

The Climb

Jacob's Ladder, Inc.®

Summer 2020

One rung at a time

JACOB'S LADDER &

The COVID-19 Challenge

The Jacob's Ladder Climber family was FINALLY able to come together for three "Field Days" in July at the Watermen's Museum in Yorktown, VA. Jacob's Ladder staff, RA's, families, and Climbers gathered for food, fellowship, and fun. Relay races, beach seining, team building, and writing "welcome letters" to soon-to-be new Climbers filled out the time. Social Distancing was the order of the day, with Climbers each carrying a hula hoop to help maintain adequate distance (despite the overwhelming urge to reconnect with their Climber brothers and sisters). Climbers and families as far away as Waynesboro came to celebrate.

Palmer Castrodale High School Advocate

Many cherished traditions look very different for 2020 including graduations. On July 19, Jacob's Ladder was happy to honor Climbers who recently graduated, remotely or otherwise. We invited all Climbers who have completed the Jacob's Ladder summer program, and honored those who have graduated this year from high school and college. The graduates received a small gift to recognize their achievements and announced their future plans to the crowd. What a special group we have! Support for our middle and high school-aged Climbers will look different in the coming year, as well. Our interactions will be largely virtual, since many schools will not be meeting in person. Jacob's Ladder hopes to have regular events, either in person or online, to continue our mission of providing support and enrichment to gifted students. As always, Jacob's Ladder is a family that grows and

changes together. We can weather this period of uncertainty and become stronger in the process!

CHIC SILVER HONORED

The Board of Jacob's Ladder, honored Charles "Chic" Silver for more than 21 years of service on the Board of Directors. Board Chair, Bruce Hemp, articulated Chic's many contributions to the organization, stating: "Chic has helped Jacob's Ladder grow into the life-changing program it is today. Over the past 21 years, he served as Secretary/Treasurer, on the Finance and Board Development committees, and helped lead mission trips to Guatemala and service projects here at home in Virginia." The Board further honored Chic's service to Jacob's Ladder by creating the "Chic Silver Service Day". This will be a day where our Jacob's Ladder "Climbers" complete a community service project as part of their enrichment and learning experiences. Chic has been invited to continue to serve on the Board in an honorary capacity being voted the organization's first "Board Director Emeritus."



Executive Director Emeritus, Aubrey Hall presents retiring Jacob's Ladder Board Member "Chic" Silver with a plaque honoring his 21 years of service to Jacob's Ladder.

NAP APPROVAL

Jacob's Ladder has been approved by Virginia's Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) participant for FY 2020-2021. In order for a donation to qualify for NAP tax credits, a minimum donation of \$500 for an individual or \$616 for a business must be received by Jacob's Ladder. A tax credit of 55% will be applied.

WHERE YOUR DONATIONS GO

Although we were unable to hold the residential portion of the summer enrichment camp due to COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions, the second key element of our model, the year-round mentorship and advocacy arm, remains vital. Your donation will be used to support enrichment activities scheduled throughout the year, despite the challenges of containing the virus.

CONGRATS TO JL GRADS!

College: Virginia Climbers:

- Samantha Blankenship
Univ of South Carolina, Cum Laude
St. Margaret's School, Marketing
- Lorin Johnson
Randolph-Macon College
Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School
Graduate Assistant Office
- Zoie McMillian, VATEch, Cum Laude
BS Degree Animal Science
Psychology Minor
Admitted into Master's Program
Animal & Avian Sciences Dept
Univ of Maryland (full assistantship)
- Jessica White
VCU; Graduate December, 2019
- Darrell Woodard
UNC-Chapel Hill; Sports Medicine

College: North Carolina Climbers

- Olivia Brown
Meredith College
- DeTrea Smith
Woodberry Forest School
North Carolina Central University

