

STEPPING Stones

NOVEMBER 2020

MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF NONPUBLIC SPECIAL EDUCATION FACILITIES

MANSEF NEWS

HSC Foundation awards MANSEF students Life Enrichment Awards

MANSEF is the proud recipient of a \$14,000 grant from the HSC Foundation's Life Enrichment Awards Program (LEAP), which supports students with disabilities who are actively engaged in the secondary transition process. Through this grant, schools are able to provide students with items that are directly linked to their transition goals and implementation.

To date, MANSEF has made awards to 26 students at six different member schools. Students receiving awards have

ranged in age from 14 to 20, and include students with Autism, ED, OHI, and SLD.

The LEAP grant was originally awarded to DCASE, which earlier this year dissolved and was acquired by MANSEF. In keeping with the original award, LEAP grants were made available to MANSEF member schools that serve DC-area students.

The most requested item has been laptops to assist students in researching colleges and careers and completing applications, as well as completing coursework. Awards have also been used to purchase items allowing

students to practice skills and get hands-on experience that will help them to ultimately find jobs in their chosen careers. One student, whose goal is to work in the music industry as a sound engineer/music producer, was awarded a music recording bundle to assist in honing his music production skills. Another student, whose goal is to become a cosmetologist, had been practicing styling her family and friends' hair. With the award of a cosmetology kit, complete with a mannequin, she'll be able to further build her skills, and use the kit when she ultimately attends cosmetology school.



MANSEF
IS THRILLED TO
HAVE BEEN ABLE TO
SUPPORT SO MANY OF
OUR MEMBER SCHOOLS
AND THEIR STUDENTS
IN ACHIEVING THEIR
TRANSITION
GOALS.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings to all of the MANSEF community and colleagues,

I am sure other new MANSEF presidents writing their letters have had challenges to address—our work is always full of challenges as great as the rewards! So, I don't want to overly emphasize a message of how tough the times are, how the times are unprecedented, or how strained our teams are. We are all living this, you don't need me to tell you how it is.

I do want to say, through all of this, I am tremendously impressed and encouraged by so much that I see. If the times have been tough, we have become more resilient. Things most of us thought were not possible back in March in regards to how we could teach and treat students in this strange new world are now not only possible, but being surpassed by new and innovative ideas. I wholeheartedly believe that when this crisis passes and we are all back to our normal operations, we will be better teachers, providers, and leaders because what we have learned during this time.

Throughout the past eight months, I know what has sustained me is that MANSEF has provided a place where we can share ideas, collaborate, and problem solve. We have always been stronger together, but I have never felt that so clearly before 2020. After we have made it through this time with this level of teamwork, I know moving forward, our other priorities will seem much more achievable.

My final thought of encouragement is this—these pages are filled with the stories about what our students have achieved. Our students have not stopped achieving, being amazing, and driving us to do our best. In a time where so much is uncertain, I take comfort in knowing that will never change.

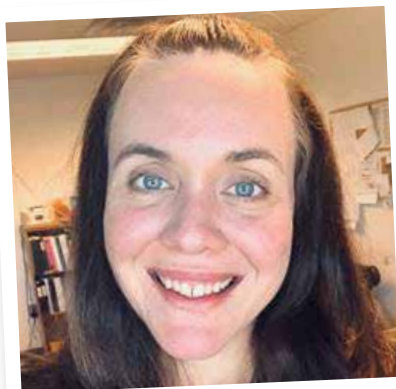
With gratitude and appreciation,

Sue McLendon

Sue McLendon

MANSEF Board President

MANSEF NEWS



Laura McKenzie, left, and Laura Lorenzen, right

MANSEF Welcomes new Transition Consultant

MANSEF is pleased to announce the appointment of **Laura McKenzie** as the new MANSEF Transition Consultant. Mrs. McKenzie will continue her work at the Benedictine School in addition to her new role with MANSEF. Mrs. McKenzie will be providing leadership, training and technical assistance to member schools to enhance the effectiveness of their transition efforts for MANSEF students.

