

## Keister *JMU College Mentors for Kids*



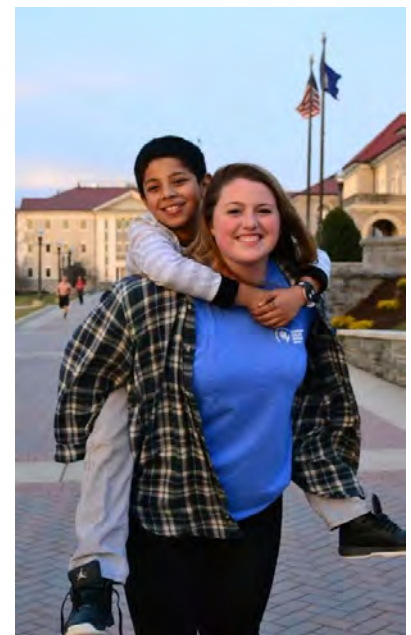
College Mentors for Kids is a national non-profit organization that pairs college students with elementary age students or “little buddies.” Through weekly after-school activities focused on higher education and career, culture and diversity, and community service, mentors help their “little buddies” understand the importance of education, show them the benefits of cultural understanding, and teach them ways to give back to their community.

JMU was awarded a grant to fund their own chapter in 2016. When Keister Elementary was approached with the opportunity to utilize such a great program, a small team of teachers formed and worked quickly to establish an invite list of students. We held a parent night in January to provide parents with information about the goals of the program as well as the logistical responsibilities of all parties involved.

Every Tuesday afternoon, 42 Keister students ride an activity bus to JMU. Upon arrival, they enjoy snack and conversation with their mentors before activities begin. To date, students have participated in “potato Olympics,” a campus-wide scavenger hunt, basketball challenges, and also listened to JMU a *cappella* members beat-box some of their favorite songs!

Participating students return to school on Wednesday with lots to tell! Isabella, a third grader, states, “[Mentor] Caroline is really fun to play with. Last week, we played freeze tag.” Fourth grader Kenny states, “My favorite activity was basketball. We shot the ball and played games.”

As educators, we know the significant and lasting impact positive relationships have in children’s lives. We feel grateful to have had the opportunity to partner with JMU in connecting our students to new experiences.



## Stone Spring *We're Determined!*

I'm Determined is a self-advocacy program that was originally designed to help students with disabilities. The program helps students recognize their strengths and weaknesses as well as how they prefer to learn. The ultimate goal is to educate students on their needs so they can ask for the supports they need to be successful.

At Stone Spring Elementary, we have used the I'm Determined program for many years with our students with Autism, and we have seen great success. But why limit the benefits of I'm Determined to just students with disabilities? These strategies can benefit ALL students. This year, we expanded the program. We started by having two students who have worked with the I'm Determined program, Jack and Yuseuf, lead a staff development session with all teachers. Jack and Yuseuf shared how I'm Determined helped them learn about themselves and develop confidence in their abilities. They then assisted the teachers in creating a One-Pager. A One-Pager is a way for students to identify

their strengths, weaknesses, likes, and learning preferences. Completing One-Pagers helps students learn about themselves and provides valuable information to teachers about their students. Jack and Yuseuf were excellent teachers! As Jack stated, "The student became the master."

After the training, kindergarten teachers completed One-Pagers with their students. Students enjoyed the process and teachers learned a lot about their students. Information from the One-Pagers was shared at parent-teacher conferences. Many parents were excited to hear what their child feels about their learning preferences in their own words. To continue our I'm Determined journey, we will explore Good Day Plans. Good Day Plans help students identify what is needed for them to have a good day and who can help them when they are not. Ultimately, our goal is for every child at Stone Spring to be determined about their learning!



*Kindergartner Tilly explaining her One-Pager to Mrs. Warburton*

**HARRISONBURG  
EDUCATION  
FOUNDATION**

**2017 Annual Gala and Auction  
A Night of March Madness**

March 25, 2017 at 7:00 pm

[More info and tickets](#)

## THMS *PE, TPSR Style!*

One of the HCPS Division Goals focuses on the concept of Social and Emotional learning. We believe a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for every member of the HCPS community is critical to student learning.

