



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE HILL COUNTRY THAT REALLY MEASURE UP

by Alison Turner

With such a large population of children in Cordillera Ranch, our residents are fortunate to have many excellent schools to choose from in the area. Choosing the right school will undoubtedly be one of the most important decisions you will make, as it is at secondary level that school will provide the springboard to launch your child into the world of higher education and ultimately the workplace. As you begin the process of choosing which school to send your children to in the fall here is an overview of a number of schools in the area. All have excellent track records but provide a number of different focuses and values, curriculum choices,

extracurricular activities and personal values to suit you and your family. Families move to this area for the small town feel, but they don't sacrifice education standards. As you explore the many educational resources available to families at Cordillera Ranch, you will find there is no shortage in academic quality. Remember, finding the right school is about finding the school that responds to and matches the needs of your family.

GENEVA SCHOOL OF BOERNE

The Geneva School of Boerne was formed in 1998 and began offering classes in 1999 to 13 students in grades K, 1st and 3rd. Today, Geneva serves 427 students in grades K-11. In 2004 the school moved to its current location on a 33 acre campus just south of Boerne proper with easy access from I-10, making the school accessible to residents of Boerne, surrounding communities and San Antonio.

The Geneva School is a private school that follows the Classical Christian model and is a member of the Association of Classical and Christian Schools, a nationwide organization. The educational program offered at Geneva School of Boerne is founded on the principles and values set forth in scripture. A classical and Christian school offers a unique and rigorous educational option for the families. The classical learning models follow a philosophy developed by the ancient Greeks which eventually influenced the Christian Church in the Middle Ages. Classical Model teaching is meant to train the mind. Of the seven arts enumerated in the Classical model the foundational three or trivium are

taught at Geneva. Grammar is the focus of elementary school, logic in middle school and rhetoric in high school. The curriculum also dictates that parents take a proactive and involved position in their children's education.

Geneva offers AP classes and next year is adding dual credit college-level English courses to its curriculum in conjunction with University of Texas at San Antonio. It also offers in house required coursework for the PSAT and SAT. The Geneva School employs a full time college counselor and administer testing such as a Myers-Briggs personality test to match interests with abilities in determining which college and line of study is best suited for the student. Geneva's curriculum culminates in a Senior thesis project in which students must present their project and then defend it in front of a panel of faculty members.

The Geneva School has a very active arts and athletic program with a wide variety of developing arts programs, full athletic offerings and competes in the TAPPS league --the private and parochial school league equivalent to UIL. Geneva offers a strings program that will develop into orchestra, a band, drama program, guitar classes for both middle and high school, an expanding choir and visual fine arts classes including sculpture, drawing and painting.

The Geneva School started a Capital Campaign in the fall of 2008 with the goal of raising \$5 million. Even amidst the economic turmoil that campaign has been successful. The campaign, titled «Not for the Sake of Stone . . . But for the Hearts & Minds,» is being held to raise funds to provide (in order of priority): an academic village for our upper level students, a competition gym, a teacher endowment, and a student center we are calling the Lyceum. The three-year campaign has brought in over \$5 million in gifts and pledges with over \$3 million collected so far. The village consists of 13 buildings totaling 28,000 sq feet. The village

includes 24 classrooms, two science labs, a computer lab, three arts rooms, two locker rooms, and an administration building. The School has been able to build a 20,000 square foot competition gym which will be finished in August of this year in time for volleyball season to kick off.

The Geneva School is set to graduate their first group of seniors in May of 2011. James Baker, the former secretary of state under President George H.W. Bush is slated to deliver the commencement address. Future growth for the school looks bright-admission is currently growing at a rate of 15% per year.

For more information please visit www.genevaschooltx.org/ or for campus tours or more information about admissions please contact Gay Young at 830-755-6101.