In her new role, Mrs. McKenzie will collaborate with the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services, to advance each organization's transition initiatives. This collaboration will ensure that MANSEF is represented state-wide and continues to share promising practices. She will provide technical assistance as needed and develop procedures that ensure the input of the Local School Systems and Local Service Providers in the development of transition plans for students attending nonpublic special education schools.

Additionally, she will chair the MANSEF Transition Advisory Committee and will provide leadership and meaningful direction related to increasing the transition knowledge base and effectiveness of MANSEF transition personnel.

Mrs. McKenzie received her Master's in School Counseling from Johns Hopkins University along with a graduate certificate in job planning and placement

for youth in transition from the University of Maryland, College park. In addition, she has an Advanced Professional Certificate as a school counselor issued by the Maryland State Department of Education. Prior to her employment at Benedictine, Mrs. McKenzie was the Coordinator of Community Services for the Cecil County Health Department.

Mrs. McKenzie can be reached at 410-634-2115 ext 1307 or Laura.McKenzie@benschool.org

MANSEF Acquires DCASE and Welcomes New Nonpublic Liaison

MANSEF is pleased to announce the acquisition of the District of Columbia Association for Special Education (DCASE) and the appointment of **Laura Lorenzen** as the DC Nonpublic Liaison.

DCASE was an alliance of nonpublic schools that provided special education services to students from the District of Columbia. Member schools were dedicated to improving educational opportunities for all DC students with disabilities. It was a natural fit for MANSEF to acquire DCASE since a majority of members were also MANSEF members. Approximately 1000 students with disabilities ages 3-21 in DC attend a nonpublic school, the majority in Maryland.

While the decision was made to dissolve the existing DCASE organization as of June 30, 2020, we are pleased that the mission of DCASE and advocacy work

for DC students enrolled in nonpublic schools will be directed by Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF). The two organizations have a strong history of working together to advocate for a continuum of services for students with disabilities across the region. The continued work and collaborative efforts with stakeholders will remain strong moving forward.

In her new role, Ms. Lorenzen will advocate on behalf of MANSEF member schools serving DC students. She will be working directly with the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS), Public Charter School Board (PCSB), and partner organizations for students with special needs. She will be providing leadership, training and technical assistance to MANSEF member schools to enhance the effectiveness of educational services for DC students.

This new position will ensure that MANSEF member schools are represented with the various advocacy stakeholders. Ms. Lorenzen will chair a committee of MANSEF members to identify the most pressing needs of our members serving DC students. In addition, she will monitor pending legislation, regulations and best practices in serving students from the district.

Ms. Lorenzen received her Bachelors of Arts degree in Government and English from Smith College and her Masters of Social Work from Catholic University of America. She was formerly Director of Student Support at Two Rivers Public Charter School in DC where she provided strategic direction and vision for all aspects of the Student Support department. Ms. Lorenzen also served as the Student Support Services Coordinator at the Kingsbury Day School. She is the proud mother of a child with disabilities.

Ms. Lorenzen may be reached at 202-750-1158 or laura@districtsped.com

MANSEF CELEBRATES STUDENT SUCCESS

Ivymount School

Michael is a 7-year-old student in the Ivymount Autism Program who has made tremendous progress during distance learning. In addition to daily group synchronous instruction, Michael participates in individual work sessions over video chat with an instructor, covering math, phonics, reading comprehension, writing, and communication skills. He requires little adult support from family to attend to and comply with his instructor's directions, and he is enthusiastic about the work sessions and the skills he is learning (e.g., doing victory dances when he reads a tricky word, telling his mom he's looking forward to his Mr. Incredible Reader practice). Through these work sessions, Michael has acquired new skills across subject areas and has made particularly large strides with phonics. Michael's positive attitude and flexibility in the face of the challenges of distance learning has impressed everyone on his team, and they are so proud of all his hard work.



