

Elevations

The latest news and updates from Education Elevators
Summer 2026, Vol. 20



A Note from the Executive Director



It's summer! In the Education Elevator world that means winding down from another exciting year and gearing up for the next. This fall we are launching a new partnership between Shuman McCuskey Slicer and Overbrook. We are also starting to work with churches as a source of Elevators. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church is going to be our first church partner! We are also expanding to Dunbar Primary through our partnership with United Bank.

At the request of the Kanawha County Board of Education, we will now be supporting relationships through high school! Even though we haven't had a formal program in high schools previously, several of our Elevators kept in touch with the students they were matched with in elementary school and have been cheering them on along the way. I wanted to share a story about a pair that stayed in contact over the years.

John became Jamar's Elevator when he was in second grade. They instantly clicked. The school counselor said that John was Jamar's "anchor when his life turned upside down" and was a "consistent presence in his life." John constantly came up with projects that they could work on so that Jamar could keep his mind off the difficult things he was going through. They worked on multiple inventions together - John often talked to Jamar about the value of duct tape and how to think critically to solve problems.

Jamar invited John to his high school graduation. This is what John shared about the experience: "When I showed up I was looking for Jamar in the seated students section. I didn't see him at first because he was seated on the stage. Jamar was senior class president and first one to speak at the ceremony! He is attending Marshall studying nursing. I am so proud of that kid!"

Now Jamar is off to spread his wings and make a difference in the lives of others! We are so proud of you, Jamar!

Allison McKinley



"It seems the mentoring relationship truly fostered Jamar's personal, academic and even post secondary goals and aspirations! One caring adult can make a lasting difference in the life of a young person."

-Jon Duffy, KCS Executive Director for Student Support & Assessment

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH A HEARTWARMING VIDEO ABOUT JOHN AND JAMAR!](#)

PARTNER PROFILE - TOYOTA WV



Why We Partner: We partner with Education Elevators to give back and do our part to showcase Toyota's ongoing commitment to our community. Our plant not only builds the engines, transmissions and transaxles that power some of the most recognized vehicles on the road, we work hard to have a positive impact on the place we call home. Our team members have logged countless volunteer hours doing just that - helping with everything from the Special Olympics of West Virginia to area robotics teams. We're proud to play a small part in that effort through the work the plant does with Education Elevators.

Elevators Perspective: The half hour I spend with Mason is a highlight of my week. We play board games, make cards for his mom and little sister and, if it's nice outside, we shoot hoops or play soccer. It's a great break for and gives me some time away from my job to clear my head and focus on something other than work for a bit. When I get back to my desk, I'm refreshed and ready to jump back into my day. Mason is such a smart, charismatic little guy. I think he likes to bounce silly ideas and jokes off me and watch me laugh. He's a goofball in the best way.

-George Gannon, Analyst, Corporate Communications, Toyota WV

CORPORATE PARTNERS



During Elevator Appreciation Week, students at Buffalo Elementary School made cards and planted a clover for their Elevators from Toyota!

Teacher Perspective

Education Elevators program has positively impacted Buffalo Elementary School by providing students with consistent, supportive mentors that have helped in building confidence and strengthening social-emotional skills. These students are gaining greater communication skills by just carrying on conversations with adults, an opportunity some of them don't often have. It gives students who may not have an adult that they can just relax and talk to freely the opportunity to do so.

Jayne reminds me every time that Brett is supposed to visit, and he watches the clock when it is time for him to come. His attendance has improved. This is a day of the week that he never misses because he looks forward to this time with Brett.

-Ashley Smith, Teacher, Buffalo Elementary School



"Jayce's attitude toward school has changed in the past two years to be more engaged and positive. Jayce's attendance has even improved!"

Chastity Miller

School Counselor Perspective

The Education Elevators program at Buffalo Elementary has created a more positive and supportive school environment. Students with Elevators benefit by gaining confidence, improving their behavior and academics, and building strong relationships with caring adults who help them succeed. Students look forward to each week's visit with their Elevator. By simply playing board games, crafts, or outdoor playground activities, these Elevators positively impact students' outlook on school and community. Students have shown increased confidence, academic growth, better attendance, and improved behavior and focus.

Jayne started with his Elevator last year during 3rd grade. Every week he looks forward to Brett coming on Thursdays for their time together. Sometimes they play basketball when the gym is open or when it's nice outside. Sometimes the pair discusses the latest NBA happenings and design shoes and jerseys together. Brett owns a 3D printer that he allows Jayce to pick items for Brett to create for him.

Jayne's attitude toward school has changed in the past two years to be more engaged and positive. Jayce's attendance has even improved!

-Chastity Miller, Communities in Schools Coordinator

Elevator Spotlight

How would you describe Jayce? Jayce is a fun, high energy kid, with a huge heart, and a major passion for sports - mainly basketball.

Have you noticed any changes in Jayce since you have started meeting with him? I have noticed some very changes in Jayce in the past year and half. He is very high energy and had troubles in the classroom for talking or getting up and moving around when he wasn't supposed to. We have discussed how to better handle that many times, and reports of behavior have reduced. Jayce and I have also worked through how to handle his passion in basketball when something doesn't go the way he thinks it should. I can see improvement in those skills in our weekly interactions.

What do you like best about being an Elevator? The greatest part about being an Elevator is knowing that I am being a consistent, positive role model in a Jayce's life. The most rewarding part of being an Elevator is hearing Jayce tell me about a situation that he used to not handle so well in the past, but this time he handled it differently because of something we talked about.



Brett with his student Jayce

THANK YOU TO TOYOTA WV FOR YOUR GENEROUS \$5000 DONATION TO EDUCATION ELEVATORS!



Elevator Appreciation Week

During Elevator Appreciation Week, kids wrote cards, drew pictures and gave other tokens of appreciation to their Elevators!



We need your support to help students take flight! Your financial contributions are critical to our program. Please visit our website at www.educationelevators.org to learn more, donate, and stay connected with us.



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