BOERNE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Boerne ISD is the largest public school system in the area that the children of Cordillera Ranch attend. The number of students the Boerne Independent School District (BISD) has 6,421 students as of February 2010. A major benefit of the large school system is the many opportunities for diverse class choices including numerous AP classes, Dual Credit courses, community service organizations and many sports programs.

Of the eight campuses in Boerne ISD, five are rated *Exemplary* by the state of Texas and the remaining three are rated *Recognized* by the Texas Education Agency in 2009. The district was first *Recognized* in 1999 and has been in 10 of the 11 years since then. In 2008/09 the district TAKS test scores were superior in every area and for every sub-population of students as compared to state averages. In the tested grades 3-11, 98% of the students passed reading, 95% passed math, 96% passed writing, 95% passed science, and 99% passed social studies. (Also: The new TPM measure pushed those initial scores to 99%, 98%, 99%, 97%

and 100% respectively.)

The district has expanded fine arts programs including the establishment of a BISD Orchestra Program (grades 5-12), annual visual arts fair, explosive growth in the high school band program, expansion during the past several years includes invitation for the Middle School Choir to sing at the White House and visits to/from a sister school in China. The Band Program students are perennial Sweepstakes winners and every year a large number of students named to state band and choir. In 2007, the band qualified for state.

A unique relationship with the University of Texas at San Antonio allows Boerne High School students to attend college classes on that campus during the school day. In addition, the high school's Tech Prep program has higher education agreements for college credit in four main vocational career areas. The Alamo Community College District is now offering dual credit courses inside the high schools (2009/10) and an emerging relationship with Texas Tech will offer College Freshman Engineering in 2010.

BISD has won seven state championships in the past six years. The Athletic program was crowned best in the San Antonio area (Dan Cook Award) in 2005 and each year since, and finished in the top 10 among all 4A districts in Texas (Governor's Cup Standings) for the past 4 years. State championships in team sports include soccer, softball, boys cross country, girls cross country, baseball, and tennis doubles. Also, there have been individual champions and state finalists in swimming, track and tennis. In 2009, the swimming team relay set a new 4A state record and the Champion Boys Cross Country Team became national champions.

Within the past decade, Boerne ISD has more than doubled the square footage of its facilities, which was possible by a bond that voters approved in 2004, allowing over \$99m worth of construction and improvements to take place.



The district opened beautiful Boerne-Samuel V. Champion High School in fall 2008 and has now re-opened beautiful Boerne High School in August 2009. Champion High School has won a state award for design/construction excellence and was given the Governor's Award in May 2009 for its innovative rainwater catchment system. The school also received the prestigious Caudill Award at the 2009 TASB Convention. The recently completed Boerne Middle School North renovation also received a state award for its design/construction. For more information please visit boerne-isd.net

VANGUARD CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

Vanguard Institute is an elementary and secondary Christian school founded in 1985 by the congregation of Christian Character Ministries, Inc. The vision for this education ministry was to design and provide a unique schooling environment for their

children. The first graduating class in 1991 had ten students. Some of Vanguard's graduates to date include: teachers, firefighters, office and business managers, civil engineers, anthropologists, military personal, home schooling mothers, medical students, ministers, film industry technicians, and other professionals. Vanguard students have frequently chosen service related occupations. Over 95% of Vanguard's graduating students attend college. Vanguard strives to prepare young people academically and spiritually to be successful, Godly citizens, capable of positive contribution to our society. Vanguard has been a directing force in the lives of many students. Emphasis on Christian values and character combined with a strong, traditional academic curriculum prepares students for challenges after high school. Vanguard stresses character with every aspect of it's curriculum and handle kids in school like a parent would. The schools founders



found that children today lack real world skills so the curriculum stresses life situations and consequences throughout the school day.

