



# Achieving Excellence Together

A century of community  
partnership with  
Alamance County



**ELON**  
UNIVERSITY





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## A CENTURY OF PARTNERSHIP

Dear Friends of Elon University,

A century ago, when a devastating fire in Main Building threatened to destroy a fledgling Elon College, residents of Alamance County came together to help build a new foundation and create the vision for the thriving academic institution that is Elon University today.

In the 100 years since the fire of 1923, working in partnership with Alamance County has been a hallmark of Elon University's mission. Together we have created programs, connections, relationships and collaborations that enrich the quality of life in Alamance County and enhance this vibrant community. Operating side by side in an atmosphere of mutual respect, we have been able to provide local children with access to academic support and pathways to success, to offer medical care for those who need it most, to grow the local business community with internships and professional development opportunities, and to create opportunities for the people of this community to gather for cultural events and activities.

As you read about the many connections between Elon University and Alamance County, I invite you to take a few moments to reflect on what we have accomplished, and to think about how we continue forward with the next 100 years of achieving excellence together.

Thank you for continuing to partner with us to build a stronger and better Elon University and Alamance County.

With gratitude,

Connie L. Book, President







## An Education Odyssey

*“My senior year was made a little bit better knowing that I was ultimately prepared for the college process and also knowing that I had a support system at Elon Academy.”*

—Jose Alex Reyes '25

Elon's Center for Access and Success has been a part of Alamance County native Jose Alex Reyes' academic journey since elementary school, when he participated in the "It Takes a Village" Project, a district-wide tutoring program spearheaded by the center. Young Reyes received tutoring from Elon students, which helped shape his curiosity about and interest in reading.

Through the Village Project, Reyes learned about Elon Academy, a college access and success program for academically promising high school students in Alamance County with financial need and/or no family history of college. Given his rewarding experience with the Village Project, it was unsurprising when he applied and was accepted into Elon Academy as well.

"My senior year was made a little bit better knowing that I was ultimately prepared for the college process and also knowing that I had a support system at Elon Academy, that they were there for me in any capacity," Reyes said when he entered Elon as an Odyssey Program scholar in fall 2021. He received the Leon V. and Lorraine B. Watson Scholarship, which supports academically talented students from North Carolina high schools.

Reyes is currently most excited about his work with Periclean Scholars, an Elon organization dedicated to civic engagement. He has also loved going back to his roots by performing community service in Alamance County through the

Latinx-Hispanic Union and other local organizations. His priority is intentionality in his service and learning more about himself through these new experiences.

"I've never forgotten about [the Village Project, Elon Academy and the Odyssey Program], and I am so appreciative of everything that has come from it," Reyes said. "Had I not done all three programs, I would most definitely not be at Elon, and I'm so happy for that."

## Center for Access and Success at a Glance

### "It Takes a Village" Project

Launched 13 years ago, the "It Takes a Village" Project is a tutoring program for academically challenged elementary school students. Parents, Elon volunteers and local educators collaborate in weekly tutoring sessions, prioritizing academic improvement in 12 local schools.

### Elon Academy

The Elon Academy is a free program that supports academically promising high school students in Alamance County. It offers summer residential experiences, Saturday programs and a Transitions to College Program. Graduates receive ongoing support through college.

### Odyssey Program

This is a merit-based program for incoming college students with demonstrated financial need. Students selected for the program are recipients of prestigious scholarships, a third of which give preference to students from Alamance County, Guilford County or North Carolina.

### iBELONG Male Mentoring Program

iBELONG Male Mentoring provides mentorship to increase persistence, retention and graduation rates of first- and second-year minority male students on campus. It also connects students to relevant events and forums.



Opposite page, top: Jose Alex Reyes '25 (second from right) participating in the "It Takes a Village" Project as a child. Opposite page, bottom: Reyes today as an Elon student. Left: Students engage in conversations about issues impacting young men of color while receiving free haircuts from local barbers at the first iBELONG Male Mentoring Program Barbershop Talk.

## BY THE NUMBERS

Impact of Elon programs on Alamance County students

**241**

local students currently attend Elon

**\$1.4M+**

given in scholarships to local students in the 2023-24 academic year

**25**

current local Odyssey Program scholars

**1,000**

elementary students impacted by the "It Takes a Village" Project in 2022-23

**400+**

Elon Academy scholars to date

**207**

ABSS classroom teachers attended Elon University

**#1**  
**UNDERGRADUATE TEACHING**

U.S. News & World Report 2022-2024





During her time in the program, Collegiate Start@Elon graduate Nidhi Khiatani (left) and Associate Professor of Education Lisa Buchanan co-authored a paper that was published in the journal *Social Studies and the Young Learner*.

