

Fall 2015

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Dr. Temple Grandin to launch Elk Hill Speakers Series



Elk Hill's first-ever Speakers Series makes its debut Nov. 3 with a special presentation by Dr. Temple Grandin. A prominent speaker on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Grandin is the author of six books on the topic, including *Emergence: Labeled Autistic* and *The Way I See It: A Personal Look at Autism & Asperger's*. She is also an inventor and professor of animal science at Colorado State University.

"We are thrilled to introduce Temple Grandin to people in this area," says Michael Farley, Chief Executive Officer, Elk Hill. "As the number of children diagnosed with autism increases, it is important that everyone in this community learn more about this disorder."

If You Go:

Elk Hill Speakers Series presents Temple Grandin at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 3 at the Martin Luther King Jr. Performing Arts Center in Charlottesville. There is no charge for admission, but seating is limited and reservations are required. To make reservations, visit www.elkhill.org.

In a partnership between Elk Hill and the Virginia Film Festival, the documentary *Generation A: Portraits of Autism and the Arts*, featuring Temple Grandin, will be presented during the film festival in November. A "Big Think" panel discussion featuring local autism experts will follow the screening. Visit www.virginiafilmfestival.org for details.

Grandin, who has a form of high-functioning autism known as Asperger's syndrome, did not speak until she was nearly 4. When she was diagnosed with autism in 1950, her parents were told she should be institutionalized.

Grandin later developed her talents into a successful career as a designer of livestock-handling equipment, one of very few in the world. She has designed the facilities in which half the cattle in the U.S. are handled, consulting for firms such as Burger King, McDonald's and Swift.

She has been featured on NPR, BBC, the *Today Show*, *Larry King Live*, *48 Hours* and *20/20*, and has been the subject of articles in *Forbes*, *Time*, *People*, *U.S. News & World Report* and *the New York Times*. An award-winning 2010 HBO docudrama, *Temple Grandin*, is based on her life. ■

**A Note from
Michael Farley
Chief Executive Officer • Elk Hill**



**A milestone you
helped create**

This September Elk Hill will be celebrating our 45th year of helping children and families transform overwhelming challenges into successful futures. From our humble beginnings in 1970, when we served six boys at Elk Hill Farm, to today, as we help upwards of 500 boys, girls and their families annually at six locations, and in the community, Elk Hill's core essence has remained constant: We believe in children!

Today we are working with children as young as four and as old as 21. The ways we work with these youngsters and their families have evolved over the years and the challenges they face have become increasingly more difficult. But for 45 years, we have viewed every child we serve with the same "lens" – that each one has hope and promise for a better future and a productive life.

Another unvarying component over the past 45 years has been you, our donor. You have been with us in good times and bad. Your kind support has provided scholarships for children who fall through the public funding cracks. Exciting new initiatives got off the ground and became viable programs because you invested in Elk Hill. It truly comes down to that one child, like Jamal, who was able to go to summer camp because you care. Thank you for caring and for being part of the Elk Hill Family. ■

Reaching children sooner, through Elk Hill's BEST efforts

In a new program launched this fall, Elk Hill is providing school-based mental health services to students in Goochland Elementary and Middle School. The Best (Behavioral-Emotional Support Team) program provides support for students, their families and teachers.

"We're seeing an increasing number of behavioral and emotional problems at earlier and earlier ages," says Laura Easter, Elk Hill's Director of Community Services. "The earlier we can teach kids, families and teachers to effectively manage those problems, the better. And the fact that these services are offered in the student's school makes it a comfortable process for children and their families."

The availability of mental health services in the school means kids spend more time in class and less time travelling to appointments up to 45 minutes away. Maximizing instructional time is the key for all students. "If a teacher has one student who presents behavioral issues, that teacher might spend 5 minutes in a 45-minute class dealing with that," Laura says. "After five days, you've lost 25 minutes, and that has a real impact on the other students. By supporting Goochland's positive interventional behavior program, BEST benefits all students."

Elk Hill has provided Therapeutic Day Treatment services to Goochland schools for the past three years. School administrators say they can see a direct link between that program and a drop in suspensions. "Our mission is to help children and their families," Laura says. "Where better than in our own backyard?"

Funding to launch the BEST program is provided by a grant from the Jenkins Foundation and The Community Foundation serving Richmond and central Virginia. ■

Full continuum of mental health care

Staffed by a licensed therapist and master's-level counselor, the Elk Hill BEST program provides:

- real time de-escalation and intervention to students in crisis;
- consultation for teachers and administrators who need more effective ways to connect with students who have behavioral or emotional problems;
- connections to related resources;
- outpatient therapy to students and families in the school;
- student assessments on request;
- group counseling, working with the school's guidance counselor on social skills and anger management; and
- a support group for the growing population of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren.



I Am Elk Hill: Lizzie

Ever wonder who the typical Elk Hill student is? Meet Lizzie!

When Lizzie, 10, began attending classes at the Charlottesville School in August 2014, she was coming off a rocky stretch at her public school. Nearly immobilized by anxiety, she had not attended a full day of school since October 2013.

But when she and her parents visited the Charlottesville School, Lizzie liked the looks of things. On the first day of school, it took a bit of coaxing to get her in the door. After that, smooth sailing. **"From day one, Lizzie has been an exceptional student," says Chuck Longerbeam, Assistant Head of School at Charlottesville. "She's never had a single write-up."**

There's one more thing she's never done since coming to Charlottesville: In one full year, Lizzie never missed a single day of school. "I'm not aware of *any* student here *ever* doing that," Chuck says.

