

# The Roundup

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 **Cal Farley's**  
Boys Ranch® • Girlstown, U.S.A.®  
& Family Resource Centers

“Children have more need of models than of critics.”  
— Cal Farley

## A Mother's Perspective ... *“This was best for him.”*

Sergeant Jovita Munnerlyn of the New York Police Department knew something had to change for 15-year-old Sayvon. He was skipping school, and eventually was expelled. He was being dishonest with his mother and he was running with the wrong crowd.

His path was becoming a dark and narrow tunnel to nowhere.

“I told him, ‘I do not want to see you at the precinct or have to ID you some night at the hospital. I’m sending you away.’”

A short while later she said a tearful goodbye to her youngest son. She had brought him to Cal Farley’s Boys Ranch — more than 1,700 miles away from their home in Queens.

“I told him every step of the way; I told him exactly what I was doing. I didn’t hide anything from him. I explained everything. I told him, ‘I don’t like you. I love you to death and I will do anything I can to help you, but I do not like the person you’ve become.’ He understood.

“His father and I had divorced in the late 1990s, when Sayvon was quite young. He always remained active in the boys’ lives, but I always wondered, ‘Is that the reason why?’ So I let him live with his father. Then, his father called me one night, ‘You better come get your son; he is outside on the curb with all his clothes.’

“I was done. Not done to the point I had given up on him, but he had a lot of chances and I needed help with him.”

Jovita said she had researched other child service organizations, but every place was just too expensive. “Ten thousand dollars, thirty thousand dollars ... I couldn’t afford any of those places,” she said. Then, one day, a coworker told her about Cal Farley’s Boys Ranch.

“I didn’t question my decision to bring him to Boys Ranch until I got down here and had to leave him,” she said. “I felt like a bad mother. I was on the phone with my friend and cried all the way to the airport. I cried at the airport. I cried all the way home.

“I thought, ‘What kind of mother am I? I can’t even take care of my own child.’ It was the right decision. I knew it had to be done before I lost him completely ... but I felt terrible.”

Jovita fought through those feelings and stuck with her decision. It hasn’t always been easy being so far apart from her teenaged son. She said that not a day goes by that she doesn’t want

to be with him.

Sayvon’s journey at Boys Ranch has not always been smooth, but he continues to adjust positively and really is doing great. He remains busy with school, football and several other extracurricular activities.

“Now, since he’s been here, he has turned around so much,” Jovita added. “I like him. I like him as a person. He’s more believable. He’s more focused. He’s more independent now. And school, he was failing everything — he failed swimming. How do you fail swimming? When he got here, he was so far behind.

“Now, he’s graduating on time!” Jovita is proud of her son.

Sayvon has been studying in the STARR Academy program at Boys Ranch High School and has worked hard at his credit recovery. He will graduate on June 4 with the Boys Ranch High School Class of 2011.

“He knows what he wants to do now, and he knows what he has to do to achieve it. He told me he’s trying to get on the A/B honor roll. He’s never had any aspirations to really do anything in school.” Sayvon is aspiring to attend either Florida A&M or Penn State to play football. Jovita fully supports his choices. “I just want him to be happy, healthy and succeed in life,” she said. “If he wants to go, I will absolutely support him. Wherever he wants to go, I told him we will make it work. I just want him to do well.”

Jovita often reflects upon the path Sayvon could easily have slipped down, and that helps her to keep her resolve being so far from her son.

“It made a big difference, what I saw at work. Sometimes, I work inside at the desk of the precinct and some of the kids they arrest ... I have to read off their birthday. I think ‘You are exactly my son’s age.’ And I think, ‘That’s the decision I could have made instead of sending him to Cal Farley’s.’”



Sayvon with his brother, James, and his mother, Jovita. The two flew in from New York to attend “Senior Night” at Boys Ranch with Sayvon.



## ANNUAL EVENT BRINGS PLENTY OF SMILES

The Panhandle-area Lions Clubs hosted the 40th annual Coat and Shoe event in November. Nearly 50 children from Cal Farley’s under the age of 12 were treated to a day of shopping and fun!

The children each received brand new coats, shoes and clothing — all of which was much appreciated. The Lions Club members were paired with a child and together they shopped and visited.



