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Because you care; horizons broadened for
 105 young people.



Because of your support, Elk Hill's 2017 summer camp reached 105 children from first grade through high school. Camps were offered at several locations state-wide including: Charlottesville, Staunton, Goochland, New Kent and Richmond City. Richmond City camps were held in partnership with St. Andrews School and Church Hill Academy.

For many of our campers their behavioral and emotional needs and financial inability inhibited them from participating in other camps. If it weren't for your support and generosity, these children would have spent their summer cooped up, sheltered from violence, but insulated from life. Because of you, kindergarteners had their eyes opened wide at the Jamestown Settlement, middle school students experienced lessons in trust during team-building activities, and high school students mastered new dance moves.

These summer camps are about more than having fun and bonding. Our summer camp program helps limit the "summer slide" experienced by students in the unstructured days of summer

vacation. Additionally, compared to many of their classmates, those who attended camp were better able to self-regulate and communicate their concerns and needs. For some campers, their reading levels and math fluency improved. And nearly all who attend camp seemed more confident in their own abilities when they returned to school.

"The beauty of Elk Hill Summer Camp is that children forge bonds with one another, participate in fun activities and field trips, and 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." ■

A Note from Michael Farley

Chief Executive Officer • Elk Hill



Courage to continue

As I reflect on the past school year, I think about those seven young people who walked across the stage to receive their high school diplomas in June. Each one of those students had experienced overwhelming challenges in their lives. Many obstacles had been thrown in their paths, often resulting in a sense of perpetual failure. And each one of those kids did struggle, but they persevered, and developed the resilience to keep on.

Winston Churchill once said that "Success is not forever, failure is not fatal—it's the courage to continue on that counts". That quote certainly speaks to those seven graduates and to the other young people you will read about in this edition of *The Advance*. In all, Elk Hill worked with over 600 girls, boys and their families during the past 12 months through our residential, educational and community services programs. And our services continue to grow. We are now helping children in Staunton and the Shenandoah Valley!

As we look to the next year, we will continue to strive to provide children the education and tools necessary for success in life. It is on behalf of all those children that I want to express our heartfelt appreciation to our Elk Hill Family—trustees, staff, supporters, and friends. Without your help, support, hard work, and commitment, Elk Hill could not continue its very important work - dedicated to improving the lives of the children and families we serve. ■

A hard journey won with your dedication.

Rylee was running out of options. She was diagnosed with Conduct Disorder, had multiple hospitalizations, and was in and out of residential placements for years. Rylee was an angry, hostile, defiant, isolated, and argumentative child.

Rylee transitioned from an alternative day school placement to an alternative program facilitated within the public school and joined the Elk Hill Therapeutic Day Treatment Program. She cursed at adults and stormed out of her initial meeting with Elk Hill's team. But Elk Hill's team didn't let that deter them.

At the start of the school year when Rylee would get upset she would destroy a classroom. This was not only disruptive to her learning, but to her entire class. Her teacher would have to clear the classroom multiple times a week. In October, she escalated and declared, "no-one understands me!" The resulting altercation led to a week-long hospitalization. When she came back to school our staff welcomed her with open arms. They continued to work one-on-one with Rylee, pushing her to learn new coping skills.

Rylee engaged in another escalation in November, but this altercation was different. She wasn't hospitalized. She could identify

a few more supports and utilize a few more coping skills. She was taking the skills taught to her by our staff, and was using them. Rylee was taking the first steps to success.

By January, she participated in groups and even when she was mad, she worked through it. She started to talk about her anxiety and how it contributes to her anger. By the time February

rolled around, she attended multiple regular education classes, first with support and then on her own. Therapeutic Day Treatment staff worked with her every day; offering support, encouragement, and challenging her. It was a long and difficult road for Rylee.

April, found Rylee picking out a

dress and making plans to attend the 8th grade formal dance with several of her friends. She discussed things that were going right and even began offering support to others. In May, she signed up for honors classes at the high school and at the end of the school year, she hugged her TDT staff and said, "thank you." Her TDT staff encouraged her to look back on all the hard work she did and all she had accomplished. Our staff was there to help support her on the journey; Rylee did the work needed to come out on the other side, a better person.

Our staff couldn't walk beside Rylee without your support. Thank you. ■



A life transformed because of your unwavering commitment.



At the age of 16, Dante felt hopeless and withdrawn. Several community based interventions in Dante's life were unsuccessful. He experienced substance abuse troubles, a poor relationship with his mother, oppositional defiant behaviors, negative peer interactions, poor decision making skills, and lacked interest in anything related to school.

