

Tamassee DAR School

Beginning a Second Century of Service

Summary Message



A Season of Change

For over one hundred years, Tamassee DAR School has empowered children facing challenges to become exceptional citizens. We believe every child can reach for the stars and achieve their dreams. We believe young people can overcome poverty and adverse experiences and achieve success for themselves, our community, and our country. To accomplish this vision in our second century of service, Tamassee is making important changes, and we need your support.

A century ago, our community lacked public education and economic opportunities. So Tamassee met this need by building a boarding school for mountain children. Over the last fifty years, as family brokenness became acute in our society, our community needed a loving home for children who had suffered abuse and neglect. So Tamassee met their need by transitioning into a children's home and family service organization.

Today, public schools dot the map and school buses crisscross our roads. Today our state and nation are putting tremendous effort and resources into placing children needing out-of-home care with relatives and community foster families. These changes are good for children, and we applaud these efforts. For Tamassee, these changes mean fewer children, especially younger children, need our residential services. Yet, children in our community still have other needs. In Oconee County, 23% of children live in poverty. Fifty-nine percent of third graders in South Carolina are below grade level in reading, and 60% of SC eighth graders are below grade level in math. Over 60% of children experience trauma, which negatively impacts their emotional, social, physical, and academic well-being. With a century of educational success to its credit, Tamassee DAR School can and will help meet these needs.

Fifty years ago, when Tamassee DAR School transitioned from a boarding school to a children's home, we had to think differently about the most effective way to meet children's needs. The time has come once again for Tamassee to think differently about how best to guide children to exceptional citizenship. Over the last year, we have worked with expert consultants and other partners to ensure a successful course for Tamassee's future. Let me share a little about where we are headed.

New Opportunities

We will begin with after school programming. First, we will use evidence-based programming to tutor elementary and middle school students, especially in reading and math. We will work directly with schools, teachers, parents, and caregivers to make sure we are supplementing every child's educational needs.

Second, Tamasee will become a trauma-informed provider, so that we can offer a trauma resilient culture and teach resiliency skills. Whether a child has lost a caregiver, worries where they will sleep or what they will eat, or is dealing with bullying, our program will equip them to thrive.

Third, our after school program will offer enrichment activities to students designed not only to be fun but to expand their horizons. Activities may include recreational sports, arts and crafts, outdoor explorations, music, dance, and theater.

Lastly, Tamasee's after school program will instill citizenship values in our students through a model of individual achievement and group competition. Students will learn the principles of good citizenship – courage, dignity, passion, and service.

After school programming is a spring board to further programs development. Our plan is to expand into summer programs, including specialty camps for children with alternative learning needs, for enrichment, and for citizenship. We are currently working to identify unmet needs in the area and exploring partnerships. We will also explore family support services and the expansion of our early childhood learning program.

In order to best use the resources our donors entrust to us, Tamasee will sunset its residential program during 2020. As we do, we will work tirelessly with our partners so that the children we currently serve transition according to plan or into a new placement. We will explore new uses for our residential cottages and other campus facilities to fulfill our historic mission. We are mindful of the tireless service of our staff and the incredible support of our community and donors. On behalf of all the children whose lives have been touched in the last one hundred years at Tamasee DAR School, thank you!

Our vision is big, but so is our faith. We believe every child can succeed in life and positively impact our community and country. With your support, Tamasee DAR School will be the place of the sunlight of God in children's lives for another hundred years.