

Elevations

The latest news and updates from the Education Elevators

June 2020, Vol. 9



A Note from the Executive Director

No one could have predicted the changes that occurred in all of our lives these past few months. The Coronavirus has impacted all of our lives. Unfortunately, mentees and other marginalized youth will bear the brunt of its far reaching effects. For many kids, schools offered a respite from the stressors of their daily lives and often were the only place where they had safe and stable relationships.

With many families facing economic hardship along with the challenges of remote learning (if at all), the home environment in many cases, became emotionally, verbally and/or physically abusive. Many students have fallen behind in school work and their grade level. Not having access to their peers and school support systems can also be damaging to their mental health and inhibits proper social-emotional development.

In the wake of COVID-19 mentoring relationships are more critical than ever.

Over the past few months, our Elevators, despite school closures and their own challenges, have done everything they can to continue to support their students. They sent photos, videos and notes to let their students know that they haven't forgotten about them. They encouraged their learning and skill development. Some even sent recordings of themselves reading books and others sent care packages to their mentees and their families!

We are developing a plan for Elevators to continue contact with their mentees over the summer. In addition, we have been working closely with the Board of Education on a plan for Elevators to continue their relationships with their students in middle school.

I hope that you will continue to support Education Elevators. Mentors can provide the critical aid students need to overcome the educational setbacks and trauma caused by the economic and social fallout of COVID 19.

“Deprived of the opportunity to play and interact with their peers in person, young people risk losing social-emotional skills and instead of developing confidence and self-assurance are instead in danger of feeling isolated and insecure.” -Forbes



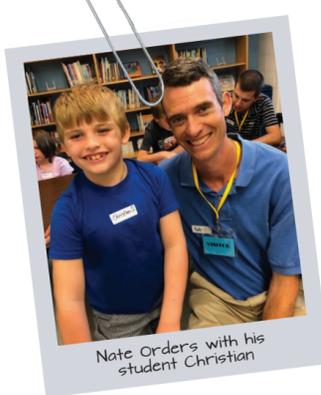
Education Elevators is partnering up with the West Virginia Public Education Collaborative (WVPEC)! One of our areas of focus is their Speakers' Bureau. The Speakers' Bureau is a comprehensive database of speakers across West Virginia who are willing to step into the

classroom or use channels like Skype to educate students about the career opportunities available to them.

If you are interested in being a speaker, please contact Donna Peduto directly at: dpeduto@mail.wvu.edu

Visit: <https://www.wvpec.com/events-and-initiatives/wv-k-12-speakers-bureau> for more information

PARTNER FILES



Nate Orders with his student Christian



Why We Partner: Orders Construction partnered with Education Elevators in hopes of making at least a small improvement in our community and state over the long-term. Today's elementary students are tomorrow's citizens, and so many of those students lack a positive role model.

Our Elevators can be those role models, and hopefully, at least one of us is making an impact that will last a lifetime.

The immediate impacts of the partnership have been to raise Orders Construction's corporate profile in the community, and improve morale of our team members who see our company doing good things for local children.

Elevator's Perspective: Christian's energy is contagious. He loves interacting with adults and dives into every activity with great enthusiasm. He is a joy to be around. Reflecting on the past several months, the thing I have most enjoyed, is watching Christian's development as a student and person. It's amazing how fast second-graders grow up! Since I started meeting with Christian, I have been pleased to see him improve his patience and politeness. These are traits that will serve him well for the rest of his life. Talking to Christian, and to the staff at his school, has opened my eyes to the struggles many local families experience every day. Being an Elevator has made me even more grateful for what I have, and inspired me to do more to help those in need. The best thing about being an Elevator is the happiness I can bring to Christian's life, just by showing up. It's really that easy!

-Nate Orders, Elevator

School Perspective

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.



Our Elevators have been amazing during the Coronavirus crisis! They prepared a goody boxes for their students along with hand written notes. They brought them to the school in prepaid mailing boxes and all we had to do was put the addresses on them! They also sent pictures and messages to their students to make them feel special!

Christian absolutely loves Nate! He talks about him at times when Nate isn't even there. I think the combination of a caring teacher and Nate, helped Christian have an overall successful year!

-Beth Sturgill, Principal
Central Elementary School

Lisa and Mason's Relationship Has Spanned Six Years and Two Schools, but has Made a Lifelong Impact of Both of Their Lives

Teacher Perspective

Lisa makes Mason feel that someone is there just for him. It calms him and refuels his spirit. He settles down after a cooling off period, and he's refreshed after spending time with Lisa.



He is always so excited to see Lisa. He's up and out the door before I know what's happening sometimes! I think Lisa is like a mother figure to him, and as a twin - he always has to share. He doesn't have to share Lisa and that is something he needed.

-Stephanie Elkins, School Teacher
Kanawha City Elementary School

School Counselor Perspective

Mason and Lisa have a very strong bond. She has also followed him between schools. Lisa's biggest impact on Mason would be consistency. She is there for him no matter what. Mason needs this in his life.

When Lisa comes, you can tell she's been there even without knowing she was there. He walks with more confidence and has a smile on his face. He also seems to get along better with his peers. Lisa is great for Mason. It is a joy to see them together.

-Rebecca Thomas, School Counselor
Kanawha City Elementary

Elevator Spotlight

How would you describe Mason? Mason is a sweet, smart, and fun kid. He always has a smile on his face and has the best personality and biggest heart.

What do you enjoy most about your time with Mason? I enjoy catching up with him every week and just listening to him fill me in on what is going on with him. We play a lot of games and we have built numerous LEGO creations, but I enjoy our conversations and laughing together the most.

Have you noticed any changes in Mason since you have started meeting with him? Mason is much more outgoing with me and in general than when we first starting meeting. When I first met with him I felt it was like pulling teeth asking him questions and trying to get him to talk. Now that he is more comfortable with me he doesn't skip a beat chatting with me. And he knows everyone in his school and has many friends.

What do you like best about being an Elevator? I feel it is so rewarding being an Elevator. I volunteered to be an Elevator several years ago in hopes that I would be able to help a student, which I feel I am doing, but I have gotten so much more out of the experience than I expected. It is awesome to see Mason succeed in school and be such a happy, sweet kid even with the tremendous adversity he has faced in his young life. It is truly inspiring to know what he has been through and to see it not define him or bring him down. Rather, he has risen above it and has so much potential to do great things in his future.



"I have been volunteering as an Elevator to Mason since he was in kindergarten and he is now a fifth grader. I hope the impact and positive influence I have had on his life is as significant as the impact he has had on mine!"

-Lisa Starcher, Elevator

We need your support! 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.

The **CARES Act** expands charitable giving incentives and allows taxpayers who take the standard deduction to take a one-time "above-the-line" deduction of up to \$300 for cash gifts made to charitable organizations. For those who do itemize their deductions, the new law allows for cash contributions to qualified charities to be deducted up to 100% of your adjusted gross income for the 2020 calendar year.