## A Head Start on a College Education

Collegiate Start@Elon is a dual enrollment program designed to provide high school seniors with the opportunity to simultaneously enroll in both high school and college courses and receive dual high school and college credit. An average of 75 students participate in the program each year, which provides advanced academic options for high-achieving high school seniors in more than 40 courses.

Students enrolled in Collegiate Start@Elon are eligible to take up to two college-level courses each fall and spring academic semester, earning up to 16 college credits before they graduate from high school. Collegiate Start students have access to all academic resources and student support services, including the library, writing/tutoring center, computer laboratories and an academic adviser.

"Collegiate Start@Elon provides local high school seniors the opportunity to experience critical and engaged learning at the college level while simultaneously allowing the students to connect with the Elon University community in an authentic and meaningful way," said Lesley Henry, director of Collegiate Start@Elon. "Over the past 35-plus years, this program has proven to be a springboard for success in the students' future college careers."

## A Pipeline for Local Educators

The Alamance Scholars Program, a partnership among Elon University, Alamance Community College and the Alamance-Burlington School System, was designed to address the shortage of teachers in local schools and to enhance the racial and ethnic diversity of educators in area classrooms.

The initiative's goal is to attract students with financial need from across a variety of backgrounds who desire to earn a degree in education and make an impact in their hometowns in Alamance County. To date, four students have enrolled in the program.

High school students begin as members of the ABSS Teacher Cadet Program and continue their studies to earn an associate degree at Alamance Community College in the Teacher Preparation Program. Following their

high school and ACC graduations, students are eligible to enroll at Elon University with a pathway to graduate without debt. Students may pursue a bachelor's degree in elementary, middle grades or secondary education with possible specialization in pre-kindergarten, special education or teaching English as a second language. Upon graduation from Elon, Alamance Scholars are guaranteed employment within the Alamance-Burlington School System.



## A Commitment to Lifelong Learning



Top: Elon NEXT students participate in a cybersecurity course. Bottom: Community members learn about pottery from Burlington artists during a Life@Elon class.

As the national leader in experiential and engaged learning, Elon University understands the value of meaningful education at all phases of life. Elon NEXT: Professional & Continuing Education extends the university's teaching and research expertise to the public through innovative, flexible programming to meet the educational needs of the community.

Elon NEXT learners earn continuing education units through in-person and online learning modules in topics including cybersecurity, personal finance, data analytics, entrepreneurship, leadership, digital marketing and more. Courses are for anyone in the community looking for in-demand skills to differentiate themselves in the labor market, interested in advancing or changing their career, or simply valuing a life of learning.

"The Microsoft Excel course through

Elon NEXT deepened my understanding of an essential tool in my daily work," said Carrie Ryan, an Elon alumna and staff member. "It was an investment in both personal and professional growth that led to increased productivity and more informed decision making."

Elon also offers the Life@Elon program, which provides non-credit intellectual enrichment to people ages 50 and older. The lifelong learning community features weekly presentations on a variety of different topics, conducted in an engaging format. There are 12 weekly classes offered per semester (fall and spring) which are taught by current and retired Elon faculty and staff members, other area educators, and presenters chosen by Curriculum Committee volunteers.

Session topics have ranged from the modern history of Ukraine, the opioid crisis and the media's role in shaping politics to the cathedrals of Europe, the music of Frank Sinatra and the art of storytelling. In addition to stimulating classes, Life@Elon participants have access to book clubs and special interest groups, domestic and international group travel, discounted and complimentary tickets to university events, borrowing privileges at Belk Library and more.

"Life@Elon was just what I needed to become part of the community," said Candace Ransing, a Life@Elon member since 2021. "I've met engaging students from Elon and made new friends through the classes. It's like a family reunion when we all come back together and welcome new members."





Above: More than 340 Elon students completed practicums or student teaching in the Alamance-Burlington School System in 2022-23. Right: Elon faculty and staff hold an annual school supply drive for ABSS.

### School Supplies for Children in Need

For more than 10 years, Elon faculty and staff have donated thousands of needed school supplies to children in the Alamance-Burlington School System. The school supply drive takes place the week before fall semester classes begin, with collection boxes placed throughout campus. The ABSS Student Support Services team supports hundreds of children and families experiencing homelessness and provides Elon with a list of their most-needed school supplies and personal care items each year. In 2023, the drive yielded 30 large boxes of supplies for 540 children.

### Supporting Latinx Education

LatinxEd, a North Carolina-based educational and equity leadership organization, is hosted on Elon's campus. LatinxEd was founded in 2018 by Elaine Utin and Ricky Hurtado, who both faced obstacles as they sought out higher education opportunities as high school students from Latinx immigrant families. The organization has developed initiatives that connect practice to policy and engage in systemic change to improve public education.

### A New Generation of Educators

New to Elon, Teach for Alamance is a program that grants Elon Education graduates the opportunity to earn their master's degree at Elon for free if they teach in Alamance County for two years after graduation. The Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education had more than 340 students do practicums or student teaching in the Alamance-Burlington School System during the 2022-23 academic year.



