



THE HEART OF THE MISSION...

I recently had the pleasure of traveling to Ohio to visit our dear friends and founders, the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine. When I asked them what it meant that Healthy Learners' mission is in "THE SPIRIT OF THE SISTERS OF CHARITY," my heart burned with excitement and inspiration as they told me the story. It meant traveling to America from France without friends, money, or connections, but with a deep desire to share God's love with *hurting people* in the 1850's. It meant caring for *orphans* and unwed *pregnant mothers* in the 1870's when society threw them away as trash to suffer. It meant being a part of starting *Alcoholics Anonymous*, being the first hospital to view excessive drinking as not just a moral problem, but a deep-seated addiction worthy of patient care and treatment rather than societal resentment and isolation. It meant being one of the earliest advocates and hospitals in South Carolina to accept *African American* patients before the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It meant being at the tip of the spear serving *HIV/AIDS victims* in the 1990's.

It means caring for *vulnerable children* struggling with their health, desperately seeking to succeed in school with blurry eyes, chronic dental pain, labored breath, or debilitating anxiety. Children with no options to address their health needs. Together, we are here for them and their families. Together, we live out the spirit of the Sisters of Charity St. Augustine with **LOVE** and **COMPASSION**.



Christian Markle
Director of Development



UNLEASHING A PASSION...

When you talk with Eli, chances are he'll ask you which is cooler, Batman or Superman. Eli is a quiet high school senior, passionate about art and music. He plays clarinet in the high school marching band, loves discussing the artistic styles and story elements of Marvel and DC comics, and is truly a superhero himself. Eli has battled the villains of vision loss and dental pain all throughout his high school years, yet he still triumphed.

When he participated in a vision and dental screening with Healthy Learners this summer, it was discovered he had 20/500 vision, meaning Eli saw something 20 feet away with the same clarity that a person with 20/20 saw 500 feet away – and he had never owned a pair of glasses. He also had 11 cavities, 5 of which were very serious and needed root canals. Eli has had many sidekicks on his journey: his mom loves him deeply and is passionate about Eli's educational success. She works in the school district. He also has had some amazing teachers who helped him along the way. However, with Eli being accepted at SC State University starting in 2024, he needed help confronting these villains his community struggled to address alone – All for his solo mission of succeeding in college. Just like when Captain America and Iron Man teamed up, Healthy Learners joined Eli's team to ensure he received corrective vision, coordinated care of his oral health, and radioed into Eli's mom to ensure Eli could fly into the sunset, his villains conquered for good. Eli is now ready to start his own origin story. He plans on getting a degree in early childhood education and becoming a teacher – unleashing a passion to serve students, inspire hope, and transform futures.



HEARTS OF SERVICE...



In 2022-23, our AmeriCorps Members helped screen and served **11,782** children across South Carolina.

"Your dedication to positively impacting your community has been truly inspiring. We wish you all a bright and prosperous future ahead!" - Tennia Walker

LOVE MULTIPLIED...

When you visit one of our local elementary schools, you may meet Ebony. She is an outgoing 5th-grade Principal's Ambassador on the A-B honor roll with dreams of being a video game creator. As she gives you the school tour, you feel like you've instantly made a friend. However, if you rewind to 2nd grade, Ebony's life looked quite different. Growing up with her single mom, grandmother, and three siblings, life was beautiful and challenging. Ebony's family moved around a lot to find sustainable housing. Ebony spent most days with her grandmother while her mom worked at a local cleaning company to pay the bills. Ebony enjoyed school, but she was dealing with a nagging problem that impacted her focus, confidence, and ability to learn: her teeth hurt - a lot. She confided in her grandmother, but with no access to transportation and being new to the area, finding a trusted dental provider, setting up an appointment, and getting there seemed insurmountable. Both Ebony and her grandmother needed help. They were connected to Healthy Learners through their school's nurse. Ebony had six deep cavities and needed three crowns and three extractions. After four appointments and many hours of coordinated care, Ebony could smile again.



Over the last three years, there have been many ups and downs on Ebony's healthcare journey, but because of you, we've been able to address every challenge, giving Ebony the space to thrive. Her confidence has soared, her grades have improved, and she is serving her school and community with the same love and compassion she has received. In the words of St. Augustine, "One loving heart sets another on fire."



BUILD A FUTURE...



← - - - Give FIVE to help her THRIVE

Join us in transforming futures monthly. Your \$5 gift can provide three students per month with a vision screening, their first step towards a healthier future.

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