

## BOYS HOME ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Spring 2016

Greetings again to all BHAA members, their families, alumni friends, and honorary members!! I hope that the year 2015 has been good in most ways to you all! For myself it has been a year of self reflection. I have spent much time reflecting on my life while a young boy on "the Hill", and my life after leaving Boys Home. While on the "Hill" during the sixties, life was, I am sure, different from what the young men experience each day today. Some of us older alumni members thought of the "Hill" as our permanent residence. We would take short visits to whatever family members we may have had on holidays and during the summer. Most of us were happy to get back to the "Hill" and our "regular routine" of school, work (we called it rack-up, and I still don't know why?) play sports, etc. Some of us had experienced a harder life before Boys Home, so we were able to learn to appreciate what the staff was doing for us. Some of us back then were not able to see the positive benefits of Boys Home. They would spend a short time and for whatever reason they would leave. Of course we would speculate among ourselves as to the reasons. Maybe they ran away too many times; or too many fights with peers; or poor school behavior, etc. etc.? Some of us remained at Boys Home not because we loved it, or even liked it, but because we had no choice. As we stuck it out over time, we were able to gain some glimpse of what the staff members were trying to instill in us. Many of us remember the incentives to get good grades such as more pay (not that we got that much pay). We recall the citizenship levels (called group 1-4). By moving up we were able to get more privileges and better pay. Rack up and chores taught us to take pride in a job well done and accept consequences of a job poorly done. By living among our peers we were taught to respect each other strengths and weaknesses and to work as a group (in cottages and in sports) for common goals. Some of us were able to excel in sports, academics, clubs and scouting. etc. We were very lucky to have health and dental care (many parents struggle today to provide these for their children). We were taught through church and Sunday School enough to at least allow us to make up our minds and to make choices regarding our spiritual life and goals.

I believe one of our greatest advantages was to be in a unique position to gain experience in two ways. One to have the boundaries and structure of Boys Home along with the large number of recreational, sports, clubs and activities. And also benefit socially by going to the public schools where we were involved in sports, student government, clubs, band, chorus, etc. etc. Here we were treated as equals in everything attempted just as the local youth.

Fast forward to today and we see the young men on the "Hill" receiving many of the same benefits we received plus much more. Some of these include their own campus school with all the tools needed, including licensed teachers to guarantee their success. An Independent living program where they are taught to live alone and take care of their own financial budget. A religious program that allows them to choose for themselves. A technological program which teaches different trades allowing for future job success. All of these and more added to the benefits we received in the past have made Boys Home a much improved home and placement for young boys in need of an environment in which they can thrive and excel. For many years the "Hill" has been blessed with excellent leadership. Dr. Rogers, Mr. Burrowes, Mr. Tysinger and Mr. Wheatley have all contributed to the fine home and place that Boys Home of Virginia is today.

What does all of this mean to us alumni - the ones who have been lucky enough to have been placed on the "Hill?" It means that before it is too late, we need to recognize our gift and to do what we can (even in small ways) to give back and support the work of Boys Home. We have had a very good representation from our members from the 50's and 60's. Our members from the 70s, 80s, 90s have improved, but we all can do better! Our newsletter goes out to all members on our roster and Mr. Pinner tells me we have one hundred plus members on facebook that talk to each other. This is a great thing! I am placing a challenge to all BHAA members from all past years. Boys Home of Virginia and Mr. Wheatley are in the middle of a capital fund raising campaign through this year and into September 2017. These funds are very important to the daily operation of Boys Home and to the approximate 55 boys in residence. For the rest of the year 2016 and 2017, I am asking all of you to send what you can to support Boys Home. Every dollar is important, no matter how large or small it may be. Please note on your check that you are a BHAA member, or BHAA friend, so we can track the total amount contributed by our membership. Remember that the donations (your check) are made to Boys Home of Virginia. Boys home will keep track of our totals. Your rights to privacy will be completely respected. Also please help us (BHAA) continue to help the boys.

