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With your help, we've reached our goal!

We are thrilled to announce that the biggest comprehensive campaign in the history of Elk Hill has exceeded its \$7 million goal. Launched in 2014, Elk Hill 20/20 has generated \$7,355,000 in charitable donations – *and none of that would have been possible without you!*

"All of us at Elk Hill are so grateful for the amazing support given to this campaign," says CEO Michael Farley. "With resources like these, **we can accomplish the goals** outlined in our strategic plan."

The campaign's success is the result of an incredible team effort. Board members, volunteers, supporters and staff rolled up their sleeves to get the job done. In the process, we had the opportunity to **share the Elk Hill story** in important new ways. Many people gained a clearer understanding of the work we do and the children we help.

An uncommonly comprehensive campaign, Elk Hill 20/20 will benefit endowment support, annual fund support and program expansion, innovation

and enrichment. **That work is already well underway.** Take the new Behavioral-Emotional Support Team (BEST) program. Partnering with Goochland schools, Elk Hill launched a new school-based mental health services program last fall. Because you got involved in Elk Hill 20/20, more than 35 students and families are already getting the help they need.

And that's just one example. Thanks to your support of Elk Hill 20/20, we can offer more scholarships. Through new investments in technology, we can ensure our students have the same opportunities as students in public schools. And we now have the resources to reach out to autism spectrum students in public schools. **All of that and more are made possible by your support. ■**



Investing in children

Many years ago I heard a Virginia Juvenile Court judge say, "If we would put more money in the playpen, we wouldn't have to put so much money in the state pen." Since the mid-1990s, Virginia's juvenile justice system has been punitive in nature, with an emphasis on incarceration versus rehabilitation. Policy changes allowed incarceration of younger children and for longer sentences. The financial costs are staggering: \$150,000 per year, per child. The human potential costs are even more staggering.

An estimated 90 percent of the children in juvenile correctional centers struggle with mental health challenges. They receive very little therapeutic help. And way too many cycle back into the system, eventually ending up in adult correctional facilities. Not a good investment!

For the first time in 25 years, there is great momentum in Virginia to radically change the juvenile system, to help kids rather than incarcerate them. A new director of juvenile justice strongly believes in rehabilitation. His plan is to close our large juvenile prisons and use the savings to provide services to these children and their families in their communities. Now it is up to Virginia's general assembly to find the moral courage to do the right thing. ■

We've been asked to double our camp program: Will you help us meet this challenge?

The success of Elk Hill summer camp programs has created a "good problem." Three donor-funded private schools in Richmond's inner city have challenged us to **more than double the number of children served** in 2015. With support from people like you, Elk Hill is prepared to meet that challenge.

"It's so important that these kids have the camp experience," says Laura Easter, Elk Hill's director of Community Services. "Not only does it prevent isolation and limit exposure to bad influences, camp creates an **opportunity for students to continue progress** made during the school year."

Scholarships are essential. "This is never going to be a self-sustaining endeavor," Easter says. "The only way these kids will have access to camp is through **donor support.**"

Elk Hill currently operates camps at Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School, St. Andrews School and Church Hill Academy. **Each camp is customized** to meet the needs of each school. At Anna Julia Cooper, children continue to hone academic skills, but also receive varied services and broaden horizons through field trips.

At St. Andrews, music lessons are an important part of the camp curriculum. And at Church Hill, a unique "bridge" camp prepares incoming ninth graders for the transition to high school, while reinforcing academics and identifying individual needs. "**These are amazing programs,**" Easter says. "They meet kids' needs at so many levels." ■



Niger, a member of the fledgling golf team, is proud to represent his school.

"People who don't even know you can care!"

When you support camp scholarships, you change lives. Last summer, we introduced golf into our camp program. It was such a success that Church Hill Academy created a school golf team, and that is a very big deal indeed.

Many of these young golfers have never before experienced school pride. Many have never belonged to any team. Many have never seen an expanse of grass like that on the public course where they practice.

"When we introduce these kids to golf, it teaches them integrity," says Pam Pitchford, Community Services coordinator for Greater Richmond. "They learn about doing the right thing and controlling their temper, and those are good life lessons."

And that's not all. Awed by donations of clubs, bags, shoes and uniforms, one team member's eyes grew big. "I learned that people who don't even know you can care," he told Pitchford. ■

I Am Elk Hill: **Marquez**

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

Now 16, Marquez is a classic example of an Elk Hill student. He came to us an angry, volatile young man. He had issues at home and he'd had issues at school, where he'd assaulted teachers. Two years later, he is leaving Elk Hill's Varina Day School to attend his public school fulltime.

Initially apprehensive about the transition, Marquez sought a gradual approach. He spent most of his school day at Varina, but he attended one class a day – band – at his public school. A natural talent with the tuba (Marquez plays by ear), he found ready acceptance among members of the school band.