- The development of pro-social skills through social-emotional learning will be a part of every student’s school experience.
- Social-emotional learning will be integrated into curriculum and instruction daily.

In support of this goal, THMS is engaged in implementing TPSR (Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility) through physical activity.

TPSR is a curriculum and instructional model developed by Don Hellison, Professor Emeritus at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The practical effectiveness of the model lies in its unique approach to empowering students to improve their social/emotional awareness and their academic progress. Physical activity is used as a vehicle to teach students various life skills that they can practice in the gym and transfer to other settings such as school, community, and home life.

The primary goals of the model, often referred to as Levels of Responsibility:

Level 5: Outside	Be a role model outside the gym!
Level 4: Caring	Listening and responding to others. Helping peers in need. Inner strength and courage to resist peer pressure.
Level 3: Self-Direction	On-task independence. Goal-setting progression.
Level 2: Participation	Self-motivation. Effort - try new tasks. Keep going when the going gets tough!
Level 1: Respect	Self-control and respect the rights and feelings of others. Right to peaceful conflict resolution. Right to be included and to have cooperative peers.

## ***THMS, con't.***

### **What teaching strategies support the model?**

The model outlines six instructional strategies that contribute to the development of responsibility. These strategies are **awareness, experience, choice, problem-solving, self-reflection, and counseling time.**

### **Summary**

The TPSR Model offers teachers a wonderful framework for their teaching. The model offers students guidelines for their behavior, outlines expectations, and invites greater participation in learning. By being empowered, students learn self-control. By changing our thinking about behaviors, we are creating positive learning environments that enrich the lives of students, both within the school and in the community. Ask a THMS student about TPSR!



### Upcoming Events

- March 21: School Board Meeting – City Council Chambers – 7:00 pm**
- March 31: No School for Students**
- April 4: School Board Meeting – City Council Chambers – 7:00 pm**
- April 10-14: No School – Spring Holiday**
- April 18: School Board Work Session – School Board Office – 5:30 pm**

## Smithland Watch DOGS

This year the home-school relations committee at Smithland Elementary implemented a new program called Watch DOGS with two goals in mind. First, we wanted to help parents, specifically fathers, become more involved in their child's education and the overall school community. Second, we thought it would be a great opportunity for all of our students to interact with positive male role models who value education.

The Watch DOGS (**D**ads **O**f **G**reat **S**tudents) program is organized by the National Center for Fathering and provides an avenue for dads to play an active role in their children's day-to-day education. Through this program, fathers volunteer for an entire day in their child's school to help in the classroom, cafeteria, and at recess. However, their simple presence in the school is perhaps even more important than the assistance they provide to teachers and staff. By physically attending school for a day, they show that they are invested in their child and believe in the importance of education.



At our school, we began by hosting a father-student pizza night in order to build interest and excitement for the program. When the families arrived, they sat down to enjoy dinner together and then the students



transitioned to the gym to participate in some fun activities. While the children were playing, dads were presented with information about the Watch DOGS program and why it had the potential to be so valuable at Smithland. At the end of the presentation, the fathers had an opportunity to sign up for a date on which they would like to be a Watch DOG. That night, around 200 people attended the event and enough interest was generated to provide our school with at least one Watch DOG every week through Winter Break.

Thus far it has been a great experience for our students, fathers, and faculty. Dads have left the building exhausted from their day, but with closer relationships to their children and a new appreciation for what our teachers do every day. Additionally, our students have been filled with pride as they show their dads what life is like at Smithland and the great work that they do. Other students, many of whom do not have male role models in their lives, have benefitted from interacting with the caring male figures our program has brought into the school. The Watch DOGS program has proved to be a valuable addition to what was already a positive, supportive, and safe environment at Smithland Elementary.

Highlighting Excellence in Harrisonburg City Public Schools



Photos by Bob Adamek