



WESTVIEW
BOYS' HOME

BULLETIN



Hard at work to make a yard more beautiful

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Play, work, and learning . . .

Fred Rogers was right when he said that “play really is the work of childhood.” Play is the way children come to understand the world around them and practice their power to shape the space in which they live. Their playful discoveries bring a deep joy to their parents—and their grandparents! Children see this joy, and delight in their power to bring it.

Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play really is the work of childhood.

- Fred Rogers

As children move into adolescence, the boundaries between play, work, and learning become more challenging. It is one thing to push a play lawnmower until one is bored with it; it is another to push a very

real—and heavy—mower through tall grass on a hot day. What once was play is now just work.

Some of us--professional athletes and musicians--can still call our work play, but for most of us, the connection between work and play is not so clear. So, we learn to find joy in a job completed with style or craftsmanship. Or we see the fruit in our labors, either in the good it does for others or the enjoyment it empowers in our lives.

In the **Summer Work and Fun** program at Westview Boys' Home, our young men work on putting play, work, and learning together in ways that are uniquely their own.

When they apply for jobs on campus, they learn how to apply for a job and how to behave for an interview. Once they have the job, they learn that being on-time and ready to work matters. Most of them learn to find joy in finishing a job that is well done.

The money they earn is deposited in their accounts at Westview. Half of their earnings goes to their spending and half to their saving accounts. Delaying gratification is always a hard lesson to learn.

Many of our young men use their spending money to make their experience of our summer excursions more fun. A surprising number of them, though, use their hard-earned cash to buy presents for loved ones in their family. They are beginning to understand that not only can their work bring joy to themselves or the ones they love, their work has the power to provide for the needs of others. This move toward financial independence is powerful.

We remain grateful for the partners, numerous and generous, who make our **Summer Work and Fun** program a reality. You are empowering play, work, and learning all at once!

An education of knowledge and skills

Westview Boys' Home believes in the power of education. This entire school year has been an investment in providing the best possible virtual classroom experience our young men could have during the COVID-19 pandemic. We're very proud of our young men and how well they have adapted.

As important as it is to "hit the books" and gain broad, fundamental, factual knowledge, it's also important to gain real-life skills that empower our young men to function as adults who can live out on their own. That's one reason every young man who comes to Westview takes the Ansell-Casey Life Skills Inventory. This tool empowers the young men

and our team to understand the basic life skills that they have and those they need to learn. Those skills are large and small, including cooking a meal, doing laundry, sewing on a button, and driving a car.

It's one thing to read about cooking in a cook book and another to actually experience the challenge of dealing with the heat in the kitchen. Experience (with guidance from mentors) gradually builds both skill and confidence, whether grilling a burger or making a pillow.

We're grateful to the Hollis Schools for collaborating with us to provide a rich learning experience for our young men.



Derek learns about grilling



Eli starts a seam



Christian proudly shows his work



A painting by James

Collaboration for the sake of children

When it comes to helping children from hard places—and the families from which they come—those who want to help should collaborate and not compete. Not only does Westview help young men on our 1,500-acre ranch, we

help young people across Oklahoma and Texas by training caring professionals in evidence-based methods to empower them to better work with at-risk youth. Westview has both the resources and experience to make this happen.

The realities of the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily shut down training for new practitioners, so the Westview team has gladly stepped into the gap for organizations who felt that improving their methods was too important to wait. Our carefully prepared presentations have empowered hundreds of professionals to stay engaged with the youth in their care, even those youth who can present very real challenges.

Do you know schools, churches, or other organizations that want to better cope with youth from hard places? Contact Terry Owens or Josh Birney at Westview to discuss your vision for your work with youth.



Josh Birney teaches a class of residential care workers

Moving into the new reality

Young men from hard places have found life-changing opportunities at Westview Boys' Home since 1956. Westview's rural setting gives young men a chance for a new beginning in an environment where they can learn new skills and develop positive habits. Caring for animals, taking care of chores, catching up in school, and living in a positive environment empowers these youth to grow spiritually, emotionally, physically, academically, and socially.

Through individualized training and guidance from highly trained Westview team members, young men who were once viewed as being "at-risk" and a burden on their communities become productive members of society. Having known devastating failure, they find paths to success in a nurturing setting. In the open spaces of Westview's ranch, these young men find renewed hope for a brighter future. Even so, the Westview team continues to move forward into the new reality that stands before us.

