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Noah hits his stride at Elk Hill

When a child struggles in the classroom, his struggle is rarely contained within the school walls. His anxiety washes over every member of his family. Routines are disrupted; stress levels spike.

And so it was for Noah and his family. An exceptionally bright child cognitively, Noah struggles with sensory issues. Traditional preschool and kindergarten environments presented significant challenges. "He had a hard time navigating a classroom with lots of inputs," says Noah's dad, Jay. Put that kind of pressure on a family, he admits, and it can be overwhelming. "He needed someone to meet him where he was on a daily basis," Jay says. "Elk Hill was able to do that."

Noah began attending Elk Hill's Charlottesville School as a first grader. After a slow start, he finished strong. "We saw a big improvement during that first year," says Noah's mother, Teller. "Elk Hill created a safe environment for him. He knew what to expect and he felt accepted and understood."

But when Noah returned to Elk Hill for the second grade, he had a rough start. "Elk Hill brought 'Team Noah' together and we hashed out ideas," Jay says. "They were willing to try whatever it took to help him." Changes were put in place, and they clicked. "He had a great year," Teller says, "and it led to a great summer."

This fall, Noah is settling in as a third grader at Elk Hill's Charlottesville School. "All children want to do well," Jay observes, "and Noah is no exception. We're very, very lucky in that he faces the day and tries his hardest. In the last 10 months, he's really starting to find his stride. We owe a great deal to Elk Hill for that." ■



You helped change lives

When I came to Elk Hill 32 years ago, it was apparent to me that the residential program was invaluable to the 17 children and their families that were being served. The same focus exists today, although we have grown to serve 518 youth, plus their families at seven locations, and in 35 schools.

As we celebrate our 46th year of helping children and families “transform overwhelming challenges into successful futures”, our program enhancements coincide with Virginia’s move to overhaul the state’s juvenile justice system by focusing on a more therapeutic approach versus incarceration. With the closing of Beaumont Juvenile Correctional Center in 2017, the Department of Juvenile Justice is focusing on providing more therapeutic services to children and their families in their communities. Elk Hill is positioned to be a part of this solution, through our day schools, community based residential settings, our outpatient, and school based mental health services.

With the support from you, Elk Hill has provided scholarships for children who fall through the cracks in public funding, and launched exciting new initiatives that have become viable programs because of the investments made by our dedicated donors. With your steadfast support Elk Hill has pulled many children from the river, and has gone up stream with early intervention and preventative services to help keep children out of the river – and to provide them with a rescue line when necessary. ■



Elk Hill summer camp sets the stage for success in the classroom

Elk Hill summer camp is more than fun and games. The enrichment programs you make possible ensure that campers retain what they’ve learned in school, and that helps them take off fast when classes resume in the fall.

“Kids who attend camp don’t lose ground over the summer,” says Pam Pitchford, Community Services Coordinator for Elk Hill. “It makes a real difference in their demeanor at school. We see solid skill retention, and that helps **our students make a smooth transition** into the academic routine.”

Thanks to your support, the **Elk Hill summer camp program doubled in 2016**, reaching 120 children from first grade through high school. Camps were offered at New Kent and St. Andrews School for elementary students, Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School for middle school students and Church Hill Academy for high school students.

If it weren’t for you, many of these children would spend the summer cooped up, sheltered from violence but insulated from life. **Because you care, horizons broadened for 120 young people.** Because you care, kindergarteners’ eyes opened wide at the Jamestown Settlement, middle school students learned lessons in trust during team-building activities and high school students mastered new dance moves.

And because you care, **120 young people began to sense possibilities.** When campers were coached on table settings in preparation for a meal at a sit-down restaurant, one pushed back. “We don’t need all that,” she said. “We’re from the ghetto.” For Camp Director Mary Dick, it was a teachable moment. “Where you live,” she told the girl, “doesn’t have to define you.”

Summer camp helps limit “summer slide.” For some campers, reading levels and math fluency improve. And nearly all who attend camp seem **more confident in their own abilities** when they return to school. Compared to many of their classmates, those who’ve attended camp are better able to self-regulate and communicate needs and concerns.

“The beauty of Elk Hill Summer Camp is that children forge bonds with one another and have fun in activities and on field trips, and they also have fun while engaged in academics and social/emotional learning,” says teacher Kathy Tappen.

“I’m not aware of any other summer camp that offers such a great experience and support in these combined areas.” ■



New Elk Hill Staunton School to serve students with autism



For families of children with autism, finding the services they need can be a challenge. Thanks to your support, a new Elk Hill school opening this fall will meet the needs of local children and their families.

Open to students with various disabilities, the Staunton School is the first Elk Hill school licensed to work with autism spectrum students. “This is a real need in the communities we serve. There really is nothing else in the Shenandoah Valley,” says Darlene Ferguson, Director of Education at Elk Hill. “These students have had to go to Charlottesville, Roanoke or Harrisonburg, as much as a one-hour drive each way.”

