

# Winter edition

2021 TAMASSEE TODAY NEWSLETTER



## The Afterschool Program is *Making a Difference*

Tamassee's passion is empowering students to succeed in school and in life! Robbie is an excellent example of our mission in action. Robbie is a 2nd grader in our Afterschool Program. Being the child of a single mother, along with a father who is not consistently present in his life, Robbie has dealt with a series of traumatic and stressful situations at home, otherwise known as Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Robbie has a difficult time functioning in both academic and non-academic activities.

During his first few weeks in the Afterschool Program, Robbie struggled to focus during homework time, had very little interest in reading, found it difficult to get along with his peers, and tested below grade level in reading and math. As a result of his trauma, he also has a greater need for individualized attention, which he is unable to receive throughout his school day. He did not have the ability to cope with his feelings, which further made it difficult for him to complete his homework, work cooperatively with others, and deal with life's challenges.

However, after spending time in the Afterschool Program, **Robbie has made a tremendous amount of progress.** He comes to the program with a better attitude, has a stronger desire to complete his homework, and has shown a significant increase in his reading and math scores. He also has a strong connection to his Afterschool teachers, who have been a supportive presence to him through his emotional struggles and outbursts. His teachers have demonstrated to Robbie that it is normal to have emotions and they have been able to help him in not only recognizing his feelings, but controlling his actions when things become extremely difficult. As a result of this, he is more aware of his feelings and the effect on how a negative reaction can lead to consequences.

Robbie also aims to spend his reading time in the Upper Elementary classroom, as a way to help transition to 3rd grade. By showing an increase in his reading skills and in finding better ways to manage his behavior, he is rewarded with this opportunity on a daily basis. Knowing that this is a privilege, Robbie is more mindful of his attitudes and behaviors and has started to take reading and homework time more seriously.

The Afterschool Program has been a safe place for Robbie, removing obstacles to his academic and emotional growth. As a student in this program, he has shown a tremendous amount of growth in both of these areas, which might not have otherwise been possible. Supporting the needs of each individual child and providing a nurturing environment to learn and grow, is what has given Robbie the chance to be stronger in all areas of his life, thus leading to a more successful adulthood.

### 2020 BEGINNING SCHOOL YEAR

**31%** of our students and families are poverty level

**50%** of our Afterschool students are performing below grade level in math

**64%** of our Afterschool students are performing below grade level in reading

### JANUARY TESTING RESULTS

**100%** have shown improvement in math

**82%** have shown improvement in reading

Would you like to make a donation to Tamassee DAR School today?

Using your smartphone, simply scan this QR Code to visit our website at [www.tdarschool.org/donate](http://www.tdarschool.org/donate).



*Thank you! We appreciate your support.*

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# Early Childhood Learning

Impacting Little People at a Young Age



Tamassee DAR School is excited to introduce Amy Wills as the new Director of Early Childhood Learning (ECL) in the Pennsylvania Children's Center (PCC).

Amy is originally from Greenville, South Carolina and says one of her favorite things about the Early Childhood Learning Center is the innovative, experienced and nurturing teachers that she will lead as they instill a love of lifelong learning in the little people they serve.

Amy Wills has a degree in early childhood / elementary education and has fifteen years of experience as an Early Head Start and Head Start teacher and site manager. Amy knows Tamassee well, having been a Care Coordinator in our Residential program for the past five years, and we are confident that she will excel in her leadership role in ECLPCC.

This past autumn, Early Childhood Learning began using a new curriculum called Teaching Strategies Gold. This curriculum is play-based early childhood learning through developmentally appropriate practices. For example, the 3-year-old class began recognizing letters this summer through activities centered around children's books. One of the books was *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, which is about alphabet letters on an adventure up the coconut tree. Children began recognizing different letters throughout the classroom, where print is prevalent. Teachers expanded on this through creating activities such as making letters with play dough, alphabet stamp art, letter games, and letter scavenger hunts. These activities led to children wanting to try to write alphabet letters. By the end of the summer, several children had started writing the letters in their name.

Not only are literacy goals a key part in the curriculum, but also math, science, social/emotional and cognitive objectives. Teachers assess the children to find out what level they are in each area. They then implement learning strategies that support the children as they move to the next level.

With the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year, ECL had their second South Carolina First Steps 4K program dedicated to preparing 4 year olds for the beginning of their academic careers in Kindergarten. The students participating in this class have enjoyed learning about families, nature, and the seasons this semester. Some of the math objectives in these studies included connecting numerals and their quantities, understanding spatial relationships, and recognizing patterns. Our 4k students eagerly anticipate entering the public school system in the fall of 2021, and through our incredible staff and exceptional curriculum, they will be prepared to succeed there.

