CHEHAMPION



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Charterhouse School Student Shares His Voice

Charterhouse School student Alex Campbell has already found his calling. This month, 10-year-old Alex will fly to St. Louis with his family to accept the Council for Exceptional Children's 2016 Yes I Can award for self-advocacy.



WHEN HE WAS IN FIRST GRADE,

Alex's principal would send him to a converted storage closet called the crisis room—a lot. Alex would get 30 minutes in the crisis room for standing on a chair in class. Tearing papers in class warranted hours in the crisis room. School staff never told Alex's parents when they sent Alex to the room. At the time, Virginia had no laws to prohibit or limit the use of restraint or seclusion in schools. Alex, who has autism, knew it wasn't fair.

Alex said, "When I was in the crisis room, I was angry. Sometimes I felt like I went into the room for doing silly things." After six or seven times in the seclusion room, Alex broke down crying and told his parents he didn't want to go to school anymore.

To advocate for children's safety, Alex wrote and self-published a book, "Alex's Story," and began working with the Arc of Virginia and the disAbility Law Center of Virginia to create and pass a bill to direct the Commission on Youth to study the lack of protections in Virginia schools.

I've learned that it's okay to stand up for yourself ... if I don't share my story, who will?

- Alex Campbell

In October 2014, Alex stood on tiptoes to reach the microphone as he addressed the commission in front of over 200 people. Everyone in the room hung onto Alex's every word as he told his story. Alex's courageous and passionate testimony convinced state Senator Barbara Favola (D) and Delegate Richard Bell (R) to draft two separate bills for the 2015 session of the Virginia General Assembly—Senate Bill 782 and House Bill 1443—that would require the

Virginia State Board of Education to adopt formal regulations on restraint and seclusion in schools.

Afterward, Alex addressed two legislative subcommittees and also met individually with dozens of state senators and delegates to encourage them to support the two bills, despite growing controversy. His testimony spurred Senator Tom Garrett (R) to co-sponsor Senator Favola's bill. "What got me was watching the moms and dads and hearing a nineyear-old boy talking about how he was afraid to get out of bed in the morning because he didn't want to go to school," Garrett said.

The bills passed both houses of the legislature with overwhelming support from both Republicans and Democrats. In March 2015, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe signed the bills into law. McAuliffe sent a handwritten note to Alex, "To a future civil rights attorney and future Supreme Court Justice!"

Alex never realized his story would make local and national headlines. The Associated Press picked up Alex's story and shared it nationwide. The Washington Post and the Richmond Times Dispatch both featured his testimony in their op-ed sections. Congressman Don Beyer (D) VA shared Alex's testimony on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives in support of the Keeping All Students Safe Act. Alex shared his voice, and the world heard it.

Alex used his experience to make positive changes for all children in Virginia.

Sean Campbell,Alex's Father

Alex and his family struggled to find the right school. Alex's dad, Sean, said, "We went through four schools in five years. Charterhouse School saved Alex's life—he simply would not be going to St. Louis and none of this would be happening without the stability and support they (Charterhouse teachers and staff) have given him," Sean says.

Alex will finish fifth grade at Charterhouse School and will start middle school next fall in his home school district. "I can't wait to change classes during the day, and there are lots of friends I know who I'm looking forward to seeing every day," Alex says.

Today, having learned the power of his own voice, Alex continues

his advocacy efforts by fighting for greater inclusion in Virginia's public schools. He hopes to attend the University of Virginia—much to the dismay of his dad, who is a diehard Hokie—and then pursue a degree in law with a focus on educational and civil rights. "I want to help others share their voice to make a change," Alex says.

Charterhouse School uses a strengths-based approach to working with students with autism and other neurological differences. The Circle of Courage model—centered on the four growth areas of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity—empowers students to flourish and thrive in a supportive and unintimidating environment.

Barbara Favola

Enjoyed meeting Alex & hearing his moving testimony. School systems must empower and educate all students. #SB782

Virginia Senator Barbara Favola shared a tweet and an image after her meeting with Alex in 2015.



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Students Paws for Therapy Dog

WHEN TUG THE THERAPY DOG SHOWS UP at UMFS' Richmond campus, the kids make a beeline towards him.

"When we started out in March of 2014, we weren't sure what his role would be and how the kids would respond to him," says Susan Crosby, Tug's person. Since then, Tug has become a fixture on campus, serving kids at Charterhouse School and Child & Family Healing Center in a variety of different ways.



"Tug does a little bit of everything—some of the kids read to him, some wrestle with him, and all of them love throwing the ball for him," Susan explains. "He's intuitive —if someone is having a bad day, he senses it and goes right to them, offering his own kind of love."