Michael

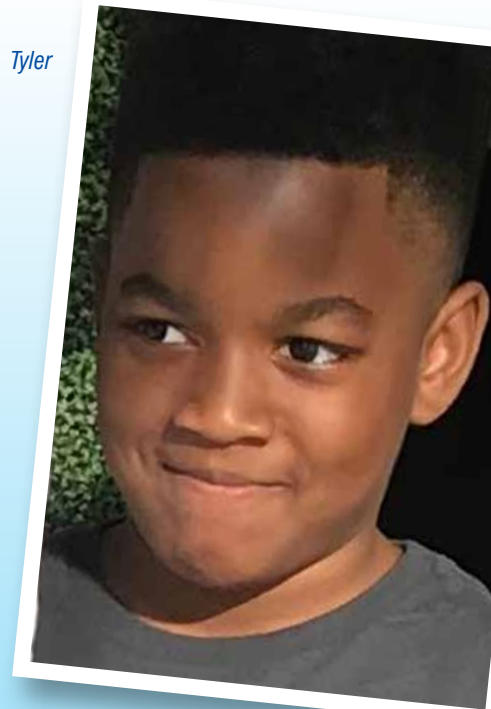
The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County

Tyler was below grade level in every subject. He hated reading and writing and would only do math with hands-on help. When school transitioned online, Tyler's teacher Austin Beeber had concerns. A special education teacher for fifth and sixth grade with The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County, Beeber says, "Once Tyler adjusted to distance learning, he discovered he liked it. Now he can't wait to show me what he is reading at home and how many new words he knows. He has tripled his reading fluency rate and wants to read online with us. It is rewarding to see him get excited about learning."

Social worker Gregory Yarbrough agrees, "Tyler is the first student to log on and the last one to log off. He really missed school

when we were shut down, and he quickly recognized that he had to do the work if wanted to get the same interaction with us that he had in person." Upon Tyler's request, Zoom opens a half hour before class, so he and other students can socialize and emotionally prepare for their day. "Tyler is making great strides emotionally and socially as well as academically," says Yarbrough. "Our teaching team is thrilled with his growth."

Tyler





The Children's Guild School of Baltimore

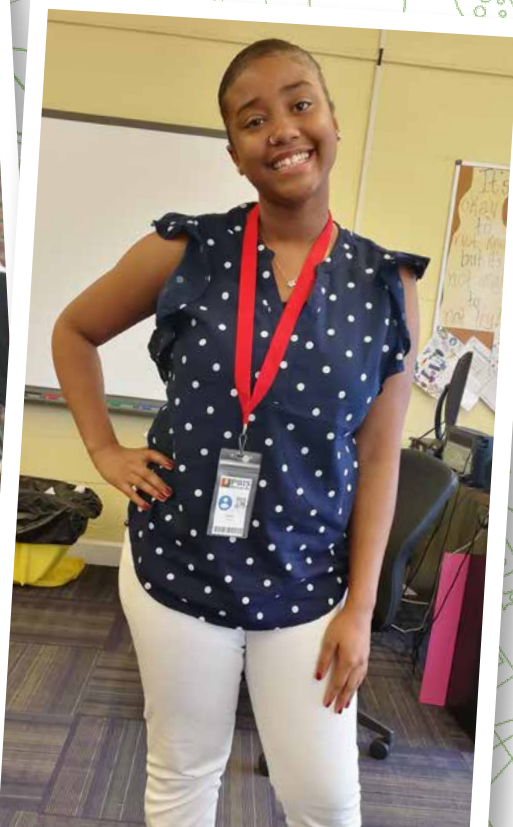
High School Seniors Equipped to Succeed

Two high school seniors at The Children's Guild School of Baltimore were awarded top-of-the-line devices through a LEAP grant. Donnell and Aniya are working hard and delighted to be equipped to succeed. Donnell has expressed interest in a career in the field of sports management, and Aniya is looking forward to attending college. Aniya has consistently demonstrated a professional demeanor while participating in the internship opportunities with the TranZed Institute at The Children's Guild Alliance.

