

# Elevations

The latest news and updates from Education Elevators  
Fall 2019, Vol. 8



## A Note from the Executive Director

By: Allison McJunkin

We've been busy here at Education Elevators! Last year, we launched programs at Kanawha City Elementary (in partnership with Potesta & Associates), Central Elementary (in partnership with Orders Construction) and ProKids Afterschool Program (in partnership with Advantage Technology).

Last month, we launched a program at the Mary C. Snow site of the Bob Burdette Center in partnership with Steptoe & Johnson. We currently have 75 Elevator and student pairs. To support our growth, we hired 3 new amazing part time program coordinators.

There could not be a more critical time for businesses and business professionals to get involved. Students are facing tremendous adversity (e.g. physical and emotional abuse, exposure to drugs and violence, neglect, apathy from those they care about most) while trying to succeed in school. Many of the students in our program are in foster care, live in shelters or have parents that are incarcerated.

In March 2015, Harvard's Center on the Developing Child released a study finding that every child that has been able to succeed in the face of adversity "had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult."

Elevators provide guidance and support to students who are experiencing trauma (i.e. abuse or neglect; a parent or loved one who is using drugs or has overdosed in front of them; transition into the foster care system, etc.). The relationship a student has with his or her Elevator is often the only stable and healthy relationship in that child's life.

Thank you to our Elevators, donors and other supporters who make our work possible! We need funds to support our existing programs to help us reach more students who are desperately in need of a mentor or a friend. I hope that you will consider making a tax deductible contribution to support Education Elevators this year!

## Be the Change that you Wish to See in the World

I was approached about the Education Elevators Program over a year ago and it was presented to me as a way to overcome small challenges before they become huge problems, the huge problems that have a drastic effect on us and our society. Problems like crime, homelessness, addiction, violence against women, etc. This is where I became interested.



You may be thinking, like I was, how do we fix these issues by working with children? Great question!

Social learning scientists have shown that much of the learning that occurs during a child's development is

acquired through observation and imitation. When asked, most of us would agree that children learn from role models and imitate behaviors of those they admire.

The question then is not, "Do children imitate adults?" but, "Which behaviors of adults do children imitate?" And, "How can we make it more likely they will imitate positive behaviors rather than negative behaviors?"

With this being the case, what happens to kids with no positive role models or only ones that show them all of the wrong behaviors? They develop what appear to be small challenges that turn into huge problems later in life. Without the proper people to look up to and guide them, they have no idea how to make right decisions. They are kids, after all.

This is where Education Elevators comes in. You all know of the problems we face as a city, state and country and how many of these problems begin in childhood. Knowing this, we must step up and try to help the little ones that may not have a shot without us.

-Chris May  
Advantage Tech Elevator

When confronted with the fallout of childhood trauma, why do some children adapt and overcome, while others bear lifelong scars that flatten their potential? A growing body of evidence points to one common answer: Every child who winds up doing well has had at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive adult.

-Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2015

## Elevator Spotlight

**How long have you been matched with William?** I started meeting with him last spring and it has been one of my biggest blessings. He is now a huge part of my life. I believe he may have helped me more than I will ever help him.

**How would you describe William?** He loves to play and imagine. He is happy and loving and his smile lights up the room.

**What do you enjoy most about your time with William?** I enjoy being able to step away from my busy world and just be a kid, with him. We play and laugh and just forget about the rest of the world for a while.

**Have you noticed any changes in William since you have started meeting with him?** He opens up to me about his life and how he feels. I see him being more comfortable to talk about his feelings, which has traditionally been a struggle for him.

**What do you like best about being an Elevator?** I like knowing that such a simple act can have such a tremendous effect on the future of a child. There are very few areas in life will you will give so little of yourself and gain so much for a child and yourself. I haven't done anything special except to show up consistently and be his friend and everything is changing in him. He just needed to know someone cared. It is amazing what 45 minutes a week can do for a child. He has taught me how important those little interactions really are and how much we can change the course of these little lives.



-Chris May,  
Advantage Tech Elevator

Chris is honestly, I believe, the best part of William's week. If William is having a bad day Chris is usually readily available to come see him and always tries his best to be there for him. He even attends student conferences when he can!

William has a rough home life, so seeing Chris is something he really looks forward to. Chris knows when his birthday is and visited him an extra day that week. He is a 100% constant in his life!

-Carli Bourne  
Piedmont Elementary Teacher

Education Elevators provides mentors for some of our struggling students. Students eagerly look forward to the day their Elevator comes. They are so excited to have someone just for them and I have already noticed changes in behaviors and attitudes as a result!



Miyonna's attendance and behavior have improved and she also talks a little more. She gets really excited for Mondays when Nina comes to see her.

-Jill Woodrum  
Executive Director, PRO-Kids

PARTNER FILES



Nina Shell with her student Miyonna



**Why We Partner:** We were first introduced to EE through a presentation at our local Rotary Club. Personally, what attracted me to the organization was having the opportunity to be the difference in a child's life. Thankfully, I always had a solid role model in my mother.

Without the fortune of having her in my life, I could have been that student that needed someone. I want each of the students seeking an Elevator to know that someone in the world cares about them, no matter what may be going on in their lives.

**Impact on Business:** Many employees say that their favorite day of the week is the day they're able to visit their student. It's important to Advantage to give back to the community in any way we have the opportunity. With the struggles West Virginia faces, it's important to make an impact in the future of the state we call home; I can't think of a better investment of time than improving the life of a child, encouraging them that they are worthy and capable.

**Elevator's Perspective:** I enjoy being able to take an hour and just act like a kid. Whether it's painting, making bracelets or trying our luck at yoga, I have an hour of dedicated time that the outside world is "shut off" and I am present. It's made me a better parent, understanding the value of putting the phone (and with it work) down occasionally to live in the moment.

-Nina Shell,  
Advantage Technology Elevator

## Yoga at Piedmont

Education Elevators sponsored yoga at Piedmont Elementary this fall. Here are just a few photos of the kids in action with Yoga Instructor Stacy Christian!



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 fill out [this form](#) or contact Donna Peduto directly at: [dpeduto@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:dpeduto@mail.wvu.edu)

Click [HERE](#) for more information



## Want to Support our Work?

Your financial contributions are critical to our program. Please visit our website at: [www.educationelevators.org](http://www.educationelevators.org) to learn more, donate, and connect with us.

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