While little people begin developing a love of lifelong learning during their time in the center, they are also guided in development of skills and behaviors that will benefit them as they grow up. The behavior patterns being encouraged by the dedicated instructors at the center do not go without notice. Ms. Morgan enrolled her child in ECLPCC and within days commented to ECL staff that it was the best move for her child. The child has had better interactions at home and less meltdowns.

As we move to the end of the current school year, we are proud of the progress being made by those enrolled in the Early Childhood Learning Center and are confident that Amy Wills will successfully lead ECL into the summer program and beyond.



## THANK YOU!

Thank you for supporting the children and Tamassee DAR School through 2020. It was certainly a memorable year. Not just because of a global pandemic, but because of your amazing generosity to Tamassee DAR School. Thanks to you, we were able to accomplish some amazing feats including:

- ★ **Launching a new After School Program for elementary through middle-school children**
- ★ **Delivering amazing services including tutoring for math, reading and other academics; music education; beginner robotics and more**
- ★ **Serve our smallest citizens (infants-4k) in our Early Learning Program**
- ★ **Providing nutritious snacks and meals**
- ★ **Furnishing educational supplies to classrooms**
- ★ **Utilizing gift cards and donations to help struggling families/ children to have a Merry Christmas**
- ★ **Providing Bridge Scholarships in support of children receiving our services**

All this and much more has been accomplished because of you. Thank you is not sufficient, but I will say it again none the less— THANK YOU. As the new year and winter begin so does our renewed need for your support. I am asking you to make a special winter gift to the Children's Fund to help us deliver services to the children. Your gift will not only help us provide for their educational and emotional needs, but also their physical needs through the purchase of food and propane to heat the classrooms during these cold winter months.

- **A \$50 gift will provide gas to transport children.**
- **A \$100 donation will help us purchase propane to keep our classrooms warm this winter.**
- **A gift of \$250 or more will assist in providing Bridge Scholarships.**
- **All gifts in any amount are needed and greatly appreciated no matter the size.**

For your convenience, a response envelope is enclosed within this issue of the *Tamassee Today*. If you prefer, you can make a secure online donation by going to [www.tdarschool.org](http://www.tdarschool.org) and clicking on the "Donate Now" button.

We are so grateful for your giving, and the very best gift you give to us is YOU. Or, as one of my favorite authors puts it, "You're never too old, too wacky, too wild, to pick up a book and read to a child." - Dr. Seuss

For God's Precious Children,

  
Jason L. Eller  
Development Officer

P.S.- Consider becoming a Tamassee Faithful Member by making a monthly recurring gift online or call us! Remember to check with your place of business for [matching gifts and double your donation to Tamassee DAR School.](#)



## DONOR SPOTLIGHT:

Elizabeth "Libby" Billham

Written by: Jason Eller, Development Officer

Elizabeth Billham, affectionately known as Libby, was born in Cape Girardeau, Missouri located on the Mississippi River. She is the oldest of five children, which meant that money could be a little tight in the family. "My father told each of us that he could only afford to send us to college for one year and the remaining was up to us. So, in 1973 I decided to join the Air Force to get my education through the GI Bill," stated Libby. However, it soon became clear that the education she received at college was icing on the cake, adding to the twenty years of training and experience she received while in the United States Air Force.

Libby says, "The Air Force totally changed my perspective. It afforded me so many wonderful opportunities on my life journey. I remember my first assignment was as an Aircraft Corrosive Control Specialist, which really means I painted the aircraft assigned to me. However, I became allergic to the solution that we used to remove the paint from the planes, so I was placed in Administrative." It was then

that Libby received her first official deployment to Greenland. During her stay in Greenland, she was able to meet and speak with living history. She says, "I was thrilled to meet General Daniel (Chappie) James, one of the Tuskegee Airmen. He was an incredibly nice man and really tall...around 6'7". I don't know how in the world he ever fit into a cockpit, but he did. I will always cherish meeting him and the opportunity the Air Force provided me."

Upon completing the first 10 years on active duty, Libby transferred to Charleston, South Carolina where she spent her remaining 10 years of service in the Air Force Reserves sending aircrews on missions. Her primary responsibility was to brief the Commander on the upcoming mission and he in turn would inform the crew. "I would do everything needed to prep them for a successful mission, including doing trip kits (food) for their journey," stated Libby. While stationed at the base, Libby met and fell in love with the man she would marry.