"Both students are proud members of our high school community and consistently bring joy and hope to our school. Their resilience, persistence, and caring personalities are a testament to what is to come," says Ana Degea-Coombs, director of Special Education Services. "We are extremely thankful for all the teachers and staff who make their success a reality. Our faculty and student community will continue to cheer them on, so their visions materialize, and they arrive at the finish line of their high school careers."



Donnell



Aniya



Tyler B

Arrow Center for Education - Riverside

2020 brought many unexpected challenges to The Arrow Center for Education Riverside family. One amazing student faces one of his biggest challenges: yet. "Yet" is a word that Tyler B. uses to explain his path and journey. As he says: "I haven't beaten cancer, yet." "I will come back to school after my brain tumor surgery; just not yet." Tyler is the epitome of our acronym RISE. RISE stands for Responsibility, Integrity, Safety and Encouragement. We grow from his kindness, strength, courage, positivity, perseverance and power. We too, believe in the power of "yet." It means doors are open and adventures await. We are stronger because of Tyler!



More!

STUDENT SUCCESS

*Sheppard Pratt
School - Millersville
Elementary School*

Carmello is always on time to classes. He can brighten up anybody's day, and he likes to help his classmates. His accomplishments would include him working hard, showing a great improvement in his studies, and following tasks. Sheppard Pratt School at Millersville Elementary has made a difference in Carmello's life by teaching him important skills in life when difficult task may come about, how to handle situations when they don't go his way, and how to ask for help or advocate for himself when there are problems.

Gavin has shown great improvement in Math since starting with us in January this year. He was inverting all symbols in Math calculation and he no longer does that and he retained a lot of the information taught. His new-found independence and positive attitude make Gavin our MANSEF highlight student.



Will Frisinger during his internship



Kennedy Krieger

In August 2020, Will Frisinger began his internship experience with Project SEARCH at Kennedy Krieger Institute. Project SEARCH is a workforce preparation program that provides hands-on job training to individuals with a variety of abilities. Will adapted quickly to our daily virtual sessions and helped to create a positive Zoom environment. As the interns began to explore different internship opportunities, Will was excited about working on-site in the International Center for Spinal Cord Injury (ICSCI) at Kennedy Krieger as a Rehabilitation Technician.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, he works with different therapists to support patients during their physical therapy and occupational therapy sessions. Will is very mindful of the COVID-19 regulations and reminds others to maintain social distance. His supervisor at ICSCI has been impressed with Will's professionalism and initiative to help patients during sessions. We are very proud of Will's progress and desire to help others through his work!

Sheppard Pratt School - Severn River Middle School

Garrett has visibly grown in skills like time-management and academic accountability since the Spring 2020 virtual semester. Garrett attends all classes on time and frequently participates by raising his hand and patiently waiting for his turn to speak. He completes his work on time and completes it thoughtfully and thoroughly. Garrett is a kind and positive student who enjoys creating silly stories, puns, and jokes to make others smile. His new-found independence and positive attitude make Garrett our MANSEF highlight student.

Sheppard Pratt School - Severna Park High School

Talynn has improved academically and socially since joining our program. In particular, staff have observed an increase in Talynn's confidence and ability to advocate for herself. When she first joined the program, she would make negative comments about her work and would sometimes give up in frustration. With assistance from staff, Talynn has become a student who sees the positive in difficult assignments and chooses to do her very best. Talynn now serves as a mentor for other students in our program and will talk about her progress with others. We hope that Talynn is as proud of herself as we are of her!

