



Executive Director's Message

Chris Burns
Executive Director

The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, is often quoted without being given credit for his time proven wisdom that “the only constant in life is change”. For an agency that has been serving youth for over 113 years, Boys Republic has certainly experienced that to be true.

We began the year fully engaged in the system level change brought about by the State’s Continuum of Care Reform (CCR) and shortly thereafter celebrated the grand opening of the Max Scott Center for the Culinary Arts in October. October also ushered in our newest President of the Board of Directors, Tina Javid, who you have been introduced to at the outset of this report.

The changes in the culinary center brought a flurry of activity. Students were deeply engaged in culinary and bakery classes and the outside public was taking a significant interest in the new bistro. Almost immediately, the Rancho Del Chino Rotary club was meeting in the bistro each Tuesday morning with culinary students involved in preparing the breakfast and providing the table service. Word spread and a business roundtable group was doing the same every Thursday morning. Sports banquets, birthday parties, introductory staff lunches and even Thanksgiving dinner had become part of the regular schedule. In January, we decided to let the culinary staff and students really spread their wings with a few wine dinners to thank major supporters and give them a closer look at the new culinary center.

Then, as Heraclitus himself might have predicted, a mysterious flu-like illness traveled around the globe and brought about change at a scope barely imaginable. The impact of COVID-19 has been felt quite literally around the world and Boys Republic is no exception.



Photo: A4E and RMA Photography

Working with youth in a 24-hour residential environment meant “safer at home” was feasible for very few of the employees. The direct care staff grew to appreciate that their role came with virtually the same responsibilities as nurses or stay at home parents – and they have been amazing. While the courts have slowed and schools moved to “distance learning”, the treatment program for the youth in our care didn’t skip a beat.

School credits continued to accrue, vocational skills were taught and students and families continued to strengthen through the counseling/therapy that has persisted throughout.



California State Assemblyman Phillip Chen donated masks to Boys Republic.

The ongoing positive impact of the treatment program was further evident as the student and staff population processed the tragedy of the death of George Floyd. With a significant percentage of students who are black or brown, there were

emotional and intellectual responses that mirrored what so many around the country were experiencing. What was noteworthy was the conventional manner that they engaged in expressing those reactions. No looting, rioting or property damage. They demonstrated skills they were learning in processing their feelings, managing their anger and taking responsibility for their choices. Staff marveled as students on several occasions lamented the damage done when lawful protest crossed the line into criminality. While change in this world is definitely a constant, Boys Republic remains centered within those changes and continues to provide opportunities for young men and women to self-examine, grow and

return to their communities stronger and more capable of success.

And, as a supporter of the opportunities provided at Boys and Girls Republic, our Board President and I invite you to join us for an amazing meal in the new culinary center where you'll have the opportunity to see what your support is doing in the lives of the boys and girls in our care. We will be scheduling these dates as soon as COVID restrictions have lifted and it is safe to do so. You can add your name to the list by emailing KrisC@boysrepublic.org or calling 909-628-1217, ext. 210. I hope to see you in person in the very near future.



FOOD SERVICES TRAINING: Students serve a Christmas dinner to Pasadena Auxiliary volunteers in the Culinary Arts Classroom's attached bistro.