

A Note from the Executive Director

It's been another very busy year for us! Last fall, WV Medicine, Toyota and Flaherty Sensabaugh Bonasso joined our list of esteemed partners. This fall, we will be launching a partnership between BridgeValley Technical and Richmond Elementary as well as one between Alban Elementary and Moses Auto Group! In addition, South Charleston Chamber of Commerce and South Charleston Rotary will be joining us as general partners. I continue to be amazed (and so very grateful) for the enthusiasm of the business community to join our program. Schools reach out for help - and the business community steps in. It makes me so proud to be a West Virginian.

Due to our immense growth and to the departure of two of our long time program coordinators (Becca Revercomb and Kathy Thomas), we will need to hire SIX new program coordinators to manage their schools and our new ones. The coordinators that we are losing, however, are irreplaceable. This program actually started in Becca's fifth grade classroom over 18 years ago. It was her classroom where my dad was a volunteer for Read Aloud and saw all the issues that these kids faced. He, like Becca, and so many of their other teachers also saw all the promise in these students. Kathy Thomas was a resource teacher at Piedmont when Education Elevators first began and got involved because she saw with her own eyes the incredible impact that Education Elevators has on the lives of the kids who need it most.

Becca once shared with me a special interaction she observed between a student and his Elevator, Katrina. She wrote:

I just witnessed a beautiful example of the raw power an Elevator can have with a child. So positive, so real, so personal, so absolutely amazing. I was, and still am, gobsmacked. The school counselor and I couldn't look at one another because we were afraid to cry! Katrina spoke to Quincy about his behavior and it was MAGIC.

She drew parallels between her life and his and was able to sprinkle in the spatter of what kind of man he needs to be and told him how to get to that point in his young life. She also taught him about self-healing, anger and how to not give his power away through that same anger. She reminded him of real-world heroes - his father, his pastor....Oh my. Amazing. She saved him and she saved me, too.

She's an example of the incredible resource the Elevators can be for students - and for teachers!

It's interactions like these that I think kept Becca and Kathy involved with Education Elevators for so long. Both tried to retire on several occasions, but returned to provide our program with the support it needed to get off the ground. Becca and Kathy helped give Education Elevators its wings!

People like Kathy and Becca make me even more proud to be part of Education Elevators and I am grateful beyond measure to them for their years of service.

Allison McJunkin

PARTNER PROFILE - WVU MEDICINE



Why We Partner: We partner with Education Elevators because we believe in the transformative power of mentorship and education. By placing our doctors and staff in elementary schools, we aim to inspire and guide young students, fostering a love for learning and a curiosity about the world around them. This partnership allows us to give back to the community in a meaningful way, nurturing the next generation of thinkers, leaders, and innovators. We are committed to making a positive impact beyond the walls of our hospital, and Education Elevators provides the perfect platform to do so.

The impact of our partnership with Education Elevators has been profound. Our doctors and staff have served as mentors and role models, showing students the importance of dedication, empathy, and lifelong learning. This initiative has led to increased student engagement and a greater sense of community within the school. Additionally, our doctors and staff have found the experience incredibly rewarding, as it allows them to connect with the community on a deeper level and contribute to the holistic development of young minds. Together, we are fostering a supportive and inspiring environment for students to thrive.

-Brystal Belmonte, Manager of Student Services

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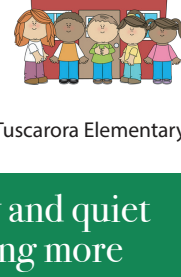


Elevators from WVU Medicine celebrated the holiday season with a fun filled party with their students at Tuscarora Elementary! Kids made Santa Dust, Gingerbread Ornaments and played reindeer games!

Teacher Perspective

Mentorship programs like Education Elevators are valuable to our students at Tuscarora Elementary because students are able to build new relationships with people in our community. Students benefit from Education Elevators because it has provided students with an outlet to make new connections during the school day.

Since Michael has started meeting with his Elevator Cate, I have noticed that he has become a more active student, willing to share and ask questions, and more attentive to his classwork.



-Anneliese Hughes, Teacher, Tuscarora Elementary

When looking at Michael, I have seen immense change in him. Where he was once a shy and quiet student, I now see an outgoing boy who never hesitates to say hello. He has been making more friends throughout the school and continues to be a model student for his peers.

-Thomas Schloemer, School Counselor

School Counselor Perspective

The Education Elevators program has been a major highlight for the students involved at Tuscarora Elementary. Every week, the kids who are in the program are seeking me out to figure out when their "friend" will be back to spend more time with them. They are always eager to meet with their mentors and spend time with them and it has helped these students come out of their shells.

The students who are a part of this program have benefited in many ways. The thing that stands out to me the most, however, is that they have someone to look up to in the school system aside from their teachers or school admin/workers. They know that they can talk to them without judgment and that there are kind people everywhere for them to confide in and relate to. Having that added support has been great for these students.

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Elevator Spotlight

How would you describe Michael? Michael is such a sweet and caring boy. He is also super smart and works very well with his peers.

