

Elevations

The latest news and updates from Education Elevators
Winter 2020, Vol. 10



A Note from the Executive Director

By: Allison McJunkin

What a year this has been for all of us! None of us could have predicted this. I wanted to report what Education Elevators has been doing before and during the COVID crisis. Last November, we launched a new partnership between the Mary C. Snow afterschool site at the Bob Burdette Center and Steptoe & Johnson. Bryan Cokeley, the managing partner of Steptoe & Johnson, who is an

Elevator himself, said this, "The single most important thing I got out of being an Elevator is the feeling that I can help make a difference in the life of one child. Education Elevators is an incredible program. If it could continue to be scaled up in the Valley, it would have even more of an impact."

In March, the sky fell and our worlds were turned upside down. The pandemic and its far-reaching effects hit the students in our program especially hard. Mentoring relationships are more critical now than ever. We worked diligently with Kanawha County Board of Education (BOE) to implement a virtual mentoring program. Our Elevators are connecting with students using Schoology, a video conference platform that all students use for schoolwork.

Schoology will also enable our Elevators to provide support to students in middle school. Our program technically ends after elementary school, but we know that students are just starting to form their identities in middle school and it's such a critical time for students to feel supported. We also know that students in middle school report that they have fewer "developmental relationships" than in elementary school. In mid November, we launched our virtual program for middle school students and will continue to work with the BOE to develop a plan for how our Elevators can provide support when students encounter difficulties such as bullying, peer pressure, family discord, or violence, and other emotional trauma.

By using the virtual platform Elevators will support students in 7 elementary schools and 5 middle schools in Kanawha County. In January, we hope to launch our virtual program in one more elementary school in Kanawha County and in several schools in Berkeley County. We also plan on using a virtual platform to provide training to our Elevators.

I cannot thank our Elevators and supporters enough for making such an impactful difference in the lives of students! We need funds to successfully launch and implement our virtual programs and to develop a curriculum and materials guide for Elevators, designed to cultivate positive youth development and to provide training to our Elevators.

I hope that you will consider contributing to Education Elevators this year. Hearing the heartwarming stories about students and their Elevators has been a bright, shining spot for me this year and I hope it is for you, too.

Happy Holidays to Everyone!

With Gratitude and Appreciation,

Allison McJunkin

WHAT OUR SCHOOL PARTNERS SAY!

The Elevators who visit our building have a direct impact on the students they are working with. We know this and value this. We often miss the indirect benefits of Elevators. They support the teachers of the students they are working with by providing needed attention to their students weekly. They also bring a strong sense of community partnership into the building.

- LEAH KERSEY, SCHOOL COUNSELOR, EDGEWOOD ELEMENTARY

Our students light up when they find out they are getting matched with an Elevator and when they get to see them weekly. They truly do make a huge impact on our students and their lives!- CAITLIN LASTORIA, SCHOOL COUNSELOR, PIEDMONT ELEMENTARY

The students with Elevators have become more successful in all areas of school. They look forward to Elevator visits and light up when with them. - REBECCA THOMAS, SCHOOL COUNSELOR, KANAWHA CITY ELEMENTARY

The Elevator program has helped children form much needed healthy relationships with great adult role models. Students really look forward to their weekly mentor visits. It has helped us be more mindful of those kids that need that positive adult interaction in their lives. - BETH STURGILL, PRINCIPAL, CENTRAL ELEMENTARY

Students eagerly look forward to the day their Elevator comes. They are so excited to have someone just for them and I have already noticed changes in behaviors and attitudes as a result! - JILL WOODRUM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PRO-KIDS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The program has been amazing for our Mary C. Snow After School Program! I have seen students who have trouble making friends look forward to seeing their Elevator. I have seen students who are insecure in school work become more involved with others and their school work. Attendance to our after school program has even improved. I have other students asking if they could have an Elevator. Parents and teachers beg for their child or student to get an Elevator!- NATALIE BELVINS, AFTER-SCHOOL COORDINATOR, MARY C. SNOW ELEMENTARY - BOB BURDETTE CENTER

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-Bryan Cokeley, Managing Partner, Steptoe & Johnson



[Click Here to Watch the Impact our Elevators are Making!](#)

Here is how one Elevator summed up the importance of connecting virtually with her student:
"I know a great deal of what Sarah has been through. It would break my heart if I couldn't reach out to her, to be her sounding board, to support her during what is likely a very confusing time for her, to provide her with stability and distractions from what's going on in her life. Sarah is such a special young lady but she needs support. I cannot let her down."

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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#1 holiday hack:

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