



THE Elim EQUIP

Winter 2020



A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

When a student arrives at Elim with a bright smile on his face, eager to discover what the day will bring, that student is well on his way to learning and growing.

That best describes 16-year-old Luke, who is in his third year in the high school program at Elim. Luke loves coming to school. His excitement about the week ahead at Elim begins at home on Sunday night. His mother says he can barely contain himself as he anticipates Monday morning.

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Elim
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Providing the opportunities and support students need equips them to thrive and pursue new possibilities.

A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

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THRIVING ON SUCCESS

“Luke has such a positive attitude at school. He comes in daily smiling from ear to ear,” says his teacher Miss Kayla. “He is so willing to participate and learn new things. He knows how to make you laugh and smile even when you are having a bad day. He has brought such a positive, irreplaceable energy to the classroom.” And Luke’s speech therapist at Elim, Brandi, adds that Luke’s family thrives on his many successes and they are extremely grateful for the opportunities Luke has at Elim to connect and engage with his staff and peers.

Brandi also describes Luke as social, good-natured, funny, inquisitive, kind, caring, and strong. These are just some of his strengths. He also thrives on social interaction, learning, and pleasing others, and he enjoys engaging in curricular, therapeutic, and social activities throughout each school day.

A ROLE-MODEL AND FRIEND

Even with his outgoing personality, Luke hadn’t always been so open. When he first joined Elim, it took him a while to open up to his staff and classmates. He had a hard time handling the transition and was not immediately able to adjust to his new classroom.

But in no time, thanks to the care and attention of Elim staff, he has made connections, friendships, and has even become a fantastic role model for other students.

Brandi admires how Luke rises above the tough times in life.

“Luke may show frustration and fear with change, but he works through these changes with strength and humility, wanting to accept and meet any given expectation,” she says. Last summer, when Luke made a second transition to a new room, she was happy to report he handled it much better thanks to the growth he has had at Elim.

Miss Kayla has seen the pay offs of the work Luke has done with Miss Brandi as they continue to work together to find the right communication tool for him. “His communication has blossomed,” she shares. “Luke has made many on-topic comments about what is going on in class or about a discussion we are having..” She can’t wait to see how Luke continues to improve his communication and becomes even better equipped to advocate for himself.



Thank you for equipping students like Luke to achieve their God-given potential through your support.



BECAUSE OF YOU, THEY PURSUE POSSIBILITIES

Every child and adult has different abilities and challenges. But what they do have in common is the potential to live their fullest, best lives.

You make a world of difference for people with disabilities.

THANK YOU!



**PURSUE
POSSIBILITIES**



ELIM – A SECOND HOME FOR ADAM

Through community engagement he's had through Elim, Adam has grown his skills and love for going out and interacting!

"My husband and I knew when we visited Elim that there was no other place that would take care of Adam like Elim would," reflects Adam's mom, Polly. "I can't imagine him anywhere else." Polly and her husband are thankful for the experiences Adam has had during his time at Elim. From going to see movies, to working with HOPE Packs, Adam has experiences every day that he might not receive somewhere else.

Adam has been given the nickname "supervisor Adam" because he is always looking out for the other program participants. When out in the community, Adam stays toward the back of the group. Why? Because he can make sure that everyone stays with the group! Even at the end of the day, Adam makes sure everyone on his bus route has made it onto the bus before they head home.

Adam is always the first to jump at going on community engagement outings, no matter what it is! "I never brought Adam to the grocery store. I wasn't sure how he would react or if it would be too much stimulation for him," remembers Polly. "Since he's started going on community outings with Elim, though, he has become my grocery shopping partner!"

Thanks to you, Elim is able to provide opportunities that give our participants, like Adam, the skills to go into their communities and thrive!

YOUR SUPPORT MEANS THAT PEOPLE LIKE ADAM HAVE THE RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES THEY NEED TO THRIVE EACH DAY. CAN YOU GIVE SEND A GIFT TO CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OUR STUDENTS AND ADULTS?