Above: The Elon Explorers science enrichment program. Below: The Freedom Scholars summer residential program.

### Change Agents

In partnership with the Teagle Foundation's "Knowledge for Freedom" initiative, Freedom Scholars is a free initiative that supports local high school students from underserved populations who want to attend college and be difference makers. The program includes a two-week summer intensive residential experience with monthly programming throughout the year. During that time, Freedom Scholars work collaboratively with a civic-leader mentor and Elon student mentors.

### Cultivating Young Leaders

The Alamance Youth Leadership Academy empowers local youth through civic engagement and leadership development with support from Elon's Center for Leadership and the Alamance

County Chamber of Commerce. The free two-year program exposes participating seventh and eighth graders to the power of leadership by honing skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving. AYLA connects students from numerous middle schools to foster local connections.

### Adventures in STEM

Elon Explorers is a summer science enrichment program for middle school students. The week-long camp is designed to make science, technology, engineering and math education more interesting and accessible and to show students how rewarding and enlightening STEM research can be. Thanks to a grant from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, students also participate in year-round programming.







## Spreading Hope

*“We’re striving to address health care disparities, particularly in the part of the county that has such a significant discrepancy in life expectancy.”*

—Crystal Ramsey, assistant professor of physical therapy education and faculty adviser for the HOPE Clinic

Above: Elon Doctor of Physical Therapy students volunteering at the HOPE Clinic.

The Health Outreach Program of Elon (HOPE) is a student-managed pro bono organization that offers physical therapy services to uninsured or under-insured people in Alamance County and surrounding areas. Opened 10 years ago by the Elon Doctor of Physical Therapy program, the weekly clinic now serves the community in two locations, the Gerald L. Francis Center on Elon’s campus and CityGate Dream Center. “We’re striving to address health care disparities, particularly in the part of the county that has such a significant discrepancy in life expectancy,” said Crystal Ramsey, assistant professor of physical therapy education.

As the faculty adviser and one of the volunteer clinicians for HOPE, Ramsey has seen the program’s impact firsthand. Over the past six months, that impact has grown exponentially, with the clinic seeing 66 patient visits and 235 volunteer hours. “We’re providing services to individuals who have been marginalized by traditional health care systems,” she said. “We provide them with exceptional care, as well as trying to shift the narrative and the perspective that they’ve had about health care systems.”

While HOPE is supervised by local practitioners, students engage in practical experiences, from initial scheduling to aiding clinicians with patients. Ultimately, the clinic is a community endeavor. “We had a gentleman that required two of us to stand when he started, and he’s graduated from therapy and he is now walking without an assistive device,” Ramsey said. “It wasn’t just me as the clinician; it was the students. It was the students who got him scheduled. It was members of the Dream Center who (literally) helped him get in the door.”

## Opening Doors for Quality Care

Since 2013, Elon’s Physician Assistant Student Society has focused its philanthropic efforts on the Open Door Clinic of Alamance County, a free clinic serving more than 500 county residents with no other source of medical care. In many years, Elon PA students have volunteered over 400 annual hours of service to the clinic.

To help fill the clinic’s widening financial gap, the students created a superhero-themed 5K/10K race, The Great Cape Escape, in 2015, with proceeds benefitting the Open Door Clinic. In 2022, the event was revamped as the Great Golf Getaway, raising \$14,400 to advance access to medical care for the uninsured. To date, the PA Student Society has raised more than \$130,000 net proceeds benefitting the clinic between the two events. In many years, the total raised has been enough to pay for all the medications needed by all of the Open Door Clinic’s patients for a full year.

“It’s an honor for Elon’s PA program to be part of a team dedicated to bridging the health care access gap for the medically underserved in Alamance County,” said Gabriella DeCoste, an Elon physician assistant studies student.



The Great Golf Getaway for Open Door Clinic

## Health Initiatives at a Glance

### Start Early in Medicine

Elon’s School of Health Sciences launched the Start Early in Medicine initiative to combat the decline of Black Americans pursuing careers in medicine. The program exposes middle and high school students to health care careers. It aligns with Alamance Community College’s Medical Bridge program, encouraging minority males to pursue dentistry, medicine and other fields and fostering early interest in health care professions.

### Alamance Wellness Collaborative

The Alamance Wellness Collaborative engages partners across Alamance County to develop and implement strategies that promote active living, healthy eating and other opportunities

for current and future residents to improve their health. Members include key leaders from planning, public health, business, parks and recreation, nonprofit organizations and education, including Elon University.