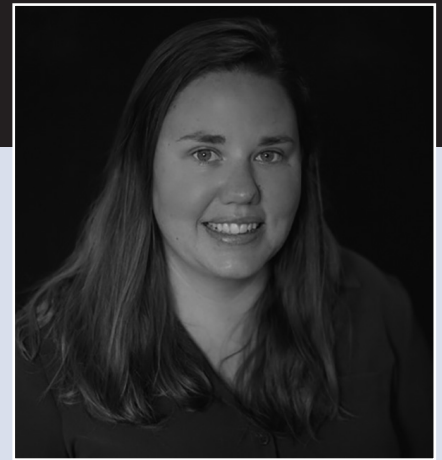
When Dante first came to Elk Hill's residential program, he was withdrawn. He wouldn't engage with peers or staff, and would often put his head down in the classroom. After a couple months and a lot of work by our staff, he began to trust. It was this trust that allowed Dante to make a determined effort to work in the program. He developed and maintained positive relationships with his cottagemates and staff. These relationships gave Dante the confidence to develop a positive relationship with his mother.

After eight months of hard work and your support, Dante was ready to go home. Dante was motivated to change and the staff, and his family, knew that he could accomplish anything he set his mind to. This positive life change is directly related to the new-found skills and support he developed at Elk Hill.

Since returning home, Dante receives continued support services from our Community Based Services. He completed and passed his 11th grade SOLs, made the honor roll, and will continue his education, starting his senior year in the fall. Dante is on the path to a high school diploma, a path he set with skills he developed at Elk Hill. His future includes enrolling in trade school to study Culinary Arts.

Dante's mother says, "He has made a complete transformation". ■

A Note from the Field



Liz Knotts
Mentor Program Coordinator

"Between every two pine trees there is a door leading to a new way of life."

—John Muir

Elk Hill started in 1970 and at one time had various outdoor programs for our students; from hiking the Blue Ridge Mountains to canoeing on the James River. Unfortunately, these programs have subsided significantly because of the litigious world we live in. However, Elk Hill was able to bring back, on a small scale, wilderness "therapy" for the 2017 Spring Break. What a joy it was to get those kiddos back to nature!

Everyday six youth explored creek beds, boulders, falcons, "Mother" trees, and everything in between. Although it was a small group, this program had a significant impact. For one of our students, Ellie, it helped her deal with some negative memories of overcoming an unstable home life and living outdoors at some points. It was with the help of our staff, that she could work through those fears in a positive way, and continue the journey throughout Ivy Creek Natural Area.

Nature brings healing, calmness, and exciting fear of what it is up ahead! Kids facing overwhelming challenges need this time with nature more than most; it gives them and us hope and positive new ways to face the world! ■

Sometimes it's in the most unlikely places that you shape a path to the future.

By Pete Glessman, Harambee Head of School & Farming Program Director

When I first brought up the idea of creating a small-scale agriculture (farming) component for our students, there were groans and puzzled looks. However, when I took one student, Wayne, out to the garden and showed him some jalapeño peppers that somehow managed to survive a hot summer, he lit up. He asked, "What can we do with these?" From there, he and I (and several other students) picked, cleaned, cut up, and pickled those peppers. Each day after that, Wayne asked me when the peppers would be ready for eating.

Wayne transitioned back to public school, and the peppers still weren't quite ready,

even though Wayne was. I gave him the jar to take with him, instructed him to be patient, and told him he could share what he created with others when the time was right. In a way, that experience encapsulates how farming can be the hook or the tool that leads to a path for one's future. Wayne may



never become a farmer or work with fresh produce, but he took interest in something new, asked questions, participated fully, and was looking forward to his future. At Elk Hill Harambee, we hope that all students view the workforce opportunities like farming as a gateway to a path toward one of many futures; successful futures that often start like a seed. ■

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 Synapse Hub.
The Synapse 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.synpasehubs.com
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jcoccione@elkhill.org.

Elk Hill is going
digital!

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Gillian Kunkel,
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@ GKunkel@elkhill.org
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Do you remember
what it was like
starting the school
year with a fresh set
of school supplies?

Without the help of our community, many of
the children we serve will not be starting their
school year with that same excitement and
support. Many will go back to school wishing
for a new back pack or new school supplies.

They just want the same chance for success
as the other kids in their class.

How Can You Help?

Donate a Supply Pack:

For only \$25, you can provide a child with the school supplies they need to start their school
year on the right foot.

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

Gifts can 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.)

Backpacks, 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.

If you are interested in doing a back to school drive; or wish to arrange a delivery of school
supplies please contact Gillian Kunkel at 804-457-4866 ext. 312 or gkunkel@elkhill.org. ■



Planned Giving

Join Elk Hill Society

The Elk Hill Society recognizes individuals whose foresight and generosity ensure the long-term
stability of Elk Hill for future generations. We encourage you to consider joining a very special
group of Elk Hill supporters – Elk Hill Society members. Society members are those friends who
express their support for the future of Elk Hill by including a bequest or other life income gift for
the Foundation in their estate plan.

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: Michael Farley, CEO (804)-457-4866 ext.
311 or Mfarley@elkhill.org ■