"Darrell was a Load Master at the same base I was stationed. I was working as a Contracting Officer to construct facilities at the Base. It wasn't long after that we married." In fact, they were married in 1984 and in 1985 they had a daughter named Renee. Libby fully retired in 1994 after twenty years of service, and Darrell followed after thirty-three years of service. Both now reside in Summerville, South Carolina. However, if you think that after a lifetime of helping others and serving

her country that her service days would be behind her, think again.

Service was ingrained into Libby at an early age and continues today through her volunteer work. "It really was a way of life in our family. We were always involved in our community. I was in girl scouts, church work and volunteering wherever needed. We all were a part of giving back. My dad wanted us to be passionate about what we did. He would say, 'volunteer when passionate about what you are doing---it needs to come from the heart' and I have followed that advice ever since."

**"I want to help them make better lives for themselves and I am happy to be a part of that through my giving."**

Her passion for serving from the heart is what led her to serve at Tamassee DAR School. When asked why she chose to be a part of Tamassee DAR School and serve the children, she stated, "I really understand the great service Tamassee is doing for children and it has been such a rewarding and enriching place for generations for over one hundred years. I want to be able to continue that great legacy in whatever capacity I can provide."

Libby is no stranger to Tamassee. Her mother, Dorothy Krueger-Points who was herself a member of the Missouri DAR, brought her to campus in the 1960's when she was just thirteen years old. "My mother had heard so much about Tamassee that she just had to go see it for herself and I was just lucky enough to be able to go with her. I remember coming to the campus and seeing the wonderful stone rock buildings. The children were all in school, and I just remember how beautiful everything was and of course my mother was very excited and understood why everyone back home was talking about Tamassee." Today, Libby is a member of the South Carolina State Society DAR and currently serves as State Regent.

When asked why she gives of her time and finances to Tamassee, Libby simply stated, "Because the need is so great and these children are so very deserving. I want to help them make better lives for themselves and I am happy to be a part of that through my giving." Libby states that she is honored to serve as the Chair of the Tamassee DAR School Board of Trustees and to give as a member of the Tamassee Faithful monthly recurring donor program.

Jason Eller, Development Officer at Tamassee DAR School stated, "Libby is a wonderful example for our children. She exemplifies service and giving to others, which is what we want our children to learn and be able to pass on. She shows great leadership not only as Chair of the Board, but also in her giving while encouraging others to learn about and give in support of the children we serve. I am so very grateful to know her and thankful for her tremendous support."

**Thank you Libby for sharing your story of selfless service and for your unwavering support of the children at the "place of the sunlight of God."**

## LETTER FROM THE CEO



From the Desk of Jon Holland  
Tamassee DAR School, CEO

I love *The Lord of the Rings*. As I reflect on 2020 and all the adversity we faced as a nation and at Tamassee DAR School, a scene comes to mind from Tolkien's incomparable story. The Fellowship of the Ring has set off to destroy the ring of power, and the journey has been challenging from the beginning. The nine companions are now deep below the Misty Mountains in the deserted Mines of Moria, and Frodo – the hobbit carrying the evil ring – grows discouraged. "I wish none of this had happened," he says. The wise wizard Gandalf responds, "So do all who live to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us."

It is understandable to reflect on a global pandemic and lost loved ones, local natural disasters and homes destroyed, and even program changes at a beloved school, and wish none of these things had happened. Yet we can't control or undo them. What can we do? Decide what to do with the time given to us. We can help set things right. Whether it's fending off COVID-19, rebuilding our communities, or impacting underserved children at Tamassee, each and every one of us has a part to play.

You may be a volunteer tutoring a student in our afterschool program, reading to preschoolers in our early learning program, leading an enrichment theme in our summer program, or beautifying our campus. You may be a donor faithfully supporting our work with underprivileged students and joyfully seeing us through a season of change. You may be a partner working with us to create exciting new programs and services. Every part is vital to Tamassee's bright future.

As you'll read in this edition of *Tamassee Today*, our early learning and afterschool programs are making a tremendous impact in children's lives. Our upcoming summer program will serve even more young people as they catch up academically after coronavirus. All our programs empower children to overcome traumatic experiences and instill citizenship values so students can grow into fine young Americans.

These programs are the beginning. Our Board of Trustees and the Staff continue to work diligently on additional programming to revitalize our mission, utilize our campus, and impact young people through education. As in *The Lord of the Rings*, the journey may be long and fraught with unforeseen challenges, but they can be overcome. Together, as a fellowship of friends and partners, we will use the time given to us and shape another generation of young people. We will empower children to succeed in school and in life.