And with that came new confidence. **"I think I'm ready to go fulltime," he says. "I know what to do if I get frustrated; I know people I can go to for help. And I know I can turn to my friends in band."**

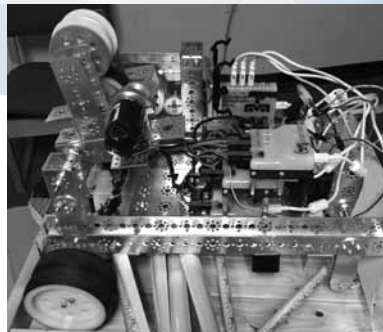
During his time at Elk Hill, Marquez underwent a dramatic transformation. "He's able to deal with his anger now," says Melanie Crocker, head of school. "He's even become a mentor to younger students. When one of them has issues, he volunteers to talk to them. He's not the same young man who came to Varina." ■



Making you proud!

Elk Hill students make repeat trip to state contest

For the second year in a row, the Robotics team from Elk Hill's Charlottesville school has qualified for the FIRST Tech Challenge state contest. Open to students grades 6-12, the competition challenges youths to design, build and program robots in a 10-week period.



At a local competition held in January, the six-member Charlottesville team won the Judges award and was named a finalist for the Alliance award. The Alliance award recognizes achievement in support of and collaboration with other teams at the competition.

Team members learn math, science and engineering skills as well as important lessons in teamwork and communication, says Charlottesville teacher Marion Lang, who coaches the team. They also master time management: Public school teams meet after the regular school day ends, but Elk Hill's team can meet only during the school day, when instructional time is job number one.

Funding is also a challenge. The team's inventory of parts and components is five years old. Transportation, registration fees and other costs are defrayed by student-led fundraising efforts.

One team member won individual recognition at the January competition, when she was nominated as a FIRST Tech Challenge Dean's List semi-finalist. As secretary/bookkeeper and active fundraiser for the team, this student plays an active role in every part of the activity. The nomination also commended her for uncommon dedication to her team, organizational skills and leadership abilities. ■

Will you help support these students?

Preparing for the world of work

Today's students can't make it on academics alone. That's why Elk Hill puts a priority on workforce development. Take a look at how Varina Day School students prepare for the world of work –

Varina students have long had the opportunity to earn OSHA and ServSafe professional certifications. A new program gives them access to a customer service certification as well. Offered through a local community college, the new program also gives a preview of the college experience.

Varina's Cool Jobs program offers juniors and seniors the opportunity to learn about various entry-level jobs by visiting local businesses. In follow-up sessions, students discuss what they learned about job possibilities, the interpersonal skills they need to master, and what they feel they can accomplish.

Helping students hone skills, a team from Capital One's Human Resources group held mock interviews at Varina. Students interviewed the staffers for a "teaching" position at the school, and then progressed through a series of stations, where they were interviewed by the HR professionals.

And every Wednesday – also known as Professional Day – Varina students dress for success. Students who wear bow ties to school win a "dress casual" pass to use later that week. ■



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

What people are saying about the Elk Hill Speaker Series:

Dr. Temple Grandin was the featured speaker at Elk Hill's inaugural Speaker Series Nov. 3. A prominent authority on Autism Spectrum Disorder, Grandin is the author of six books on the topic. Presentations at Charlottesville High School (sponsored by Virginia National Bank and Charlottesville Community Schools) and Virginia Repertory Theatre (sponsored by MCV Health and Virginia Repertory Theatre) and book signings (like that shown at right) drew crowds of more than 1,200, and launched important conversations among educators, caregivers, service providers and families throughout this area. We are grateful to all sponsors who helped make this event such a success!



"As a parent of a child with autism, I often feel rather isolated and lonely on this rollercoaster and I wonder, where are the other families, caregivers, providers and therapists in the autism community? It was so gratifying to look around the audience and see them sitting right next to me, walking the same journey with me, seeking answers and advocacy for their loved ones. It meant the world to me that six teachers from my child's school attended the talks between Charlottesville and Richmond! As Richmond Public School employees, they probably would not have been able to attend if the event had a fee associated with the tickets.

"Temple Grandin's story and her messages are ones that need to be shouted from the rooftops. Every professional in the autism field should hear her, be inspired by her success and push forward with hope for those in their lives with autism. I know I certainly did!

"I was struck by Dr. Grandin's humility, humor and remarkable life story, as was every other person sitting in that audience. We were simply captivated. I was equally proud of Elk Hill for bringing her to Richmond and bringing all the autism warriors out of hiding to hear her message."

–Margaret, Richmond



Elk Hill has many ongoing opportunities for volunteers.

Interested?

Contact Gillian Kunkel, Development Coordinator, at Gkunkel@elkhill.org; (804) 457-4866 ext. 312.

Sign up to receive the newsletter via email

Send an email with your name and mailing address to Gillian Kunkel,

Development Coordinator, at Gkunkel@elkhill.org; (804) 457-4866 ext. 312.

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