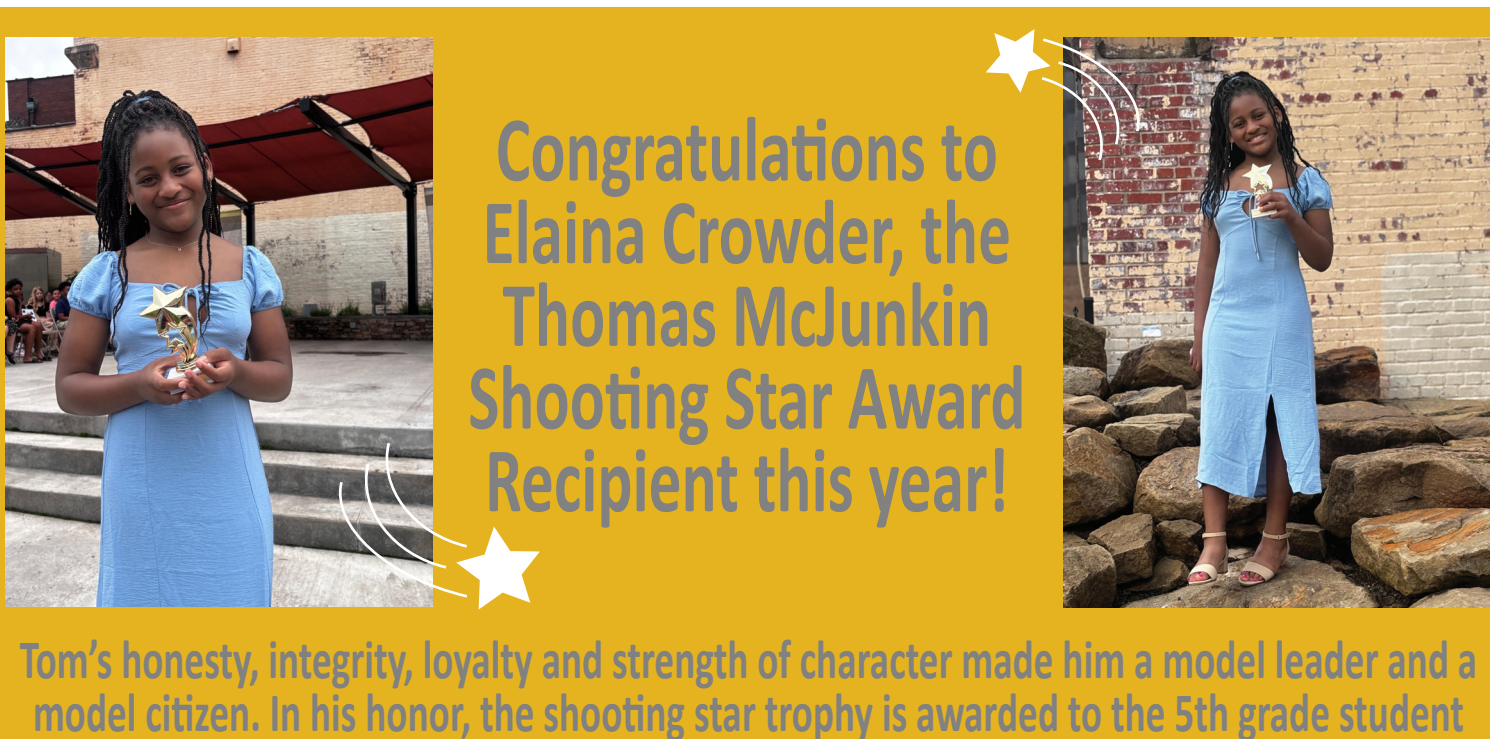
What do you enjoy most about your time with Michael? I enjoy learning about Michael's interests and getting to know him as a person. Our time together always includes a fun activity such as coloring, building blocks or playing games. We always have so much fun playing and laughing together.

Have you noticed any changes in Michael since you have started meeting with him? Michael has definitely opened up more compared to when I first started working with him. He has become more outgoing which I love! It makes me happy that he feels comfortable talking about school and life with me.

What do you like best about being an Elevator? Education Elevators is such a rewarding program. I'm so grateful for this opportunity. I love that I am able to be that extra support for Michael, even if it means just providing a listening ear for that day. Michael has a heart of gold and such a bright future ahead of him!



Cate Woolcock with student Michael



Congratulations to Elaina Crowder, the Thomas McJunkin Shooting Star Award Recipient this year!

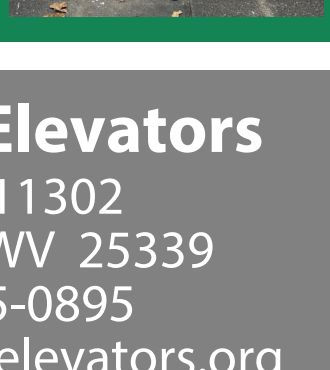
Tom's honesty, integrity, loyalty and strength of character made him a model leader and a model citizen. In his honor, the shooting star trophy is awarded to the 5th grade student who most exhibits those same traits, providing a shining example to fellow students.

Elevator Appreciation Week

During Elevator Appreciation Week, kids wrote cards, drew pictures and made keychains and other tokens of appreciation for 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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