree. These precious memories shape an amazingly beautiful family story.

The young men at Westview are already gathering holiday memories, too.

Some of those chapters are beautiful, while others may be traumatic or challenging. They struggle with being in a hard part of their history.

We all know this part of the story. Our hero has been knocked down; it doesn't appear that there is a path of escape, much less of victory. And then something wonderful happens.

Enter the sage. At just the right time, they bring the help, the wisdom, the vision for our young hero to move forward. And who is this sage?

Our first reaction might be to say the amazing caregivers at Westview are the sages; they do bring love, wisdom, and resources that our heroes need.

I think the hope-giving sage is the wise soul with the vision to give their time and resources to make Westview happen. They step alongside our caregivers with the very gifts from God our young men need. I thank God for them and the victories they empower.



Tristan enjoying a sunny afternoon

## Respect is powerful

Westview's *Five Respects* are an important part of our program. We encourage boys to respect God, respect self, respect others, respect property, and respect nature. Respecting God doesn't require our young men to believe in God but to respect the rights of others to worship God, or not, unhindered. This is religious liberty.

Often our boys observe the way Christianity influences our lives and behavior and they come to develop their own faith.

Recently, Tristan stood in front of the congregation, helping guide people's minds during our observance of the Lord's Supper. He's led prayers in worship before, but this was much more challenging. Though he was nervous, he did a great job. We respect Tristan and the growth he and his peers are showing in so many areas of life.



Breaking bread together

## Honoring our friends & allies: educators

Every year—as they prepare to go back to the classroom—teachers join Westview Boys' Home for lunch on one of their in-service days. This is now a 20-year-old tradition.

Westview maintains this tradition in order to honor the teachers and staff who are a part of the Hollis Public Schools. These professionals give their best efforts for the young men at Westview and their work is life-changing. Because of their caring service, we prepare this meal as a token of our appreciation.

Dr. Ron Bruner, executive director of Westview, greeted them and gave them an update of current events at Westview. He then led a prayer of thanks for the meal and said a blessing over all the teachers and staff.

As is customary, the menu was freshly grilled hamburgers, baked potatoes, and all of the fixings. Cathy Coaly, Westview's commissary manager, oversaw preparations for the meal. Terry Owens and Josh Birney, members of the administrative team, grilled the burgers.

Teachers were also given small tokens of Westview's appreciation.

# Taking a break in the fall

Every year as the weather starts to cool, the young men at Westview begin to ask the question, "Are we going to Six Flags this year?" During the school's fall break, it has been Westview's habit for everyone on campus to take a little vacation to Arlington, Texas. This year was no exception.

On Friday night the boys spent the evening chasing each other in the laser tag arena, playing video games, digging for prizes in claw machines, and eating pizza.



Some of our Westview Family fly sky high indeed

Our friends at *It's Family, Food, and Fun* gave our boys a wonderful night of entertainment, including the first experience many of our young men had with virtual reality.

On Saturday the main event began as the guys and their caregivers enjoyed the fun at Six Flags over Texas. Over eight hours in the park gives everyone a wide range of experiences in rides, shows, and some Halloween frights.

The truly courageous guys ride roller coasters with Bev Leigh, one of our caregivers.

This trip stretches some of our guys but they always walk away with the question, "Are we going to Six Flags next year?" We are always grateful to the many friends of our young men who make it possible for us to say, "Yes!"

## It's a commitment

When a young man chooses to join the calf program at Westview, it's more than an animal project; it's a commitment. From late spring—when we buy our calves—until early spring show season—this is nearly a year-round effort.

Christian, Derek, Jess, and Noah committed to the calf program this year. Noah cares for a steer; the others have a steer and a heifer.

Our young men soon learn that their ability to control these large animals with deceptive speed depends very much on having a trusting relationship with them. So, tying up and down in the cooling house in the summer is important, as is breaking winter ice in the waterer.



Noah and his calf

Working with calves brings wisdom and self-awareness. A youth working with a heifer knows that she will eventually rejoin the herd to have calves. A teen with a steer understands the connection between this animal and food on the table. Importantly, young people who've faced these realities are better equipped to be good stewards of our world.

# An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

Very few things are as challenging as a child having a bad day in the classroom. Every teacher can testify to this. The team at Westview knows this, too, and has worked with a battery of evidence-based methods to help these kids find hope. We are now about the business of sharing what we've learned with our friends and allies: classroom teachers.