Tug serves kids at UMFS who have complex histories of trauma, or autism and other neurological differences. Tug's unconditional love and affection for the kids helps many of them heal or grow beyond some of the developmental barriers they face. "Tug teaches the kids to build relationships," Susan explains, "and they love him for it."

"It's really nice to see the kids having a good time and just being kids playing with a dog," says Elizabeth Bucholz, program services administrator. "Pet therapy has really helped some of the teens come out of their shells."

Tug the therapy dog brings love to UMFS' Richmond Campus.

STORIES OF IMPACT

Charterhouse School – Edinburg Students Shoot Hoops for Heart

STUDENTS AT CHARTERHOUSE

School - Edinburg took to the court to raise more than \$700 for the American Heart Association.

Hoops for Heart is a fun event where students learn about heart health, play basketball and help save lives.

Students set-up their own Hoops For Heart Web page and emailed it to friends and family to ask for their support.





VIRGINIA'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY

session wrapped up in March with both the Senate and House of Delegates passing key legislation that benefits children and families.

Children's Mental Health

Legislators approved a budget package that will increase funding for crisis response and child psychiatry services by \$3.5 million over the next two years, bringing the statewide allocation for these supports to just over \$10 million. Their actions ensure that kids in crisis in their own communities will receive the services and supports they need.

Fostering Futures for Emancipated Teens in Foster Care

For the first time ever, the General Assembly agreed on a version of Fostering Futures, a bill that extends foster care benefits for youth up to age 21, as long as they are working or are in school. When Governor McAuliffe signs the bill into law this spring, he will be ensuring that youth who age out of the foster care system at age 18 have access to housing, monthly casework support and legal counsel.

As part of a collaborative effort, UMFS President and CEO Greg Peters published an op-ed in the Richmond Times-Dispatch to help advocate for Fostering Futures. Greg wrote, "It's time to stop serving eviction notices on Virginia's youth who are turning 18 and aging out of the foster care system. The result of this action is homelessness, school dropouts and incarceration, as well as the need for continued long-term public assistance."

Del. John M. O'Bannon III, R-Henrico, credited foster care advocates for developing a plan that legislators could support. "If the advocates keep at it and make it better, you can eventually get something done," he said.

It's time to stop serving eviction notices on Virginia's youth who are turning 18 and aging out of the foster care system.

- Greg Peters

UMFS joins Voices for Virginia's Children, FACES of Virginia Families and others in thanking Sen. Barbara Favola and Del. Chris Peace for being champions for Virginia's foster youth and for working together to make Fostering Futures happen.

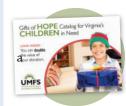
DONOR HIGHLIGHTS

Funn Runn Success



Andrew Rountree and Lee Weisiger presented UMFS with an \$18,000 check from the Rotary Club of West Richmond for the 2015 Nutzy's Rotary Funn Run. Gary Duncan, UMFS vice president of marketing and development, credits participation in the event for increased awareness of UMFS programs and services. Thank you, Rotary Club of West Richmond for your partnership over the past four years and for being unwavering champions for our kids and families.

Support Our Gifts Catalog Year-Round



Did you know you can make donations to our Gifts of Hope catalog at any point

during the year? UMFS staff identified several much-needed items for the catalog — items that we need year-round that we cannot provide without your help. Become a champion for a child in need by donating toward one or more gifts in the catalog. Your donations become real gifts delivered into the hands of the children we serve. You can give online at: www.umfs.org/donate

INNOVATION INSIGHTS

The CarMax Foundation Serves Up \$10,000 Grant for UMFS' Leland House

THE CARMAX FOUNDATION awarded UMFS' Leland House in Centerville, VA a \$10,000 grant. Leland House staff will use the money to provide therapeutic services, Spanish-speaking interpreters and to purchase special workbooks, as well as other tools and toys to use in therapy sessions. The money covers a minimum of 60 workbooks and language services for the 30 percent of their clients whose primary language is Spanish.

"We use workbooks regularly to help the kids in therapy learn to externalize struggles and help them with self-awareness," said Kristina Kallini, director of Leland House. "They are used between therapy sessions for practice and kids are able to take them home to help them transition out of our program and keep them focused on the future."

The grant is part of The CarMax Foundation's Regional Giving Program. A CarMax store in Northern Virginia nominated Leland House for the grant. The CarMax Foundation awards its Regional Giving grant to a



nonprofit organization that has been nominated and meets a need that relates to children's education, healthy living, or youth leadership

Leland House works with highrisk youth in crisis situations, providing individual, group and family therapy, education and recreational opportunities.

Children receive clinical case management with the most up-to-date, evidence-based practices in a structured, therapeutic environment.