  
Jon Holland, CEO

*Stay Connected*

Visit our website: [www.tdarschool.org](http://www.tdarschool.org) & stay connected with your Tamassee DAR family. Read about future happenings & enjoy photos & stories from past events. Register your email address & be included on the distribution list for eblasts and newsletters.

"Like" us on Facebook for snapshots of campus happenings!



# GETTING THE JUMP ON SUMMER!

## Meet Tamasee's new Assistant Director of the Afterschool and Summer Program, Tyler Gibson.

Tyler earned his Bachelor's degree at North Greenville University and graduated in December 2019. He joined Tamasee DAR School's staff in January 2020 as a Life Bridge Mentor for the Tamasee young adults who had graduated high school and were beginning their transition to independent living. In August of 2020, Tyler began working with the Afterschool program where he was active in the creation and implementation of the Afterschool program, as well as being the classroom teacher to the older elementary and middle school students. His students enjoy participating in his classroom lessons, and Tyler's Tamasee's Summer Program will offer plenty of exciting adventures to challenge the students with subtle educational lessons that will be built around the same four core principles of the Afterschool Program: academics, citizenship, enrichment, and resiliency. Each week throughout the summer months our Summer Program will highlight a specific theme. These themes will guide activities to broaden the scope of the student's understanding and educationally advance their knowledge of the world

around them. For instance, there could be a week of an enrichment dance camp to focus on different countries and cultures. At week's end, the children will have an increased awareness of dance traditions around the world and a deeper appreciation for the diversity of those around us. There will be a week of art classes to help children explore their inner-selves, test their creative talents, and awaken the artist that sleeps inside of each of them. At the end of each week, families will be invited to a special event that spotlights the lessons the children have learned and the experiences they enjoyed.

Good citizenship is a trait incorporated into the key principles that guides all students enrolled in both Tamasee's Afterschool Program and Summer Camp experience. **The Tamasee Navigator Citizenship Program**, which the Afterschool students also participate in throughout the school year, will be the basis for the lessons learned during citizenship week. They will hear about America's forefathers, their bravery, their courage, and their leadership that resulted in this great nation where we live. They will learn about serving others and how those actions actually reward themselves. Students will see an



emphasis placed on characteristics that build strong community-minded individuals and will be rewarded for their efforts to practice what they learned.

With Tamasee's history of assisting children who have experienced adverse circumstances, our knowledgeable staff is skillful in using trauma-informed principles to enhance a child's coping and resiliency skills so they can overcome pain and move on.

As we finish up this school year, plans are being finalized and the enrollment process is beginning for the 2021 Summer Program. We welcome your participation and invite you to contact us if you would like to become a member of our Tamasee Volunteer Family. Don't forget to check out the Tamasee Facebook page to follow the fun.



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P.O. Box 8  
Tamasee, SC 29686

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Depending on developments with Covid-19, the events identified below may have to be virtual again in 2021. Please visit our website at [www.tdarschool.org](http://www.tdarschool.org) to stay updated and be in the know about all events we will be hosting throughout the year! We hope you will have the opportunity to join us for the fun.

**WEDDING OPEN HOUSE**  
April 10, 2021

**COMMUNITY RUMMAGE FESTIVAL**  
May 8, 2021

**EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER FIRST STEPS  
4K GRADUATION / AWARDS DAY**  
Monday, May 24, 2021

**TAMASSEE STUDENT ASSOCIATION  
HOMECOMING**  
TBD

## TAMASSEE NAVIGATORS Becoming an Everyday Hero



The Tamasee Navigator Citizenship Program exists to mold children into great American citizens. Through a culture of citizenship, we empower children to be everyday heroes.

One of the key segments of the Afterschool Program is the Tamasee Navigators. The four values of the Navigator program are passion, courage, service, and dignity. Navigator classroom sessions are held two times weekly during which time the teachers and students discuss how each of these components encourage and build character traits associated with good citizenship. Students are encouraged to utilize this knowledge to perform acts of good citizenship for which they receive individual and group points.

During monthly Town Halls, the Navigator students, instructors, staff and family members watch as awards and recognitions are presented based on the good citizenship projects and actions the students have displayed. At the first Town Hall all students received their sashes which are to be worn to all future meetings. These sashes display the pins

and badges students have earned through acts of good citizenship. Badges and pins were applied to their sashes by Mr. Jon.

Anticipation rose when the announcement of the class currently in the lead with the most citizenship points was made. The competition will continue until the end of the school year when, at the final Town Hall meeting, the class with the most accumulated points will be announced and begin making plans for their trip to Six Flags. At Tamasee DAR School we value and award good citizenship!