We have taken on this work in order to use our hard-won expertise to help prevent young people from getting into trouble in the classroom. This is one step we take to help prevent children needing out-of-home placements and is very much in keeping with our mission. This outreach can help prevent children from requiring foster care and yet the need for the vibrant residential program of Westview Boys' Home still remains strong.

Consequently, Westview Family Services recently held its TBRI® and the Classroom Seminar in Childress, Texas. Educators from the Childress Public Schools and the Green Belt Cooperative were present. Joshua Birney and Terry Owens, Westview Family Services team members, led this seminar. Westview

Family Services is an outreach of Westview Boys' Home serving at-risk youth who aren't in residential care.

Over 140 teachers, school staff, and special education directors were in attendance for this in-service training.

A major component of this seminar is TBRI® methodology. Trust-Based Relational Intervention® is an evidence-based method to work with children from hard places. The Karyn Purvis Institute at Texas Christian University has certified Birney and Owens as TBRI® practitioners. The objective of this workshop was to equip teachers and staff with a better understanding of trauma and its effect on the brain. Workshop topics ranged from brain development and TBRI® principles to classroom implementation and classroom management.

Trauma-informed classrooms are essential in helping children from hard places have successful interactions and relationships in the school environment. Westview Family Services is pleased to be able to offer these in-depth conversations with teachers.



Terry Owens presents TBRI material to classroom teachers



Dylan, eye-to-eye with his pig

## It's time for pigs again!

When the weather begins to turn and the leaves fall, the young men at Westview know it's time to clear out the hog barn, re-set the pens and get ready for new pigs.

This year Brayden, Dylan, Eli, JT, Luke, and Tyler have decided to show pigs. They'll spend the next few months caring for their animals: watering, feeding, washing, weighing, and walking them. There are pens to be cleaned and dozens of other errands. All of this continues through show season and up to the Oklahoma Youth Expo this spring.

What will these young men gain from this experience? They learn much about relationships because the pigs and boys bond. They'll better understand personal responsibility because the life of a living being is literally in their care. Our young men will grow in their knowledge of nature and the fragility of life.

An investment in the pig program turns out to be an investment in the life and learning of young people, each of whom are better for the experience.

# Did you know?

Gifts of appreciated stock, bonds and mutual funds can offer a significant tax savings to you as a friend of the young men at Westview. You receive a charitable deduction for the fair market value of the donated assets while avoiding capital gains tax. We have accounts at several brokerage firms and can easily facilitate

the transfer of securities. As a 501 (c)3 nonprofit, we will issue a receipt for your taxes in the amount of the value of the stock at the time we receive it. For more information about donating stocks, bonds, or mutual funds, please contact Ron Bruner or John Moore at 580-688-9281.



Sweetwater House, on Westview's ranch in northern Harmon County

## Investing in education

The Westview Foundation uses its endowments to serve the young men at Westview—and the farm and ranch on which they live—in important ways. The Foundaton is particularly active in helping Westview alumni with education. Very few students have the resources to make it through college on their own; they need help. When young men come from hard places, their family often can't help. In those cases, Westview steps up and does as much as or more than a family might. The difference is life-changing. Often these young men are the first in their family to obtain a college degree. To find out more about how you can help, contact them at: The Westview Foundation, P.O. Box 714, Hollis, OK 73550; (580) 688-3608.

BIRTHDAYS	
Tyler Fletcher.....	12/2
Tristan Watkins.....	12/5
Eli Turner .....	12/5
D. J. Blomgren .....	1/15
Christian Fincher.....	2/7
Noah Meyer.....	3/1
Derek Chapin.....	3/2
Caleb Parkes.....	3/30

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



### A Message from Home

If there is anything that being at Westview Boys' Home for over 20 years has taught me, it is a respect for legacy. With careful intentions—or not—each of us leaves the world better or worse than we found it. Thank God for the many souls who have chosen caring for the young men at Westview as a part of their legacy. Their loving and sacrificial gifts have been life and soul-saving for young men from hard places. Their love goes beyond our boys; they've often cared for our caregivers like family. Their legacy is often more than their gifts. For many of our friends, their ingrained generosity has so shaped the hearts of their children, their nephews, and their nieces that those later generations choose to join in this work. We thank God for the way these generations honor the legacy of those who have made such a difference and choose to make such a large impact themselves. May God bless your legacy by bringing about the good for which you hope and act.



Dr. Ron Bruner  
Executive Director