SCHOOL News

Ivymount School

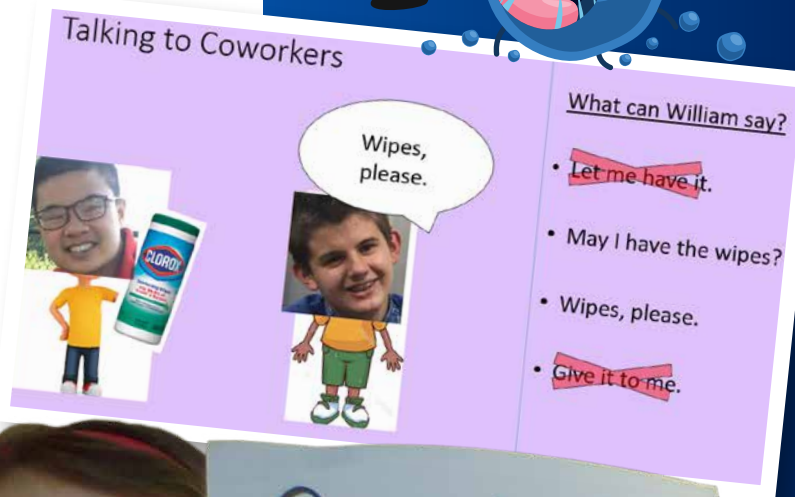
Ivymount School has continued to focus on its dual priorities of making distance learning as robust as possible, while also planning for a safe return to on-site instruction. Throughout the summer and fall, each of the program models increased their offerings of synchronous classes, tele-therapy, adapted PE, and art, using additional new platforms to engage students and work on IEP goals and objectives.

Ivymount School programs have also responded to current events by addressing issues such as equity and identity, health and safety, and self-care. The Model Asperger Program (MAP) introduced a new social skills course titled "Social Justice" to its elementary and middle school classrooms. The programming includes age appropriate learning across four domains - identity, diversity, justice, and action - through interactive and hands on activities (e.g., read aloud, art projects, writing poems, etc.) which support self-reflection and social development.

Students in the Middle/Secondary Autism Program learn work awareness skills during a weekly group led by Vocational Specialist Melissa Chew. They have recently been working on a unit about the right way to talk to co-workers and supervisors. Students have been very engaged by the interactive and personalized lessons and have demonstrated an increase in knowledge week to week.

The Multi-Learning Needs (MLN) program continues to prepare students to transition back to on-site instruction by working on key skills such as understanding and appropriately using protective equipment, increased hand washing/use of hand sanitizer, social distancing, and following a wide range of adult instructions. Students have practiced wearing their masks in classes for increasing durations of times, from 5 minutes to an hour or longer. The team has also been previewing changes to the building and schedules through photos, explanation of what things are the same and different, and discussion around the complex emotions that come along with the many changes.

At a time when mental health and physical health are so important, Ivymount's Post High School has been working hard to keep students and staff healthy during distance learning. They start every morning with a Movement class and four days a week also host an afternoon fitness class. The activities vary, from stretching to speed skating, dancing to deep breathing, and each class includes a warm up and cool down. Students have been learning that staying healthy isn't just important, it can be fun too!



More!

St. Elizabeth School

St. Elizabeth School was so excited to open its doors on November 4 for students to return to the building! While many students will continue to attend classes virtually, the entire student body has shown off their efforts to help curb the spread of Covid-19 by consistently wearing masks. In October, students and staff submitted photos of themselves at home and in the building wearing their favorite masks. It was quite the fashion show of face coverings. When students attended classes in person on November 4, they showed overwhelmingly that they are up to the task of keeping their masks on throughout the school day. We are so proud of our students and staff who continue to thrive and to take care of one another during a very challenging year.

Addie Adkins



SCHOOL News

Foundation Schools

Sixteen students from The Foundation Schools are very grateful to have been awarded LEAP grants to help them reach their transition goals. The Maryland Association of Nonpublic Special Education Facilities (MANSEF) made these awards through a generous grant from the HSC Foundation's Life Enrichment Awards Program (LEAP). Award recipients are students who are actively engaged in the secondary transition process, and the items awarded are directly linked to their transition plan and implementation. Eleven students have received vital technology devices such as computers that are crucial for them to stay connected to their post-secondary education and career transition goals. Students have also received items such as cosmetology kits and music recording bundles to help them practice and hone their skills in their chosen field. These grants have made a significant impact at a very difficult time in our students' lives!