High School: Virginia Climbers

- Joey Berry (moved)
Wesclin High School, IL
- Kayleigh Bristow
Essex High, Co-Salutatorian
ODU – Fall
- Tyler Derozen
Fishburn Military Academy
VA State – Fall
- Meghan Gilmer
King William HS, Co-Valedictorian
UVA – Fall
- Marcella Leonard-Jackson
Collegiate School
Point Park College, PA - Fall
- Evan Johnson
Lancaster High School
JMU – Fall
- Kadosa Schaffer
Wilson High School, 2 Yrs. Early
- MeKayla Barmore
I.C. Norcom High School, 1 Yr. Early
Norfolk State – Fall
- Rylee Ocker
Atlee High School, 1 Yr. Early
Longwood University – Fall

Jacob's Ladder is a pro-active enrichment program serving children who are gifted and at risk for over 29 years.

Climber Field Day-Watermen's Museum



"For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord; plans for good and not for evil, to give you a hope and a future." – Jeremiah 29:11

IS IT WORTH IT?

Caleb Selph has earned two diplomas from UVA; a Bachelor of Arts (with distinction) and Master of Teaching. He has moved to his new Alexandria studio apartment and will begin teaching Social Studies at a middle school in Washington, D.C. Those who know Caleb share this proud feeling. There is NO DOUBT that his 5 years as a Climber, JL follow-up in high school, and summers working as a RA all contributed to this major accomplishment. He is now a successful and confident young man starting a very noble profession. Plus, he can SING! I couldn't be prouder. And, yes, it's worth it!

JoAnne Ruffa, Advocacy/Counselor

Oryan Law is a Music (piano) Major at Elizabeth City State University. He was a Climber in the JL program for 4 years. He is so respectful, so joyful, so appreciative of his opportunities. Oryan recounted many past summer camp memories and addressed the impact of those experiences early on. Then, he threw out a statement, "JL breeds winners." Yes, JL is a breeding ground for winners, for greatness, for successes.

JoAnne Ruffa, Advocacy/Counselor

Coming up ... Oct & Nov

JACOB'S LADDER

27th Annual Golf Classic



On Monday, October 19, 2020 Jacob's Ladder will hold its 27th annual Golf Classic at the Golden Eagle Golf Course in Irvington, VA. **ALL** proceeds go toward the summer enrichment camp. Sign up on line at www.jladder.org and bring a friend to support a worthy cause!



JACOB'S LADDER

10th Annual Oyster Tasting

Sunday, November 1, 2020

Details to follow

Dr. David Niebuhr

Executive Director

Wow. What. A. Year!

The COVID crisis has presented us with challenges...cancellations of our Climber Spring Retreat and Summer Enrichment Camp, the disruption of our prospective Climber interviews and family meetings, and even the delay of our long-standing Jacob's Ladder Golf Classic...yet, we persevere!

While we are saddened that camp did not happen this year...we are excited that, after speaking with our Climber families, we will now be able to offer an **entire year** of extra enrichment activities to our Climbers. We anticipate offering an enrichment program at least once each month (and perhaps twice in some months) for our Climbers. These programs will be offered for small groups, in regional locations, and simultaneously shared with the other locations using interactive video technologies. JL staff will be on-site for the remote locations in order to facilitate participation, distribute materials, and connect with Climbers.

To kick off our expanded programming, we just completed three Jacob's Ladder Field Days of friendship, fellowship, and fun with our Climbers. On Saturday, July 11, all current Climbers met for a "field day," on Sunday, July 19, we celebrated our Climber graduates and alumni, and on Saturday, July 25, we welcomed 15 brand new Climbers with games, get-to-know-you activities, and friendly competitions. Climbers were thrilled to see one another and welcome their new friends into the Jacob's Ladder family.

We are currently working with our supporters to determine the best possible allocation of 2020 resources and grants and have begun to request funds to support our expanded programming in the fall and into 2021. We accept our challenges as opportunities, and we continue to CLIMB!

In these times, we need to go digital. Please provide your current email address on the enclosed donation card.