## Concern for Youth is Universal

President's Message  
By Dan Adams



My role with Cal Farley's is very interesting, and it is an honor to be here. I am privileged to be able to see how all of the various facets of our organization fit together as part of a larger system. Having seen what it takes to make it all work, I can tell you that no person in the system is exempt from having some level of influence on the lives of our children — whether a mechanic teaching youth how to change the oil in a car, or a coach teaching them about the power of team work.

I believe the same to be true for our external stakeholders — that is, all of you have a role in making a difference in the lives of our youth. We may be headquartered in the Panhandle of Texas, but the scope of our work goes way beyond those boundaries. The information and referral system through which we receive calls from families who need our help is national in reach. This is made evident through the story about Sayvon and his mother Jovita from New York; and the story about Shemika's journey from Boys Ranch to Howard University Law School, and on to beginning her career in the legal profession.

Our donor reach is broad as well — after all, concern for the welfare of youth is universal. I am absolutely amazed at the depth of commitment some of you have for the work we do with children and families. I am humbled by those who started supporting us as far back as the late 40s and early 50s. There are civic clubs like the Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis that have made a huge impact on Boys Ranch and Girlstown, U.S.A. since the early days.

Whether you are one working directly with our youth, referring families needing help, or contributing financially, I know that the passion and commitment to support our work is not arbitrary. It is a conscious decision you make because you know that all children are a gift from God, and we have the obligation to develop them into productive citizens.

Thanks to all of you who have been a part of this phenomenal endeavor.

## ASSIGNMENT CHANGES FOR BOARD

The Cal Farley's Board of Directors announced the addition of two directors: Walter T. "Four" Price, who was recently elected the 87th District Texas State Representative; and Amarillo Mayor, Debra McCartt. Each will serve a three-year term.

Tom Roach III remains Board Chairman and Tom Bivins remains as the Boys Ranch Foundation Chairman. Other executive appointments are as follows: Lenny Sadler, Board Vice Chair; Rodney Ruthart (a Boys Ranch alum), Board Treasurer; Lilia Escajeda, Board Secretary; Fay Moore, Foundation Vice Chair; and Joe Howell, Foundation Secretary.

In addition, Bud Joyner will serve as budget committee chair, Jane King as programs/homelife committee chair, and Mike King as governance committee chair. W.A. "Billy" Attebury, who has served 15 years on the Board, has retired but will serve on the Cal Farley's Advisory Board.

## YOUTH ASKED TO PERFORM AT NATIONAL GATHERING

Riley has a real talent: *Cowboy Poetry*



Riley's ability to perform and his natural talent to recite cowboy poetry doesn't go unnoticed by the professionals.

In fact, last October, Riley was personally invited by Red Steagall to perform at the Fort Worth Stockyards for Steagall's annual Cowboy Gathering and Western Swing Festival.

Riley met up with nationally-known artist, Chris Isaacs, whose poetry he recited at the event.

Riley also has performed at other national events including Saddle Up, held each year in Pigeon Forge, and the annual National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada.

## FAMILY OF "FIRST NINE" COME BACK TO SERVE, VISIT



Pictured is the family of James "Jimmy" Malone, one of the "First Nine" boys to live at Cal Farley's Boys Ranch when it first opened in 1939.

Jimmy, who is pictured in the middle row, far right, of the photo in the background is the father of Cindy Hall, seated in the middle. To her left, is her daughter Amy Brianne White, who is Jimmy's granddaughter. She is holding her nine-month-old son, Jimmy's great-grandson and namesake, Gabriel James White.

Gabriel's father, Kip White, is currently serving his second year as the Boys Ranch Choir Director. The group is pictured performing.

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# ASPIRING THESPIAN CO-WRITES BOYS RANCH CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION

*Longing. It hurts us. It controls us. It consumes us; and we all long for something. Whether it be a home visit, a town trip, a note from a pretty girl, or simply an end to our suffering. We have all been in a dark valley, and we know what it's like to feel abandoned. Like it's never going to get better. Things just get worse and worse until it becomes too much to handle, and all we long for is it to be over. (... narrative written by Bekie)*

This is a story that ends happy and fulfilled. This is a story that ends with a future full of promises and happiness. This is actually two stories, intertwined — one of Bekie, a 16-year-old Boys Rancher and aspiring thespian; and of Simeon, the Biblical prophet portrayed in the 2010 production of the Boys Ranch Christmas Cantata.

