

Elevations

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

By: Allison McJunkin

This January will mark 15 years from the first Elevator and student visit at Piedmont. Every year we continue to grow and impact the lives of more students. This fall, we launched new partnerships between First Choice

Services with Ruffner Elementary and Boyd CAT with Malden Elementary. With the addition of these schools and businesses, we now have 7 school partners and 12 business partners in Kanawha County! Our growth is critical as students need mentors now more than ever.

I recently met with Jessica, a school coordinator at Kanawha City Elementary, and she told me that students needed assistance with "basic life skills." When I asked her to explain that a little further, she told me that many students did not have anyone to help them with things like: "memorizing their birthdate, middle name or home address, zipping a zipper, making eye contact when speaking, taking turns, learning how to tie their shoes or ride a bike." It's heartbreaking that some parents are not able to teach their children these basic life skills, but they are all things that Elevators can help with. Jessica explained, "One person believing in a child, giving them positive feedback and forming a relationship, can literally change their life. Having an adult come just for them is better than any birthday/Christmas gift a child could ask for. I am thankful for everyone in this program. We need more of this."

Elevators see so much potential in their students. One Elevator recently said, "Angelo is a really smart kid! If he makes the right choices, he really has an opportunity to go far." This particular little boy was never on time before, but now he is because: "Mr. Fenwick (his Elevator) says it's important." Elevators can also help kids learn the importance of making good choices, help them care about the future and see themselves in it, and assist them with developing the habits and skills to get there. Elevators also boost academics, improve attendance, cultivate confidence, help improve behavior and increase overall happiness in the students they are matched with. Please take a look at the quotes from our program evaluations to see the amazing impact our program is making!

In addition to cultivating transformational mentoring relationships, we are also elevating children by exposing them to future possible careers and helping cultivate their passions. This Fall, the students with Elevators from Central Elementary had the opportunity to tour Orders Construction. This Spring, in honor of our 15th Anniversary, instead of hosting a fundraising gala, we will host an event at the Clay Center where students and Elevators can explore exhibits such as My Town, the Planetarium, the Fossil Stem Lab etc. This will help strengthen the Elevator and student relationship, spark excitement about the future and expose kids to different kinds of jobs they can pursue.

In honor of almost 15 years of Helping Kids Take Flight, please consider making a contribution to support our work. Together we can elevate children in our community!

Best Wishes for a Happy and Peaceful Holiday Season!

Allison McJunkin

WHAT OUR SCHOOL PARTNERS SAY!

Students need that person who is always there for them. They loved having the Elevators come and spread love and show that they are cared for. The students that were selected are so excited to see their Elevators and love spending time with them. I am so grateful for this program!

-DEANNA MYERS, SCHOOL COUNSELOR, EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY

The program is working wonderfully here at Central, and our students who participate look forward to the visits they have with their mentors each week. I am so thankful for their hard work and dedication to our students and would highly recommend the Education Elevator program to any school who is interested.

-WHITNEY CANADA, PRINCIPAL, CENTRAL ELEMENTARY

The single most important thing I got out of this program is seeing the Elevators make a difference in the student's lives. Our students without Elevators keep asking me for one and the students that have Elevators can't wait to see them!

-CAITLIN LASTORIA, SOCIAL WORKER/ASSISTANT ATTENDANCE DIRECTOR, PIEDMONT ELEMENTARY

Elevators have helped impact Mary C. Snow Elementary by giving our students consistency and positive role models. They have improved our students' attendance and behavior. Elevators have provided our at risk students a reason to want to come to school...so they can see their Elevator! They've helped our students form important connections with adults and have helped our students have another adult in their life to show that they care and make them feel special!

-DESTINY SPENCER, PRINCIPAL, MARY C. SNOW ELEMENTARY

I love having Elevators in my school! There are so many kids who need someone to care. It's awesome when you see at least a few getting that basic need met. I wish we had started this program years ago, and appreciate all of the adults who give up time from their work day in order to help a child. This has been an amazing experience.

-JULIE SAYRE, PRINCIPAL, MALDEN ELEMENTARY

Education Elevators is an amazing program! Students light up when I tell them that their Elevator is here. Student attendance, school performance and confidence have all improved! Students smile more and are more comfortable when talking to adults (this is even with students who really struggled previously with trusting people). One student who used to not make eye contact now stops me in the hall to talk!

Students also engage more with their peers and are happier in general. Another student, who last year would just look down at her desk and wasn't affectionate at all, is now seen skipping down the hallways always saying "Hi Ms. Natalie!" She has given me three hugs! I wish I had more Elevators to match with students! It's really incredible to see the impact they have on our students! I LOVE this program!

-NATALIE BLEVINS, FAMILY SUPPORT WORKER/AFTER SCHOOL DIRECTOR, BOB BURDETTE CENTER

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"It is nice to know that the community cares, and feels invested in the children who will soon be productive adults in our/their communities as well. It truly takes a village and sadly, most of these kids do not have the immediate family foundation that many take for granted. It really does take a village/community to help these kids.

One person believing in a child, giving them positive feedback and forming a relationship, can literally change their life. Having an adult come just for them is better than any birthday/Christmas gift a child could ask for."

-Jessica Pinkerton, School Counselor, Kanawha City Elementary

ORDERS CONSTRUCTION FIELD TRIP

This Fall, students with Elevators from Central Elementary had the opportunity to tour Orders Construction, exposing them to future possible careers and cultivating excitement about the future!



Education Elevators is Hiring!

In addition to financial resources, we need "human energy" to support our growth! We are looking for part time program coordinators to manage some of our new programs next fall.

Ideal candidates are current or retired counselors, elementary and special education/resource teachers, family support specialists, etc. who are organized and passionate about kids!

Please contact allison@educationelevators.org if you are interested!



Want to Support our Work?

Your financial contributions are critical to our program. Please visit our website at: www.educationelevators.org to learn more, donate, and connect with us.

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