Miya Tazel





Sheppard Pratt Residential Treatment Center

At Sheppard Pratt School and Residential Treatment Center, our teachers have been coming up with creative ways to engage and educate our students. Mr. Val, our computer technology teacher, asked students to tell the tale of his vacation using Photoshop. After first completing a mad lib, students were then introduced to the basics of Photoshop and created an original and outlandish scene. Dogs with seven eyes, flying computers, pink skies, celebrities floating in space, anything was possible!

In addition to images from the internet, students were instructed to include a picture from Mr. Val's photo album that contained images of him acting out various emotions. Each student had to complete several tasks, including changing the color of the sky, adding a celebrity, editing an animal, and more! For extra credit, students had to use Mr. Val's shirt pattern in the picture.

Sheppard Pratt School - Glyndon

Distance learning calls for creative ways to teach and connect with students. This summer, our students participated in activities where they could express their artistic talents! In July, our music teacher organized a "Front Yard Music Jam". School staff caravanned to the homes of our students for live musical events. Students, siblings, parents, neighbors, and grandparents participated by singing, clapping, and dancing to the music, which was played with a variety of instruments. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect and collaborate with our students in their neighborhoods in a unique and safe way!

In addition to our musical ventures, our creative arts teacher put together art kits to send home to students. Using video demonstrations in Google Classroom she taught students how to make slab bowls, wall pockets vases, and coil vases using clay. Students were encouraged to find creative ways of using objects in their homes to create designs and patterns in the clay.

Front Yard Music Jam
participants



Sheppard Pratt School (Reisterstown)

Senior Brooke contributed her unique talents as Sheppard Pratt School in Reisterstown prepares to welcome students back for in-person learning. A teacher notes, "When Brooke entered school, she was so quiet that she surprised us with her creativity and with the warm support she offers other students." Among her skills, Brooke designs masks and costumes for conventions. With her help, Wolfie, the school mascot, is now safety compliant with an appropriate mask!

Brooke is also part of the Wolfpack Welcome Crew created to inform students of new safety guidelines and get them involved in getting the word out about school changes and procedures. Members of The Welcome Crew filmed and edited videos; others created posters that used student artwork and slogans to unite the community in health compliance. Rather than a series of "don'ts", messages focused on the community taking care of one another while raising school spirit. Wolfpack Safe, Wolfpack Strong!



Wolfie, school mascot

More!

SCHOOL News



Kennedy Krieger High School

The PBIS Committee at Kennedy Krieger High School hosts several activities for students and staff throughout virtual learning to promote a respectful environment and maintain a sense of school community even though we are not together in the same building. One of our first events of the new school year was a Virtual School Spirit Week! During the week, both students and staff were invited to submit a photo related to that day's theme.

The Virtual School Spirit Week themes were:

- **MOVE IT MONDAY:** show us a picture of your doing something active
- **TIRED TUESDAY:** send us a picture of you in your favorite pajamas
- **WORKPLACE WEDNESDAY:** take a picture of your "office" space where you are doing your school work
- **THROWBACK THURSDAY:** share a picture of you from when you were younger
- **BULLDOG PRIDE FRIDAY:** wear Bulldog swag or KKHS colors (red, white, and blue)

We had lots of students and staff participate! It was a lot of fun to have a shared experience and to see faces that we do not always get to see now that we are in a virtual setting. After the week was complete, a video was created to show off all of the photo submissions, which was shared with all staff and students.

Katherine Thomas School

The current pandemic environment has been anxiety-provoking for even the calmest individuals. Did you know that we all have it within ourselves to reduce our anxiety and stress levels? At KTHS, Sharnet Chavis, Dean of Students/Sr. Social Worker and Registered Yoga Teacher, has brought yoga, meditation, and mindfulness to the high school program. Ms. Chavis has been leading morning meditations during homeroom to help our students get ready for their day.