Bekie came to Boys Ranch two years

**Bekie co-wrote the 2010 Cantata. She hopes to one day become a theater director.**



Simone singing an amazing rendition of "To See the King".

ago after bouncing from home to home and living with family, friends, and whoever could look after her from one week to the next.

She was angry and hurting when she arrived on October 15, a date she says she will never forget.

Her experience with "adapting quickly" is what she says got her through. It didn't hurt, of course, that her very first day at Boys Ranch just happened to be the day that NFL player, Jerome Bettis, was on campus shooting video footage with the Roughrider football team. Bekie, a Pittsburgh Steelers fan, was ushered right up to him by her new houseparent, Mr. Smith. And her experiences have been mostly positive since.

Bekie has adjusted well. She is on gold level, which is the highest level a student can achieve; and has a boyfriend she adores and who adores her. She has a best friend, is involved in a plethora of extra-curricular activities — including, of course, One Act Play — and she works part-time at the Boys Ranch Chapel filing paperwork, making copies, cleaning the candles, etc.

Bekie also has been working hard to unite the girls in her home. "We all are new to each other," she explained. So, they all participate in group activities such as cooking dinner. "Tacos are a favorite to make in the kitchen because everyone can have their own little job," she said. "I've always been kind of a good kid, I guess. I'm a people pleaser."

Most of all, however; "I am a HUGE thespian. I love to be on stage," she exclaimed. She shared that she wants to



Brig. Gen. Dale Hoover played the role of Simeon for the 2010 Christmas Cantata.

become a theater director.

That's where the Christmas Cantata comes into play.

"Chaplain Wilhelm knows that I like to write poetry. I am a very creative person. So he asked me one day if I could write some lyrics for a song. Then, it was a narrative for the beginning of Cantata ... then a middle narrative. It was just a lot of little pieces.

"It just flowed. It was out, it was there and it was done. It was really easy this time and I really connected the audience to the story."

The Cantata story was about Simeon and how he had longed to see Christ before his death. Bekie's story was about longing, too. "I drew on my own experiences," she explained. "Everyone has longed for something. I long for happiness, but that is something you have to go find."

## Meet Our December Graduates

### Cassandra Cannon

Boys Ranch



Age: 17

How long at Cal Farley's: 2 years

Plan to attend college: Yes

Where and what major: The University of Texas at Arlington; social work in the medical field.

What are your immediate plans: To move into the Cal Farley's Alumni Support Independent Living Center and attend one year of community college before moving to the Dallas area.

### Dalton McCullough

Boys Ranch



Age: 17

How long at Cal Farley's: 2.5 years

Plan to attend college: Yes, auto mechanics.

What are your immediate future plans: To find a job, a car and an apartment.

What have you learned at BR: The Ranch taught me I need to stand up for what I believe in, and that life is what you make it.

### Jennifer Leanne Broome

Girlstown, U.S.A.



Age: 17

How long at Cal Farley's: 9 months

Plan to attend college: Yes

If yes, where and what major: A junior college for basics, Physical Therapy

What are your immediate future plans: Get basics done in Dallas, then transfer to Mississippi State, get my life started with Physical Therapy as my job.



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# A Little Support and A Lot of Passion

## *Boys Ranch Alumnus realizes her dream*

Shemika and her two brothers arrived at Boys Ranch in 1994 when she was just 10 years old. The three of them had been living with their grandmother when she fell ill and required heart surgery. Shemika lived in the first Romersi Home in the girls' community before moving to Romersi 3 when it was built in the late 1990s.

To know Shemika is to love her. She has always been a very driven and passionate girl. Graduating third in her class from Boys Ranch in 2002, Shemika participated in everything she could — cross country, track, band, cheerleading, basketball, VICA ... the list goes on and on. "Let's just say, I liked to stay involved and active," she recalled. "Looking back, I really enjoyed it.