COLLABORATION CORNER

Open Table Brings Government, Congregation and Community Together to Fight Poverty

JON KATOV, FOUNDER OF OPEN TABLE, believes passionately in transforming poverty through community. Katov recently spoke to a group of UMFS church and government partners about how the faithbased Open Table model leverages



congregations to create community and transformation with the homeless, working poor, young adults transitioning out of foster care, veterans, probation/re-entry and victims of human trafficking.

Open Table trains congregations and their members to form communities—called tables—that transform their vocational and life experiences into tools that people in poverty can use to develop and implement plans that create change.

"For a long time the church has understood mission as a transactional sort of thing—if someone were hungry, we fed them. If someone needed clothes, we clothed them," explains the Rev. Joe Torrence, UMFS minister of youth and church relations. "Open Table is different. It's a program that uses communities' social and intellectual capital to transform the lives of our brothers and sisters in poverty."

UMFS hopes to use Open Table to help link churches and government agencies to bridge social capital resources and connections for people in poverty. The unique contribution of Open Table is its focus on establishing intensive and long sustaining positive supportive relationships.

QUESTIONS? Contact Joe Torrence at jtorrence@umfs.org or 804.239.1042.

Betty Forbes, UMFS Board Member, Donor and Volunteer

How did you first get connected with UMFS?

I got involved with UMFS when Gary Duncan was hired as vice president of marketing and development. I knew about UMFS, but not about all of the inner workings and everything they did until he came aboard. I had worked with him in the past, so he got me in fast and indoctrinated me in the work that UMFS does. When Greg Peters asked me to be on the board, I quickly said yes, and I've enjoyed every moment of it.

What role do you play on the board?

I serve as chair of the resource development committee. We work together to educate the public about the services and programs that UMFS provides and encourage them to donate to support the work we are doing.

What would you say to someone who might be thinking of supporting UMFS?

I would say from my view that UMFS is an organization that truly understands the needs of children, youth and families who are left behind. I tell people all the time that this is an organization that has a can-do attitude—they don't give up on children and families when

it's difficult. If they can't offer a program or service, they go out into the community and find a partner who can. I'd also want them to know that when I give my money, I know it's going to be well spent by people I trust who are as committed to children and youth as I am. They will use it to give help to children and families in need and they are not going to turn people away.

How else are you involved with UMFS?

When I first got connected to UMFS, I came over (to the Richmond campus) on a volunteer day. I spent my day in the flower beds pulling grass as my husband and son trimmed shrubs. It was a family affair.

What else do you want people to know about UMFS?

UMFS operates in a Christian spirit and we are very proud of our Methodist roots. We celebrate our history with the church and continue to build on our relationship with it. We are very appreciative of our continuing support from members of Methodist churches across Virginia.



Mission

UMFS is an unwavering champion for high-risk children and families, collaborating with communities to help them reach their full potential.

Vision

Creating a world where caring, opportunity and generosity are passed on from generation to generation — empowering all children to contribute to society as engaged citizens.

www.umfs.org

RICHMOND CAMPUS CHILD & FAMILY HEALING CENTER

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FREDERICKSBURG REGIONAL CENTER

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NORTHERN VIRGINIA REGIONAL CENTER

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TIDEWATER REGIONAL CENTER

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LELAND HOUSE

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CHARTERHOUSE SCHOOL

3900 West Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23230 804.239.1080 • info@chs4u.org

CHARTERHOUSE SCHOOL, EDINBURG

508 Picadilly Street, Edinburg, VA 22824 540.984.6266 • info-edinburg@chs4u.org

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In the 1920s our Richmond campus served as an orphanage, farm, school, dairy and the print shop featured in these photos. Almost 100 years later, our new vocational and technical education program is empowering students with skills that will help them succeed in the workforce.

Visit www.umfs.org for more information.

HAPPENINGS AT UMFS



GREEN THUMBS PLANT SALE

Our annual Green Thumbs plant sale is May 4. Just in time for Mother's Day, Charterhouse School students in Ms. Westfall's horticulture class will sell:

- annuals
- vegetables
- houseplants
- planters

- perennials
- herbs
- hanging baskets
 and more

WHEN: Wednesday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. WHERE: UMFS Richmond campus, 3900 W. Broad Street



Proceeds benefit Charterhouse School -Edinburg's art program.

WHEN: May 22, noon to 3 p.m.

WHERE: Charterhouse School-Edinburg

508 Piccadilly Street Edinburg, VA 22824



WHEN: Wednesday, June 15, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

WHERE: UMFS Dining Hall 3900 West Broad Street Richmond, VA 23220



VISIT UMFS.ORG

for up-to-date information on events or to give online. Find other updates about upcoming events and other news on social media:



