

The Climber

Fall/Winter 2021

Jacob's Ladder, Inc.®

One rung at a time

JACOB'S LADDER

11th ANNUAL OYSTER TASTING

Watermen's Museum
November 7, 2021

The weather was brisk with a stiff breeze off the water. It was indeed Oyster Tasting weather! The location was lovely (oysters served right on the banks of the York River), and the assembly of friends, old and new, made the day complete. In addition to oysters served up by our willing volunteers, there was Brunswick Stew, clam chowder, slaw, and hushpuppies to round out the menu. Music was provided by Gary Archer. We'd like to extend a special thanks to our premium sponsor, Davenport & Company, for underwriting this event, and to all of our loyal donors. There were 74 who made it to the tasting – though, sadly, some poor souls had to turn back due to traffic issues on the Gloucester side of the Coleman Bridge. We hope to see you all next year, and tell your friends!



UPCOMING EVENT

29th ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC
Monday, May 16, 2022
The Golden Eagle

Jacob's Ladder, established in 1991, is a proactive enrichment program serving children who are gifted and at risk.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Ashley Tomlinson

Alumni Climber- Class of 1999

After graduating from Virginia Tech in 2007 with a BS degree in Psychology, Ashley found her passion in the field of mental health and worked at the bachelor's level with children experiencing severe emotional and behavioral challenges. This led to a Master of Social Work degree at the University of Chicago. Here, she had opportunities to work in clinical research and present at national conferences. With an MSW in hand, Ashley and her husband relocated to his hometown of Philadelphia, where she worked at the University of Pennsylvania on a research study focused on understanding the social/mental health implications of cutting-edge genomic technology. While interesting, she found herself tremendously missing the opportunity to work directly with children and their families and made the transition to school-based social work. Currently, she supervises a school-based team of social service professionals in the School District of Philadelphia and provides trauma-focused therapy. Her work also provides training to education professionals to promote trauma responsiveness in schools, helping teachers and school staff members understand the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) and learn strategies for working with trauma-impacted children. Most recently, Ashley has launched a private psychotherapy practice. She is grateful to Jacob's Ladder for providing inspiration and perspective-broadening opportunities so early in her life and has fond memories of her time as a Climber, especially the enrichment courses and field trips. Ashley relates, "I think one of the things that had the biggest impact

on me was the theater class and the play we did (I love theater to this day.), as well as a really wonderful cooking class! I also took a class that involved field trips to sites around Virginia, such as the Richmond Holocaust Museum. The senior hiking trip at St. Mary's Trail was also really memorable. Mostly it was just great to be with other gifted kids and be encouraged to explore new interests, and splashing in the giant mud pit in the field at Christchurch School after a week of rain. I know that my family could not have afforded the experiences I had at Jacob's Ladder and am so thankful to have had the opportunity."

"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

Ashley Ward

Alumni Climber- Class of 2003

Ashley Ward, formerly of Portsmouth, landed a role in Hallmark's *Christmas in Harmony*. The show aired on October 29.



Ashley writes, "It's difficult to explain to people who haven't had the Jacob's Ladder experience how impactful and meaningful my years as a Climber have been. There's no need to explain it to my parents or sibling because it's as if my entire family reaped the benefits of my involvement. The four-hour drive to drop me off at camp every summer was a road trip. Leaving Portsmouth behind and traveling to Chatham was at first a major shock, but over the years my favorite memories took place in that little town. Mr. and Mrs. Hall taught me how to balance my checkbook and even write my first check. I will never forget getting a crash course in how to do my own laundry and the importance of punctuality to the dining hall. "Seek ye

first the kingdom of GOD and his righteousness" will always be my favorite song from chapel and a rule to live by. I could talk forever about French, math class, the Friday night dances, and taking care of the horses. All of these memories, too many to share, fill my heart with joy. I am grateful that GOD gifted me with the Jacob's Ladder experience. Discipline, integrity, the importance of education, and a strong foundation in Jesus Christ were just a few of the life lessons I learned from Jacob's Ladder. Though every Climber has their own experience, I know we share these common threads, and because of that, we will always be connected."

From the Outgoing Board Chair

Bruce Hemp

Dear friends,

After a second stint chairing the board of Jacob's Ladder, I am thrilled to turn the reins over to an enthusiastic and very capable younger member of the board. I have full confidence in Charlie Vaughters and will support his ideas and efforts as he leads Jacob's Ladder into new territory. Sometimes change is hard, but at this time I relish the thought of fresh ideas and new leaves being turned over. Therefore, it is not with sadness that I step down from leading the board of directors, but with a sense of rejuvenation and new direction. I will continue to wholeheartedly support the program because I believe in the extraordinary benefits it has, not only on the Climbers, but on their entire families. Once again, change has its benefits and the change I have witnessed in the Climbers as they mature from middle school children to young adults and even to board members is so very rewarding. Please join me in supporting Jacob's Ladder with your end of the year gift.

From the Incoming Board Chair

Charlie Vaughters

As incoming Chairman of the Board and Head of our Executive Director search process, I want everyone in the Jacob's Ladder family to know that our leadership team believes strongly in our incoming Executive Director, Catherine

Coggeshall. We are excited about the experience, talents, and enthusiasm she will bring to our organization. In the coming days and months, we expect that you all will be seeing and hearing a lot from Catherine and hope that you will not hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions or comments. Change is always challenging, but it brings with it new opportunities and excitement. We are thrilled to have Catherine leading our organization moving forward. Please welcome her with open arms.

From the Exec's Desk

Catherine Coggeshall



As a Virginia native, I have spent the last eight years in the Midwest. I attended Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana and in 2017

graduated with a Bachelor's in Elementary Education and an endorsement in Exceptional Needs: Mild Intervention. I moved to Chicago, Illinois where I spent two years working as a Special Education Resource Teacher. As an educator, I believe that each student should have access to quality education in a well-managed place that makes them feel safe and comfortable. I believe it is a teacher's job to excite students, support them, and ultimately teach them how to become responsible and independent. I am a firm believer that teachers are to help students find themselves and their place in this world. In 2019, I returned to school in South Bend, Indiana and obtained my Masters of Autism Studies from Saint Mary's College in 2020, followed by a Masters of Nonprofit Administration from the University of Notre Dame in 2021. I am thrilled to be back down South after enduring those brutal Midwest winters and excited to start my new role as Executive Director of Jacob's Ladder. I am overjoyed to be welcomed into the Jacob's Ladder family and cannot wait to see what this year has in store.

*From all of us at Jacob's Ladder,
Merry Christmas!*