Geoff, a 10-grade student practicing yoga and meditation with Ms. Chavis, stated "This was really great, we should do this every day." Geoff has a history of being easily distracted and having anxiety. With the use of meditations and yoga, he is able to practice being in the moment, using breathwork to help calm and regulate, and using visualization to focus his thoughts. We are so proud of Geoff for being open and receptive in trying different methods of managing stress!

KTHS students have learned different types of breathing techniques, seated yoga poses, practiced meditations and made their own guided meditations, and practiced being present and mindful using mindful exercises and mindful visual walks. Students have reported being more calm, relaxed, and focused. Now is a great time for everyone to give yoga, meditation, and mindfulness a try!

Yoga at Katherine Thomas School



Education Without Restraint at The Pathways Schools

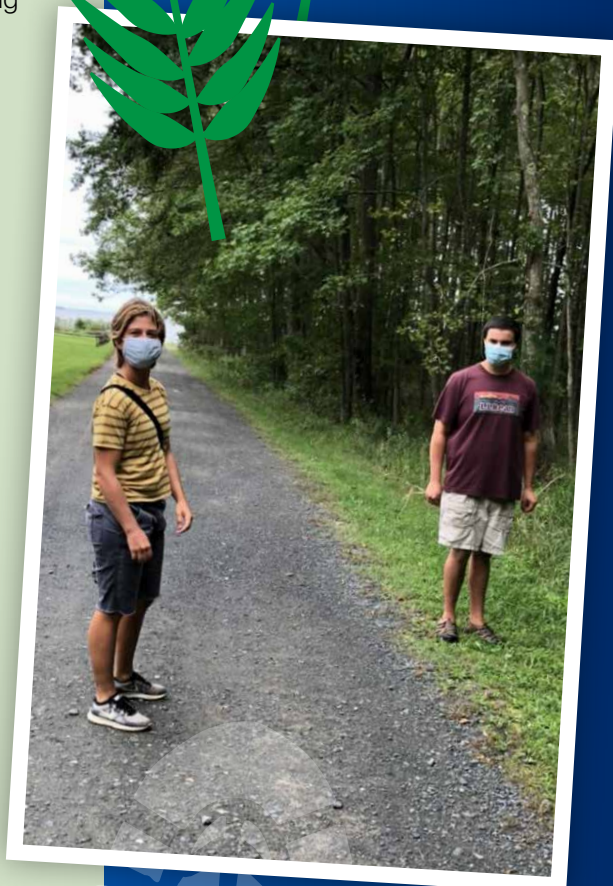
The Pathways School-Anne Arundel, one of three programs operated by The Pathways Schools, offers highly individualized educational programming in a variety of environments. This flexibility makes it possible for students to learn and be successful, even in a pandemic. Take Cooper Stephens, a bright tenth-grader from Calvert County who loves the outdoors. Under the blended learning plan opportunity at Pathways-Anne Arundel, Cooper meets with his Community Support Specialist (CSS) two days a week and participates in distance learning on other days. His CSS works with him in the places he finds most conducive to learning, including a beach or a park. Even before the pandemic, these were popular educational settings with him. Pathways-Anne Arundel's unique approach to educating students with behavioral disabilities and autism means that Cooper's CSS has a priority to get to know him, to determine his strengths and interests and build on those, while finding ways to help him work with his emotional challenges. The idea is to create a relationship of understanding and trust that allows Cooper to learn and thrive.

One key is having all those who are involved in Cooper's education see themselves as a caring team who work together for his benefit, including his parents. Cooperation and communication are hallmarks of the team. The other key is having a school that is trauma-sensitive, with staff who are aware and trained to use strategies and approaches that take into account the impact of trauma on a student. Central to this approach is avoiding the use of restraint and seclusion for crisis management. A school that instead is trauma-sensitive and builds trust and understanding sees each student as a unique learner and models community and cooperation, which fosters student success.

Pathways-Anne Arundel is all of these things and more, according to Cooper's dad, Guy Stephens. He identified Pathways-Anne Arundel as a school that could meet Cooper's needs after his son had had years of mixed success in public schools. During that time, Cooper experienced several instances of restraint that made him unwilling to go to school at all. Several years ago, Mr. Stephens began looking for alternatives and reached out to parents, educators, and others who were similarly concerned about the use of seclusion and restraint. Mr. Stephens brought his experience and acquired knowledge to his search for a school for his son.