"At the time, when you're a kid, of course you think, oh, this is horrible. You think everyone is so mean and strict, but now I know that Boys Ranch helped me to become the focused and disciplined person that I am today."

Following her graduation from Boys Ranch — and with her Cal Farley's college scholarship in hand — she obtained a business management degree at West Texas A&M University. While studying at WT, she was active in cross country; and in her junior year (2005), she was selected to intern for the Texas Speaker of the House, Tom Craddock, in Austin.

"That internship is what really exposed me to law." And so, she found her passion and her path was set ablaze.

Upon completing her undergraduate degree in 2006, she packed up all her belongings in her car and drove to Washington, D.C. all by herself. Shortly thereafter, she landed an internship with Congressman Mac Thornberry and studied for the LSAT exam as she prepared to get into law school. The next fall she began work

on her law degree as she studied at Howard University School of Law.

"Law school was a wonderful experience," she said. "It teaches you how to think differently and see issues from many different perspectives."

During law school Shemika studied abroad in Cape Town, South Africa for a summer. She worked in the criminal justice clinic at her school where she represented indigent people charged with misdemeanor offenses in D.C. She also became a member of her school's International Moot Court Team and traveled to Vienna, Austria to compete in the 2010 Willem C. Vis International Commercial Arbitration Moot.

"Each experience was exciting and unique in its own way. However, there is nothing better than traveling to new countries and learning about different cultures."

Shemika graduated law school in May and spent the better part of her summer studying for the Bar Exam. In July, she took the two-day exam in New York and this past November she received her results. "I was happy to have passed," she added.

Boys Ranch graduate, Shemika Sanford, will be sworn in as a licensed attorney at a ceremony in Albany, NY on January 20. Shemika holds much interest in labor and employment law. She learned about this particular aspect of law while interning one summer in Washington, D.C. with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

"I like working with people and meeting different people," she added. "I think I can attribute that to Boys Ranch because there were so many different people from all over that you learned to live with every day. I was comfortable with that at such an early age."

For now, she will complete her one-to-two-year clerkship working for the Honorable Zoe Bush in the Superior Court



**Shemika graduated from Howard University's School of Law and passed the New York State Bar Exam.**

of the District of Columbia. She works on juvenile cases in the family court.

"I'm really enjoying my job and I'm learning a lot about courtroom procedures and litigation styles," she wrote in an email to her scholarship administrator at Cal Farley's. "This is certainly a great building block to my career so I look forward to what the future holds."

She is 26 years old and that future looks to be pretty bright. "For now I plan to live in the moment and seize whatever opportunity comes before me," she said. "You just have to work hard and try to establish yourself; try to make a name for yourself."

She also offered some advice for those living at Boys Ranch now. "Just believe in yourself and look beyond your surroundings. I think people can be afraid of what they do not know. Trust yourself and know that you can be anything you want to be if you really want to do it. I say, just go for it!"

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"I just want to thank Boys Ranch for its support over the years. I finally achieved my goal, but I know that it would not have been possible without the support of the Boys Ranch community." — Shemika

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## **FAMILY TRADITION: THE SEASON OF GIVING IS ALWAYS A SEASON OF THANKSGIVING AT CAL FARLEY'S**



**Genie Farley Harriman, Sherm Harriman and their daughter, Shelley Sloger**

Since 1954, the Farley family has spent each Christmas holiday opening mail sent by faithful friends from all over the country.

"We did the first year at mother and dad's house before the building in Amarillo was finished," recalled Genie. "My children, Cal and Shelley, would sit on the floor and wait for my mother to hand them a stack of one dollar bills to count. We would have them in stacks of fifty, so mother always knew how much was there; nevertheless, they were helping!"

Genie shared that she is always amazed by the generosity of others.

"It is something we never take for granted, and shouldn't. I never cease to be amazed that

people are always willing to help us. That is a wonderful feeling.

"They put their money in an envelope and sent it. They trust us to do what we are supposed to do. They are not people who have a lot of money, they just share what they have. It's very special."

This year was no exception, the Harrimans were at the Amarillo office each day from 9 a.m. until at least 3 p.m. opening mail and preparing the day's deposit.

"Each year as we work it makes you remember that people are responsible for our success. It's one thing to care for the children, but quite another to have the money to do that."