Located on the grounds of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind, the new Elk Hill school has four large classrooms in an 8,000-square foot facility. Although licensed for students from kindergarten through 12th grade, initial plans target students grades 6-12. “We’ll add the elementary program later,” Darlene says.

By late August, eight students had enrolled. “We expect a total this fall of 10 to 15,” Darlene says. Two new teachers have been hired. A teacher for physical education and reading intervention will split time with Elk Hill’s Charlottesville school.

New students who’ve visited the Staunton school are enthusiastic. “They like the classrooms and they like the fact that the class sizes will be small,” Darlene says. Because of your generosity, they’ll have the same access to technology that all Elk Hill students benefit from, and they’ll participate in the same programs – including an introduction to social skills and executive functioning skills. “That’s the kind of thing that helps them manage their behavior and transition from activity to activity,” Darlene adds.

“We’re all excited about this new school,” she says. “It’s definitely serving the needs of children and families in this community.” ■

With your help, Elk Hill Students are at the top of the class!

School is just starting, and school supplies are a constant and ongoing need.

Your support makes it possible to meet our student’s most basic needs.

Won’t you consider making a donation to support our students at Elk Hill’s Goochland, Staunton, Varina and Charlottesville schools?

- **\$25.00** Basic school supplies for one student
- **\$50.00** Dressed for success (school uniform: shirt, pants, belt)
- **\$75.00** Ready for school (basic supplies & one uniform)
- **\$100.00** Backpack, basic school supplies and uniform

Gifts can also be made online at www.elkhill.org.

Gifts of any size will make a difference, and every gift is greatly appreciated!

Elk Hill is also looking for donations of these items (new products only, please: no used goods can be accepted).

Markers, pencils, crayons, colored pencils, dry erase markers, glue sticks, pencil boxes, 3-ring binders, notebook paper, construction paper, colored paper, composition books, hand sanitizers and tissues.

Interested in doing a back to school drive? Or to arrange delivery of school supplies contact Jessica Cocciolone at 804-457-4866 Ext 310 or jcocciolone@elkhill.org

Connect, Collaborate and Contribute at Elk Hill Charlottesville School’s Synapsis Hub. The Synapsis Hub is a networking group, but it’s more than just networking, the “Hub” facilitates connections between businesses and nonprofit groups for community and economic development. To learn more at synapsehubs.com or email jcocciolone@elkhill.org. ■





Your life, your values, your philanthropic legacy.

An effective estate plan reflects your life & values. A planned gift is a donation from your estate used to support a non-profit organization that supports your philanthropic goals. A planned gift sustains a life-long connection to an institution that has played an important role in your philanthropic goals and the legacy you have created. By including a gift to Elk Hill in your plans you can reduce tax liability on your estate and at the same time contribute to the financial strength and stability to an organization that has filled a vital role for 1000's of Virginia's youth and families' wellbeing.

It's a simple gift that cost nothing during your lifetime. – But makes a world of difference in a young person's lifetime. Let us answer your questions! Contact Jessica Cocciolone, Director of Development (804) 457-4866 ext. 310 or jcocciolone@elkhill.org ■

**Join us on the
2nd and 4th
Monday 3-5 p.m.
Elk Hill's
Charlottesville Day
School**

**CONNECT,
COLLABORATE,
and
CONTRIBUTE**

at Elk Hill Charlottesville School's Synapsis Hub. The Synapsis Hub is a networking group, but it's more than just networking, the "Hub" facilitates connections between businesses and nonprofit groups for community and economic development. To learn more at www.synpashubs.com or email jcocciolone@elkhill.org.

Enrichment program designed for residential students

Have a special talent or skill? Consider sharing it with Elk Hill residential students in a new, after-school enrichment program. Intended to expose young people to unique experiences, the program is also expected to have beneficial impacts on all facets of their treatment at Elk Hill.



Offered initially at the Goochland campus, the program will consist of a rotation of 12-week activities such as physical fitness, auto mechanics, photography and yoga. Residents have given input on potential topics. The program will be held three days a week in 75-minute sessions. Upon completion of a 12-week course, participants will receive an award.

John Bachand, Elk Hill Farm program director, says he is actively looking for instructors for a variety of interest areas. "I'll be able to utilize some of my current staff," he says, "as they have talents and passions for some of these activities and can easily engage the residents."

The more the staff engages with the residents, trust is built and negative behavior is reduced. "Additionally, I would like the residents to gain some skill with these trades so that they may utilize them for potential employment opportunities," John says. "And I would like the facility to broaden its community awareness of the good work that we do with very difficult children through volunteer support."

Can't volunteer? Please consider making a gift to support Elk Hill's enrichment programs. ■

Elk Hill is going digital!

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Twitter- [@ElkHill](https://twitter.com/ElkHill)

Sign up to receive regular updates via email:

Elkhill.org or email Gillian Kunkel, Development Coordinator
@ GKunkel@elkhill.org or (804) 457- 4866 ext. 312