Vanguard has small class sizes between 7 and 15 students. College prep curriculum includes dual credit courses through the Alamo Community College system where they earn college credits. SAT prep is done on an individual basis furthering the theme of individual responsibility. Vanguard offers twists on old classics for elective classes. An extensive auto shop class is conducted with past projects including the construction of a Cobra kit car and projects vary from semester to semester. Vanguard also has an extensive woodworking class, cooking class and a kiln set up for this semester's pottery course. It's easy to see that Vanguard stresses hands on education. Even with Vanguard's small class size they compete in a number of sports including six-man football, volleyball and track.

Vanguard currently uses the A

BEKA curriculum stressing phonics, math, history and geography. Because of the small class size every one has a place; children tend to blossom and gain self-confidence and esteem.

At Vanguard Christian Institute, the admissions process is less formal than at other institutions. The admissions process is conducted via an interview to determine if a potential student has the right attitude and a willingness to learn. For more information about Vanguard Christian Institute please call (830) 537-5244 or email office@vanguardchristianinstitute.com.

TMI- THE EPISCOPAL SCHOOL OF TEXAS

TMI is currently in the 116th year of educating servant leaders in San Antonio. Founded in 1893 by Bishop James Steptoe Johnston, the school was originally known as West Texas Military Academy. TMI opened its doors as a school to educate boys in a traditional military program. General

Douglas MacArthur was a member of its first class of students and, a few years later earned distinction as its first valedictorian.

In 1926, the school was renamed Texas Military Institute. The school opened its doors to female students in 1972 and the military program became optional in 1974.

Today the school is known as TMI – The Episcopal School of Texas. Located in the Texas Hill Country, TMI educates students in grades 6-12 and currently serves approximately 405 students. TMI also runs five and seven day residential life programs which provided a home away from home for fifty students. Students from Texas, other states, and a small but growing international community from as close as Mexico and as far away as Korea, China, Vietnam and Taiwan.

Students at TMI are dedicated to scholastic excellence and furthering their education. The 63 seniors in the class of 2009 received \$6.4 million dollars in scholarship offers and included two National Merit Scholarship finalists, three National Hispanic Scholars, three students bound for US service academies, two scholar athletes bound for Division I schools, four national Latin Examination awardees, and one National Spanish Examination gold medalist. 89% of the students who took the Academic Placement (AP) exams in the 2008-2009 school year received qualifying scores of 3, 4, or 5's, earning them college credit. All students are accepted to colleges and universities in the United States and other countries.

TMI is founded upon a firm foundation of Four Pillars. They are academics, spirituality, athletics and military. Students attend daily chapel, participate in community service through a relationship with the San Antonio Rotary Club at the Dominion who sponsors both an InterAct and JuniorAct club at TMI, explore their interests through extracurricular activities that include the Fine Arts and athletics and enjoy a



strong sense of community as they grow and learn. Students at TMI have many extracurricular activities and clubs to choose from including the National and Junior Honor Society, an International Club, Japanese Club, Latin Club, Mock Trial Club, The Muse Literary magazine, Robotics Club, Spanish Club, TMI Times student newspaper, World War II Club, Green Club, Paws to create animal awareness, an acappella group, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the Hiking Club and many more.

If you are interested in admission information or a campus tour, please visit their website at www.tmi-sa.org or call 210-698-7171. Admission requirements include completion of the applications, submittal of teacher recommendation forms, two years of grades, academic testing with the ISEE (Independent School Entrance Exam) or other comparable tests, and a day on campus visit where the student will be assigned an ambassador who will host them for the day while visiting classrooms, chapel, and the Refectory for lunch.

HILL COUNTRY CHRISTIAN HOMESCHOOLERS

If you have determined that homeschooling is a good fit for your values or you have started the process of homeschooling your children, Hill Country Christian Homeschoolers (HCCH) may suit your needs. The HCCH provides many valuable resources for parents who wish to have greater control over their children's curriculum and school environment. The organization was founded in 1999 with a small number of families saw the need for a local homeschooling group. After gaining enough support the Hill Country Christian Homeschoolers was founded and in 2003 the HCCH was incorporated as a State of Texas Non-Profit Corporation.