Message from the president

PURSUIT OF POSSIBILITY

Happy New Year! If you, like me, took some time early in the New Year to assess and re-envision the possibilities God has before us, then you will find the "Pursue Possibilities" theme of this issue of the *Equip* particularly appropriate. The stories of Luke and Adam are testimonies of how God is at work making possible what often seems impossible.

In Mathew 19 Jesus spoke candidly about possibilities so difficult they seemed impossible. **But with God all things are possible** (Matthew 19:26). This issue of the *Equip* is a testimony to that.

We all have limitations, and these limits can seem even more apparent for the children and adults who come to Elim. And because one of our human limitations is faith and belief in God's ability to use all people, it can be more challenging for us to envision what is really possible for people with disabilities.

But because God is involved, there is possibility even when it all seems impossible.

At Elim, we refer to this as "God-given potential."

So as you read through the stories of Luke, Adam, and the extended impact you make happen, take note of the pursuit of more obvious possibilities like cognitive, physical, sensory and behavioral progress. These pursuits are entirely noteworthy and cause for thanks and celebration! But notice also the less obvious possibilities that are being pursued. These less obvious possibilities exist at more of a soul level as God uses Elim to grow the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) into circumstances where the obvious possibilities seem more elusive.

God is at work in each "pursuit of possibility" at Elim, and I give thanks to God for your partnership in those pursuits!

Dr. Bill Lodewyk
President





"I FOUND THE CONNECTIONS IN THIS GROUP TO BE A WELCOMING INSIGHT INTO MY FELLOW COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND I'M THANKFUL TO BE A PART OF SOMETHING SO POSITIVE AND UNIFYING."

-Stephanie, Assistant Principal, Elim Book Club Member

FOSTERING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Where can you find a space where educators, parents, students, and community members come together to learn and grow while exploring novels related to disability? Elim, of course! This season, Elim Learning launched the "Elim Book Club" with *Out of My Mind* by Sharon Draper, which centers on eleven-year-old Melody and her journey to finding her voice.

Because of its online format, teachers, parents, and community members from all over are able to join the discussion when it is most convenient for them. *Out of My Mind* has spurred thoughtful discussion on education and communicating in general and has encouraged dialogue about how we all have something to say. One topic of discussion in the group has been the importance of ensuring people with disabilities have communication methods that give them a voice.

Your partnership in Elim's mission means that communities are being equipped to support thriving for all. Through initiatives like the Elim Book Club, inclusive cultures are fostered and encouraged. This work is making direct impacts on students and adults with disabilities by bringing us all together to learn from each other.

USE THE ENCLOSED PERSONALIZED FORM TO SEND YOUR GIFT TODAY!

YOUR GIFTS EQUIP PEOPLE FOR GOD'S PURPOSES!



Choosing one of the following options will provide the opportunities and support that will equip children and adults at Elim to pursue their highest God-given potential. Please mark the amount you are enclosing:

Elim
CONNECT. ENGAGE. THRIVE.

- ☐ \$50
- ☐ \$100
- ☐ \$250
- ☐ \$_____ to support as many children and adults as possible.



ELIM CHRISTIAN SERVICES | 13020 S. Central Ave. | Crestwood, IL 60418 | 708-293-6509 | www.elimcs.org



Get involved in Learning!

Our online learning opportunities allow anyone to be involved – and that includes you! Visit our website to join the Elim Book Club, listen to the Elim Thrive Podcast, and even more possibilities for Learning.

Visit [elimcs.org/](http://elimcs.org/shared-learning) shared-learning to check it all out!

To give securely online, go to www.elimcs.org/donate



ELIM CHRISTIAN SERVICES: OUR MISSION

At Elim, we know that each individual has been created in God's image and that He has a specific purpose and calling for each of us. With your help, we strive to equip individuals with disabilities to pursue their God-given potential by living their lives to glorify Him! Elim accomplishes this mission through the following program areas that serve people of all ages:

- School program
- Adult services
- Elim Learning
- HOPE Packs

Elim

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