

Elevations

The latest news and updates from the Education Elevators
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A Note from the Executive Director

By: Allison McJunkin

It's been another busy year at Education Elevators! The partnership between Potesta and Kanawha City Elementary we launched this fall is really blossoming. The school, teachers, Elevators and most importantly, the students, are benefiting from it. I am

excited to announce that we also launched new partnerships this spring between Advantage Technology and ProKids & Orders Construction and Central Elementary. To assist with our new partnerships, we hired another Program Coordinator, Kathy Thomas.

On a more somber note, I want to address the recent school shootings. It seems like every time you turn on the news there is another story about a school shooting or a hate crime. Each time I hear about another act of violence, I think 'this would not have happened if he or she had a mentor.' And it's true. People commit violent crimes when they feel disconnected, unseen and not valued. In contrast, when students feel more connected to school, they are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and succeed academically. Elevators help create a sense of belonging and provide an outlet for students to talk about their struggles and triumphs. They also help students see that they have value and that they matter. As one student said of his Elevator, "[h]e makes me feel like a really important person, like I matter - and that's a REALLY, REALLY good feeling."

Kids need to feel that they have someone in their corner. They need to feel that someone truly sees them. Without this support, they are at a much higher risk of engaging in antisocial and dangerous behavior. With it, they can soar.

There have already been 15 incidents of firearm attacks at schools in the United States this year. Since 2013, there have been 228 such incidents (47 of those were last year).

School Perspective

Education Elevators has had an incredible impact on our students! The students who have Elevators are so excited to see them each week and often talk about their time with their Elevators.

The students have benefited from their Education Elevators in so many ways. Some that you can't measure, you just see it in their smiles. As the counselor, I have seen these students become more involved with their peers and really shine.

Brooklin and Kristi are amazing! They have had a bond since the moment they met. It really is remarkable. Brooklin has definitely become more outgoing since meeting with Kristi.

- Rebecca Thomas, School Counselor
Kanawha City Elementary School



Elevator Spotlight

How would you describe Brooklin? She is smart, outgoing, talkative, full of life, and always has a smile on her face. But most of all, she is very loving!

What do you enjoy most about your time with Brooklin? No matter how my day is going – good, bad or in-between – she always puts a smile on my face. I get as much from her as I give to her. From the first day, she told me I was her best friend. She is very endearing! And best of all, we are a perfect match! I feel like she is my mini-me (but with blonde hair)!

Have you noticed any changes in Brooklin since you have started meeting with her? She has always been outgoing and personable from day one, but after a few meetings, I felt that she could talk to me on a deeper level. Her teacher said she is doing great in school and doing really well on her papers.

What do you like best about being an Elevator? The sense of making a difference in someone's life. Being a part of the program that gives children so much confidence and enthusiasm for school and friendships. The smile and hug of pure joy when I arrive and leave each visit, is more than I could ask for!

-Kristi Tingler, Potesta Elevator



PARTNER FILES



Terry Potesta with her student Rachael (and the greenhouse they made together)



Why We Partner: My husband Ron and I attended the Gala fundraiser last Spring. Needless to say we were quite impressed and thought it would be a great partnership for Potesta. We were correct. All of Potesta's Elevators have enjoyed this year and feel as if they have received more than they have given!

One unexpected outcome is that not only did we get to know and develop a relationship with our individual students, but we got to know, at least a little, all the other Elevatees. When we would visit our elevatees, the other students would excitedly say, "Hey you're so and so's Elevator. I'm seeing my Elevator tomorrow." So to some extent, those students know we care about them, too.

Elevator's Perspective: I had a wonderful time with Rachael this year. She's an exceptionally gifted child. I wasn't sure in the beginning what my role would be with Rachael. But earlier this year her mom was in a terrible car accident. She spent many weeks in the hospital and is still recovering. As most children would be, Rachael was very upset and she understood the severity of her mom's injuries. She shared a good bit with me. I believe that I was paired with her to help in my small way with her dealing with this traumatic event in her life.

Rachael and I have built a miniature green house this year. We have spent many hours making everything that goes into it and the structure itself, replete with plants and garden tools. She is in the fifth grade, so this is my last year with her. I will miss her.

-Terry Potesta, Elevator

New Partnerships

Here are just a few photos of our incredible Student and Elevator pairs!

Advantage Technology & ProKids



Orders Construction & Central Elementary