The HCCH says that it is a Christian support group founded on the principles found in God's Word, the Bible. But they are an inclusive group open to all home educators regardless of religious faith or background. While the board members are required to sign a statement of Faith, the general membership is not.

The HCCH has had a clear purpose and vision since its initial founding. They strive to support homeschooling families by giving them the opportunity to keep their high school students at home, help families and students make a successful transition from homeschooling to college or work, and to provide opportunities for students to grow and mature in the qualities needed to be independent learners and self-motivated students. HCCH provides all of these benefits partially through a unique program they offer called SAC Day or Secondary Academic Class Day. This program is unlike any other class day or co-op in the San Antonio area. The SAC Day is meant to be a supplement to other lessons at home providing classes that most families find difficult to teach at home on the high school level, like math, foreign language and science.

To join HCCH potential members must fill out two forms listed on their website. Simply follow the instructions on both forms and mail the forms with payment to the address on the registration form.

Within two weeks of HCCH receiving your registration, you will receive a welcome email from our registrar containing log on instructions for the Member's Area of our website, where you will find the details for upcoming events as well as a printable membership packet.

To participate in the SAC Day students must schedule an interview with the SAC Day Board

New students of current families should schedule an interview with the SAC Day Board on either April 5th or April 12th (so they can register during early registration). For more information, please visit the HCCH website at www.hcch.net.com.

HILL COUNTRY MONTESSORI

Hill Country Montessori School, Inc. (HCMS) began its journey as a parent initiative to provide early childhood education to the Boerne Community. It is the successor organization to St. Helena's Montessori School, which was founded in 1981. Their current campus facilities were constructed in 2009 and opened with the 2009-2010 Academic Year. Hill Country Montessori School is nestled on 10 acres in the beautiful Texas Hill Country and serves children 18 months through 12 years.

As a school community committed to providing children of the Texas Hill

Country with an excellent Montessori education, HCMS puts great emphasis on ensuring they remain true to the Montessori philosophy and to their mission. Their vision involves helping children develop a love of learning that results in high academic achievement, self-discipline, self-motivation and respect for themselves, others and their environment.

Weekly resource programs are provided in Art, Music, Movement, Physical Education, Spanish and Reading Development. Teachers who specialize in each discipline conduct these classes within the classroom environment. Each class is designed to be age-appropriate and meet the needs of the particular program level. Each program level has its own outdoor environment that is equipped with age-appropriate equipment. Gardens and small animal areas are available as part of the outdoor classroom. All of these resources are included in the tuition. The 2009-2010 activities include music, dance, karate, choir, piano, and strings (violin, viola and cello).

Hill Country Montessori School has received accreditations from the American Montessori Society (AMS) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and hold memberships with the American Montessori Society (AMS), the

National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and the Independent Schools Association of San Antonio (ISA). They are currently the only AMS accredited Montessori school in the San Antonio metropolitan area and one of only eight accredited schools in the state of Texas. They are also licensed through the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services, which set forth regulations concerning childcare and health policies. HCMS has also been declared a non-profit, tax-exempt educational corporation since April 26, 1990. For more information please visit www.hcmonterrosi.org. ☺



1. Boerne ISD - 10 miles*
320 S Esser Rd, Boerne, TX 78006
830 249 2848
2. Vanguard Christian Institute - 18 miles*
43360 IH 10 W. Boerne, TX 78006
830 537 5244
3. Geneva School Of Boerne - 14 miles*
113 Cascade Cavern, Boerne, TX 78015
830 249 0805
4. TMI - EPISCOPAL School of Texas - 16 miles*
20955 W Tejas Trl, San Antonio, TX 78257
210 698 7171
5. Hill Country Montessori - 6 miles*
50 Stone Wall Dr, Boerne, TX 78006
830 229 5377

* Distance from Cordillera Ranch

