

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

EAGLE VILLAGE NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2022



WE WILL *Campaign*

For 54 years, our mission to inspire hope in the lives of Michigan's abused, neglected and abandoned children has received wonderful support from those who believe and invest in our work. Together we change lives, paths and the future families of these children. Thank you for your thoughtful partnership.

We want to do the best we can for our youth while they are living with us and that means we pay attention every minute to new opportunities to increase the value and outcomes of their Eagle Village experience.

In 2019, we launched Phase 1 of our *We Will Campaign*, to raise funds for the strategies our team determined would make a lasting impact on our youth. We are grateful for the response in successfully securing the capital needed to build and open the *Elenbaas Career and Trades Center*. This new building and the programs launched provides our older teenagers exposure to options for their futures. We want them to see paths forward and decide if the next step is a career or college. Our goal is that Eagle Village youth are prepared to live happy and independent lives.

We were also able to pave and add shoulders on our main road, which allows our youth a much safer environment as they walk to and from school and programming. In addition, we upgraded our firewall to keep confidential information on our youth safe. A

wayfinding system was installed throughout campus to help families, case workers and others navigate our 681 acres when visiting.

Phase 2 of the *We Will Campaign* was interrupted by the Covid pandemic. We are now focused on reaching the fundraising goal to make the next project of impact a reality. We are excited about the renovation of the Activity Therapy Center as we know it will have as much impact on our younger youth that the *Elenbaas Career and Trades Center* has had on our older teens.

The goal of this important renovation is to have multiple spaces for expressive therapies. This type of therapy focuses on encouraging youth to become active participants in the therapeutic process. The experience of doing, making, and creating through art, drama, dance and music helps redirect their attention and energy. When our highly-trained therapists are able to include these expressive outlets in the treatment process, it creates an opportunity for our youth to communicate about difficult issues in ways that traditional talk therapy cannot provide. This newly updated center will provide these opportunities to our youth in separate spaces to allow maximum healing and growth.

Together, we will change the lives of youth by helping them discover their potential and the steps toward a new, exciting direction in life. With you, *We Will* inspire the life of each Eagle Village child. Please know that your gift is an investment that lasts a lifetime and impacts far more than one child. To learn more or to make a donation, please visit our website at www.eaglevillage.org/donations/.



Future Activity Therapy Center



A *Focused Direction* WITH TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE



Over the last few months, our entire organization went through a six week course with the Traumatic Stress Institute (TSI). During this training, our focus was on Trauma-Informed Care, and bringing a common language to our team from all of the trauma trainings we have had over the last 10 years. What is Trauma-Informed Care and why is this important?

Trauma-Informed Care is a type of treatment that focuses on addressing the trauma head on by understanding where it came from, how it has impacted the victim and finding ways to start the healing and recovery process without re-traumatizing. These traumas typically come from an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) and can range from emotional, physical and mental abuse, and neglect. ACEs can also create long-term health effects if not treated properly which is why it is so important to treat the trauma as early as possible.

As we have learned about trauma and its effects on the youth we serve, we have found that part of the healing and recovery process is to approach the situation differently than you would in traditional practices. Over the years we have brought in different types of therapy that involve music, dance, drama, art and more. Having access to these types of treatment allow our youth to express their trauma in a way they may not be able to say out loud or give them the peace and comfort they need to move forward.

Having designated places designed for these expressive therapies to take place in is essential as we move forward. This programming will change lives and create a new pathway to success. You can help make a greater impact on our kids by learning more about our *We Will Campaign* and helping us raise funds to establish a home for our expressive therapies!

ON A QUEST TO *Change Lives*

Twice a year, our youth participate in a wilderness experience called Quest. This excursion is led by our Experiential Specialists who focus on giving our students experiences that can teach them basic life skills as well as create a safe space to push them into developing desired skills such as leadership, commitment and team building.

In May, our students got to go on a 3-day overnight stay at a rustic campsite. There was no running water, electricity or plumbing and all meals had to be prepped and cooked by using a small compact gas stove.

For our kids, this was a great educational encounter as they were learning the importance of proper planning and preparation. Together with staff and experiential leaders, they learned how to clean and store food, prep

for the next day and how to properly pack their back packs.

