



# Hanna by the numbers

Marking time with  
**Father Crews**

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PHOTOS ROBBI PENGELLY

Sixty years, 3,120 weeks, 21,900 days, 9,600,000 meals and 3,548 boys.

The numbers are impressive but they don't begin to tell the story. Because there is no accounting system short of heaven that can tally the number of everyday miracles, or the number of miracles every day, that have routinely, almost invisibly, unfolded in the lives of the 107 boys who, on average, occupy the sanctified space called Hanna Boys Center.

Numbers can't begin to tell the story, but numbers do help define the depth of the transformations that occur, because the numbers tell us something of what these boys have been through and how far they will have traveled when they leave. So here's a quick tally:

- 40% experienced severe emotional abuse.**
- 63% read below grade level at enrollment.**
- 25% spent time living outside their home.**
- 75% come from single-parent households.**
- 35% have some learning disability.**
- 25% have had some gang involvement.**
- 15% have experienced the death of a parent.**

*Father John Crews—  
teacher,  
priest, naval  
officer, pianist,  
shepherd of  
lost boys.*

Read those numbers again and then ask yourself, what are the odds more than a handful of these kids will make it to adulthood without being ambushed by drugs, gangs, crime, jail or a tragically early death?

Take any other collection of teenaged boys with that load of statistical baggage and the temptation would be to throw up your hands and walk away.

But 60 years ago a visionary Catholic priest named William L. O'Connor greeted a bus full of boys who took up residence in a new campus on the old Morris Ranch off Arnold Drive in the Valley of the Moon. There they encountered an unusual commitment: No one threw up their hands and walked away.

Instead, the Hanna staff unfurled a simple formula to shift the focus of those young lives through discipline, education and love. In 60 years not much has changed. The campus has grown, there is now a fully accredited Catholic high school, a trio of on-campus group homes, a scholarship program for alumni, an active athletic program and more.

But the fundamental premise is always the