Soon after beginning classes at Elk Hill, Lizzie's parents noticed a change in their daughter. On school days, Lizzie badgered her mom to get moving each morning. "I don't want to be late to school," she declared.



What makes Elk Hill work for Lizzie? "I think it's the small setting," Chuck says. "Teachers here have a more intimate relationship with kids. You can't overemphasize the importance of those one-on-one relationships."

This fall, at her parents' request, Lizzie returned to the Charlottesville School. Just before school started, she attended a two-week summer camp setting up a smooth transition back into the school routine. Thanks to your support of Elk Hill, Lizzie hasn't missed a beat – or a day of school. ■

Thanks to you, Elk Hill grads are gaining an edge in the job market!

A comprehensive new **Workforce Development** program launched this fall gives juniors and seniors real world jobs training, instruction in workplace readiness, career exploration, a shot at an internship, skill certification and strategies for success.

In a key part of the new program, faculty from three local community colleges – J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC) and John Tyler Community College – will teach customer service skills to students at Charlottesville, Goochland and Varina schools. Students who pass an exam will receive certification in customer service from the National Retail Federation. They will also earn college credit for those classes, creating an opportunity for them to attend community college after graduating from Elk Hill.



That program – **which wouldn't exist without your support** – is a direct response to employers who've asked colleges to offer instruction in customer service skills. "Many of their new employees did not know how to interact with customers," says Darlene Ferguson, Director of Education at Elk Hill, "and were at risk of losing their jobs when they did not handle that role properly."

Other components of the Workforce Development curriculum include:

- ✓ **WORKFORCE READINESS**, focusing on teamwork, time and stress management.
- ✓ **COOL JOBS**, career exploration, possible internships and training.
- ✓ **PERSONAL STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS**, role-playing exercises and traditional coursework.
- ✓ **DRIVER'S EDUCATION COURSEWORK**, a new offering at Elk Hill. A driver's license is a requirement for many entry-level jobs.

Beginning this year, Elk Hill will offer the classroom portion of driver's education.

Students who find part-time jobs or internships will be required to "earn" time off campus through demonstration of jobs skills and abilities and achieving a specified level of behavior.

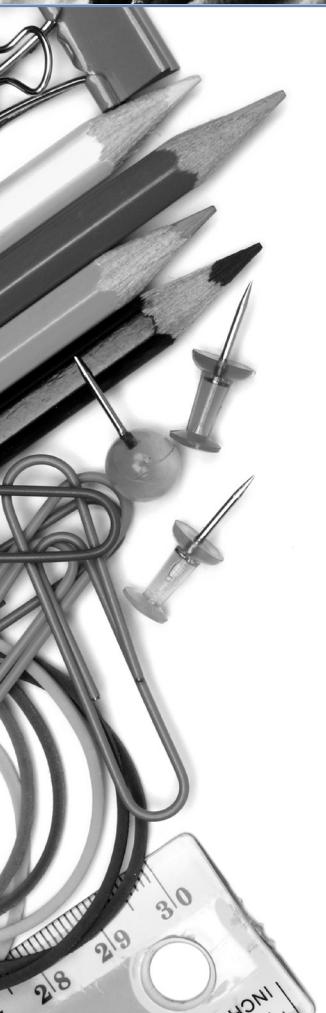
Significant funding for this program comes from the Brookfield Foundation and Capital One. ■



What does their future hold?

- Dropouts?**
- Homeless?**
- Inmates?**
- None of the above?**

A gift through your will or estate helps us continue our work far into the future. **It's a simple gift that costs nothing during your lifetime** – but it makes a world of difference in a young person's lifetime. **Let us answer your questions! Contact Ann Criswell, (804) 457-4866, ext. 310; email: acriswell@elkhill.org.** ■



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

The school year is already underway, but school supplies are a constant and ongoing need. **Your support makes it possible to meet students' most basic needs.** We're looking for donations of these items (*new products only, please: no used goods can be accepted*), or cash donations.

- Markers, pencils, pens, crayons, colored pencils, chalk
- Notebook paper, construction paper, colored paper
- Scissors for elementary students
- Glue sticks, plastic pencil boxes, 3-ring binders
- Hand sanitizer, tissues
- Composition books (not spiral)
- Inexpensive headphones/ear buds (under \$10 at discount stores)
- P.E. equipment: basketballs, footballs, baseballs, bats, gloves, softballs, protective equipment, Whiffle balls, jump ropes, dodge balls, mats, outdoor playground equipment

Elk Hill provides uniforms for students. Support is needed to continue that program. Interested in making a tax-deductible gift?

- \$40** covers the price of a shirt, pants and belt
- \$70** provides "one to wear and one to wash"
- \$20** allows purchase of new underwear and socks for one child
- \$30** purchases an appropriate regulation backpack
- \$50** covers the price of basic school supplies

Gifts of any size will make a difference, and every gift is greatly appreciated. To make a donation, send a check in the remittance envelope provided, payable to Elk Hill to "Getting Ready for School."

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

For more information or to arrange for delivery of school supplies, **call or email Ann E. Criswell, CFRE, (804) 457-4866 ext. 210; acriswell@elkhill.org**



Elk Hill has many ongoing opportunities for volunteers. Interested?

**Contact Lauren Devitt at Ldevitt@elkhill.org
(804) 457-4866 x336.**

Sign up to receive the newsletter via email

Send an email with your name and mailing address to Ldevitt@elkhill.org

Elk Hill | PO Box 99 | Goochland VA 23063 | (804) 457-4866 x 336 | www.elkhill.org