Applying evidence-based methods with at-risk youth

Westview was among the first to apply the evidence-based principles developed by Dr. Karyn Purvis and Dr. David Cross at Texas Christian University. Trust-Based Relational Intervention® (TBRI®) empowers children to cope with the trauma in their past and learn new coping skills to build sustainable relationships. Realizing that trauma often leads to the development of negative behaviors, TBRI helps youngsters develop positive ways of dealing with the struggles they have experienced and overcome the negative behaviors of their past.

Since Westview Boys' Home began using TBRI, they have seen greatly improved success of the youth in their care. Schools, youth organizations, churches, and others have seen the strength of this program and have turned to Westview for training in TBRI as used on the ranch. Westview team members have conducted seminars for several school districts, churches, and for other childcare organizations including one of the largest residential childcare programs in Oklahoma. We will be doing more of this work in the coming year.



Adding parental education and preventative interventions

To share this wealth of experience, Westview Boys' Home has expanded its outreach by developing Westview Family Services, a part of Westview that provides training for schools, childcare facilities, and families. Westview Family Services conducts workshops centered around the principles of TBRI® that help parents develop skills and practices helping them become better parents. Westview Family Services also offers counseling for families, parents, and children to empower them to build a more positive family environment and to avoid out-of-home placements for their children. To make this program more accessible to more Oklahomans, Westview Family Services has opened an office in Oklahoma City.



Rebuilding a transitional program for youth aging out of care

Westview is rebuilding its Westview Transitions program, a work that empowers young men who are 18 and older to find a sustainable path to independent adulthood. This program was successful in Harmon County, yet the Westview team has realized that this program will thrive in a setting with expanded educational and job opportunities for program participants.

Building on our experience and the best practices of other programs, Westview plans to purchase a piece of property on the west side of Oklahoma City and build homes that empower young men as they transition from living "at-home" to having their own home. The young men who participate in Westview Transitions will share a duplex with two other young men. There will be a highly trained mentor on-site to provide the young men with the help and guidance they need.



A rare opportunity!

For over 64 years, Westview Boys' Home has provided continually improving care for young men from hard places. The quality of our work is directly related to the quality of our people. Because we understand the value of good team members, we work hard (and are successful) in keeping them on the



team longer than most ministries or nonprofits.

Consequently, an opening on our team is rare. We want our friends to know, though, that we now have several openings. One opening results from one of our caregiver couples finishing their "tour of duty" and creating an opening for new caregivers. The other two job opportunities result from our work to improve the quality of care for our young men and to increase the preventative care we offer to others..

Westview Boys' Home is now recruiting for the following jobs:

- Caregivers, Hollis; Oklahoma
- Social Worker; Hollis, Oklahoma
- Licensed Counselor; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

If you or someone you know is interested in the challenging work shared by our amazing team, contact Terry Owens, director of operations, at 580-688-9281.

Stewards of the land

There is a simple beauty to the ranch land at Westview Boys' Home. The gently rolling hills, the ancient oak trees, and the well-tended pastures and fields are both productive and photogenic.

Our ranch manager, Doug Gonzalez, works hard to be a careful steward of the land and the natural resources it provides. He cares for our livestock and protects the wildlife that make our ranch their home.

His greatest financial partner in this work is the Westview Foundation. For decades the Foundation has worked to keep our farm and ranch strong. 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

James Green	5/27
Kanyon Bradford	6/2
A. J. Brown	9/11
Landon Frye	9/23
Kaden Hogan	9/23

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



A Message from Home

The team at Westview Boys' Home has much to be thankful for. With help from the Hollis Public Schools, we've made it through a year of online classes—one of the ways we've coped with the pandemic. We are grateful for the extra effort required by the wonderful educators at Hollis.

Through this year, God has blessed our efforts to keep our young men safe, and we are most thankful for that. God has kept every single one of our young men and our team COVID-free, which is an extraordinary gift.

Amid all of the challenges of this year, the many friends of Westview have continued to remember us in their prayers and in their generosity. Not only has this empowered our ongoing work, it has given us hope.

Now, as our country moves forward from the challenges of the pandemic, Westview returns to its vision of serving young men from hard places—and their families—in more diverse and powerful ways. We thank you for journeying with us.



Dr. Ron Bruner
Executive Director