Mr. Stephens appreciates Pathways' genuine team approach to educating Cooper, and the responsiveness of the Pathways staff. He values the transparent communication between school and home which allows for working together to find solutions and the best ways to support his son. He considers Pathways-Anne Arundel to be "truly unique, a model that is so much different from any other school..." He notes that the difference is more than the individualized education. He goes on, "...it's how the staff really cares about Cooper and what we can do together to help him succeed. They are flexible. They are about what I call the three R's of education: 'relationship, relationship, relationship'."

In his work with the Alliance Mr. Stephens is in touch with parents all across the United States. Often, they ask him where Cooper is going to school and what his experience is. "When I tell them about Pathways-Anne Arundel they always say, 'Wow! there's not anything like that here. Where can I find a school like that for my child?'"

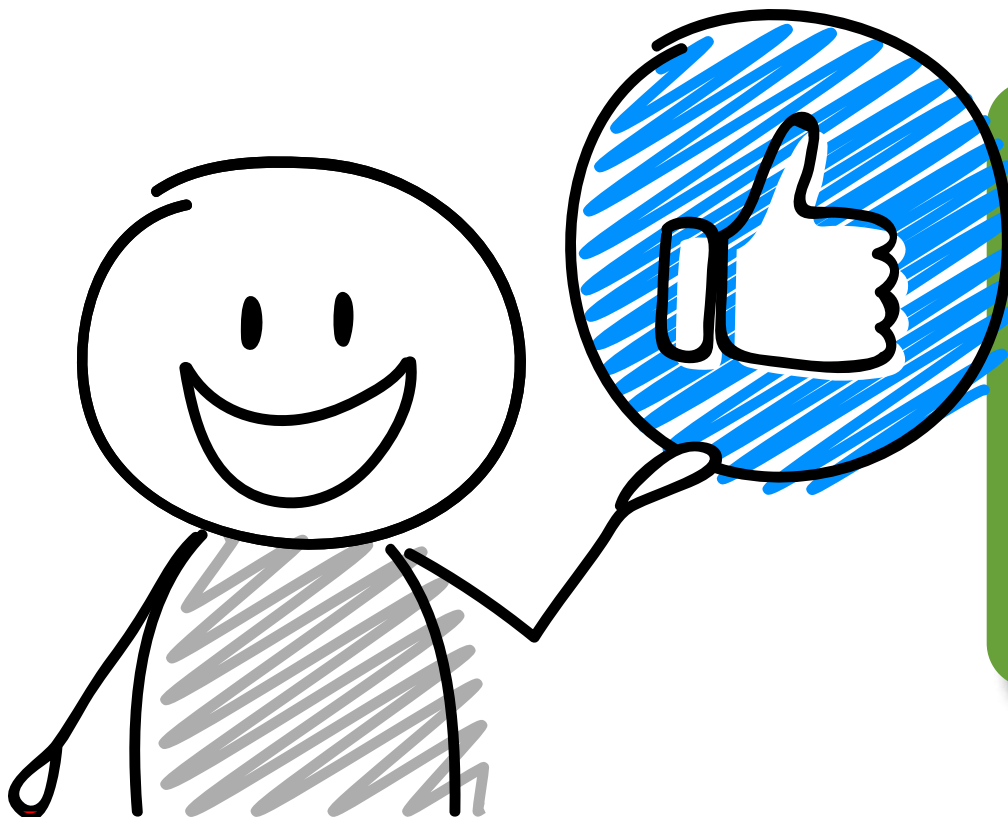


Cooper and friend



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MANSEF is committed to creating optimum educational opportunities in the least restrictive environment for all Maryland children with disabilities through: ADVOCACY, NETWORKING, COLLABORATION AND INFORMATION/RESOURCES.



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