I hear that Boys Home will graduate ten boys this June. This will take about half of our funds to gift each boy with \$100.00. If we have as many as possible to give whatever they can, we can guarantee our continued support of the boys. If we can get 100 alumni to send a gift of at least \$10.00-\$25.00, we will be able to meet our BHAA budget. Let's all search our hearts and pocketbooks and do our very best to meet this goal.

Well let's talk about FUN! Well do you guys and girls (we do have a few girls that are friends and members) know what is coming up in June?! Yes, it is our June Summer Picnic Extravaganza on the "Hill." Every one of you and your family member and friends are now officially invited. Bring family and friends and be very proud of your roots which were made at Boys Home. Bring proper clothing for the outdoor activities.

I will share a personal story with you. As a youngster on the "Hill" when I visited my mother, brothers and sisters I noticed that they were living in very poor conditions. My Dad deserted my Mom with five kids. She worked two waitress jobs to attempt to keep a roof and some degree of food. She seldom could afford electricity and heat. The kids picked up coal and wood for heat. I was guilty just like many of you at taking for granted our gift of the "Hill." Do you guys ever recall even one day that you missed a meal? Or did not have clothing for school? Or did not have heat or electricity. I don't. I was so sad and embarrassed to see my brothers and sisters with no clothing for school. My brothers and I would sleep in the same bed on my visits and we slept in our underwear. Mine looked very nice; my brothers were full of holes! Please be proud of your gift of Boys Home and do your best to support it and their work. Only give what you can, every bit helps.

We are trying to increase our list of Hall of Fame candidates. Please notify Boys Home, Mr. Wheatley or myself if you are interested. You are all invited to submit your resume as long as you are known to the treasurer of Boys Home you are considered based on your life at Boys Home and your accomplishments after leaving. Please help us with this!

I want to thank you all for your help and support in my past years as your President. Our BHAA officers are all up for re-election and/or election in June. Keep this in mind if you would like to be a

nominee. UPDATE: Bobby Mills was elected as our Vice President/Treasurer last June, and Mr. Dan Light is BHAA representative to the Board of Trustees.

Please let me or Martha Terry know if anyone is sick, in the hospital, or passed away. We will see that cards and flowers are sent if we can. As many of you already know, we lost our brother, John Dunn last fall; and Mr. Wheatley had successful heart surgery and is making a good recovery.

Thanks to all for keeping up with each other on social media. Mr. Pinner and Mr. Marple tell me that this has improved. Thanks to all for your support of visits and financial support in the past. Let's make sure we mark our calendar for Alumni Day on – **Saturday – June 25, 2016.**

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**Jim Miller '66 BHAA President**

**BOYS HOME ALUMNI MEETING**

**Saturday, June 25, 2016**

- 10-11:00 AM Social gathering at Terry Museum in Administration Building**
- 11-12:00 AM Free time to visit boys in their cottages**
- Noon Lunch with boys & staff in Ben Parrott Dining Hall**
- 1:00 PM Presentation of the BHAA Alumni Award**
- 1:10-2:15 PM Alumni Business Meeting**
- 2:30 PM Recreational Activities with boys (paint ball, softball, basketball, fishing, etc.)**

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**Please fill in and mail to Boys Home Alumni Assoc., 414 Boys Home Rd., Covington VA 24426**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Yes, I will attend the BHAA meeting at Boys Home on Saturday, June 25, 2016**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_**

**Address \_\_\_\_\_**

**I will have \_\_\_\_\_ guests with me**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Sorry, I cannot attend, but would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help with the work of BHAA**

**Make your check payable to Boys Home Alumni Association and mail to Boys Home, Att: Jim Miller. BHAA President**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Sorry I will be unable to attend the meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup> but would like to update my phone number and address and E-mail address so that I will be kept informed on BHAA news and functions.**

**Please contact Boys Home @ 540-965-7700 or President Jim @434-293-5669 (cell 434-960-0048)**