Over the three days, our youth went on three major hikes. The first one was a five mile rainy and steep terrain hike along the Pine River. The next was a four mile trek across the Silver Lake Sand Dunes to Lake Michigan. The groups spent time playing on a beach and had great discussions. On their final hike, they made a short three mile walk through the Manistee National Forest. One of the nights the group spent an evening at the Little Sable Point Lighthouse on the lake shore, watching the sunset while sharing stories and listening to the wave's crash along the beach.



Please note, the child's name has been changed for privacy and protection.

A DREAM OF *Overcoming*



May 25th was a big day on our campus as we joined together in celebration for a graduation. As we all gathered together in the Chapel, we took time to reflect on the young lady who was about to walk across the stage – a step toward her dreams.

A year prior, Marie came to Eagle Village as a girl with a heavy heart and years of trauma to unfold. She came from a home where she was physically, mentally and sexually abused by family members and watched her parents fall short due to drug addictions. What happened to Marie in such a short time is more than most of us will ever endure in our lifetime. She knew she had a long journey ahead and had little to no self-worth.

“I didn’t ask to be born,” said Marie. “I really didn’t ask for the parent’s that I have, but it wasn’t really my choice.”

This young girl worked through the trauma she endured in her home. She has realized that her parent’s lack of valuing her doesn’t make her any less valuable. She earned her high school diploma from our charter school at 16 years old and will be a college student next year. Marie said it wasn’t always easy, but worked because of the people who care about her. Marie is grateful for the staff here that help her work through a past that she didn’t ask for.

“I have hope for myself that I can be successful, that I do well and that my therapist, Ms. Keren will keep fighting for me,” said Marie.

Right before Marie’s graduation, we held a Heart Stage Hearing. Reaching this level takes a great deal of dedication and work. The Heart Stager invites those who were directly involved in their treatment plan, to hear her share her story from the past, present and plans for the future. After the student is done with the presentation, the floor is open to questions before the team decides if the youth is ready for Heart Stage. It was during Marie’s Heart Stage Hearing that we learned how she overcame her obstacles.

“The thing that made the difference from when I was struggling to stay alive to now is I now have hope,” Marie said.

On May 25th, Marie walked across the stage to receive her diploma and held it high and proud for all at Eagle Village to see. She shared a speech, thanking many staff and teachers who took part in her journey and spoke of her future of becoming a business woman. One of Marie’s elementary school teachers came to her graduation as one of the speakers and told her how proud she was of her.

Because of Marie’s dream to overcome, she now has a bright future. This fall, she plans to attend college to pursue a degree in business before heading to cosmetology school and opening her own studio.

 Cut along the dotted line to send a note of encouragement!



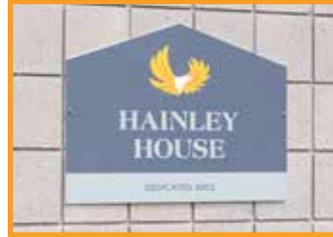
SEND OUR GRADUATE A NOTE OF ENCOURAGEMENT!



Navigation MADE EASY!



Our most recent project is underway with the installation of a new wayfinding signage system throughout our campus! The new signage brings a more cohesive look across campus reflecting our brand and provides a professional and welcoming way to navigate our 681 acres.



♥♥ Celebrating JUNETEENTH ♥♥

Juneteenth, historically known as Jubilee Day, Black Independence Day or Emancipation Day, was a day in 1865 when the last of those enslaved were finally set free!



To celebrate, our students hosted a talent show for all to see! From singing and rapping to gymnastics and poem reading, they brought their best talents forward. In between the acts, staff members provided information and history about Juneteenth and the importance of freedom for all.

But the good times didn't end there! Our kids also got to spend the day outside playing games and grilling their favorite foods.

Lives Changed SO FAR IN 2022

Although this year has come with its own challenges, we can't help but look at what we have accomplished so far at the half-way point of 2022!

Each and every single one of our employees are doing their part to change the lives of our kids and their families. It is with bold blessings that we have been able to make an impact in these ways.

RESIDENTS

50

Number of youth served in our residential programs.

FOSTER CARE

47

Number of children placed in foster homes.

ADOPTIONS

19

Number of kids granted their forever homes.

GRADUATES

2

Number of students graduated from Lighthouse Academy.

EMPLOYEES

32

Number of new employees at Eagle Village.

VOLUNTEERS

716

Number of hours volunteered.

DONATIONS

359

Number of gift-in-kind donated.