### H.E.R. Lab

Founded by Elon University Department of Public Health Studies faculty members Stephanie Baker and Yanica Faustin, the Health, Equity and Racism (H.E.R.) Lab examines health care systems and outcomes in marginalized communities and aims to address area health disparities. The lab’s work includes research, advocacy and education around race-based barriers to health care, including maternal and women’s health and environmental justice.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**1,885**

patient treatments at the HOPE Clinic since 2015, facilitating more than **\$303,000** saved in medical costs for local residents

**788**

DPT student clinician volunteer sessions at HOPE Clinic since 2015

**175**

licensed physical therapist volunteer sessions, for nearly **2,061** total hours supervising student clinicians at HOPE Clinic

**500**

Alamance County residents with no other source of medical care served by the Open Door Clinic

**\$133K**

raised for the Open Door Clinic through the Elon PA Student Society’s Great Cape Escape and Great Golf Getaway since 2015

**160**

future nurses currently being educated at Elon University





## Serving the Common Good

*“We try to enrich students to help build their résumés, and we think this helps diversify the way they see the world. They take their new lens back to campus, which helps Elon, our community and the world.”*

—Kristi Farrell, Burlington Animal Services

The importance of connecting with the local community is ingrained throughout Elon’s culture. Community-based learning takes place in many academic courses across campus, and service is a common thread through student organizations, athletic teams, and fraternities and sororities, anchored by the nationally recognized Kernodle Center for Civic Life.

The center serves as the convener of community-based engaged and experiential student learning opportunities in collaboration with faculty, staff and community partners to address the common good. The Kernodle Center connects Elon students, faculty and staff with service opportunities at nonprofits, schools and government agencies, and, in turn, those partners impart valuable knowledge about community assets, needs and social issues.

“Students have provided useful work and thoughtful ideas to our organization,” says Kristi Farrell of Burlington Animal Services. “They have offered work that we would not have otherwise had resources to accomplish. We try to enrich students to help build their résumés, and we think this helps diversify the way they see the world. They take their new lens back to campus, which helps Elon, our community and the world.”

More than 125 partner organizations work with the Kernodle Center, and university volunteers have completed more than 1 million hours of service to date. The center’s signature programs include:

- Community-Based Learning is an experiential education approach that involves reciprocal relationships, guided by the expertise of professors and community practitioners, to combine student learning with community needs as an integrated component of an academic course.
- Elon Volunteers! provides all students with opportunities to engage with diverse communities and actively contribute to civic life. The organization is run by more than 70 student leaders each year who coordinate opportunities that directly address areas such as affordable housing, food insecurity and education in the local community.
- Campus Kitchen volunteers take part in the weekly preparation and delivery of meals for local residents experiencing food insecurity in partnership with Elon Dining. Through a collaboration with the Center for Environmental Studies, students also harvest vegetables from Elon’s Loy Farm to use in meals and provide fresh produce to nonprofit organizations.
- Elon Votes! is a nonpartisan campus initiative that provides students with the necessary resources to vote and learn about issues at stake in local, state and national elections.
- Elon’s Habitat for Humanity chapter is one of the most active in the country due to its commitment to help build one house each academic year. Students perform a variety of tasks for each home, including constructing walls, laying shingles, installing siding and painting.



Opposite page: The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Alamance County. Above: Campus Kitchen’s meal packing event for Rise Against Hunger.

“The Kernodle Center for Civic Life facilitates collaborative work with students, faculty, staff and community partners to harness the transformative power of higher education to create a more just society,” said Bob Frigo, assistant dean of campus life and director of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life. “Our center inspires and prepares Elon to work with communities to help strengthen local assets and address challenges. In the process, we are teaching students to gain a deeper understanding of their civic responsibilities.”

## BY THE NUMBERS

In the 2022-23 academic year:

**78,002**  
total student service hours through the Kernodle Center

**130+**  
Elon Volunteers! student leaders

**76**  
courses taught by Elon faculty incorporating community-based learning

**41**  
Campus Alamance student interns

**32**  
Local Habitat for Humanity houses completed to date

**936**  
Elon employees living in Alamance County

**2,000+**  
Elon alumni living in Alamance County



# Local Partnerships, Transformative Internships



Top: Nailah Ware '26, left, shares a laugh while going over some work with her supervisor, Candy Snyder, at the United Way of Alamance County office in Burlington, where she worked as a 2023 summer intern through the Campus Alamance program. Right: Elon President Connie Ledoux Book (second from right) and other community leaders build a Habitat for Humanity home.

Establishing a sense of community was a top priority for Nailah Ware '26, a Crofton, Maryland, native, as she arrived at Elon University in the fall of 2022. As she looked to deepen her connections, the Campus Alamance internship program presented the perfect opportunity with United Way of Alamance County. "I want to be heavily involved in my community. At United Way, I have had opportunities to go on site visits with my supervisor and interact with different nonprofits in the community," Ware said. Elon's nationally recognized Student Professional Development Center and Kernodle Center for Civic Life launched the Campus Alamance summer internship program in summer 2021. This paid,

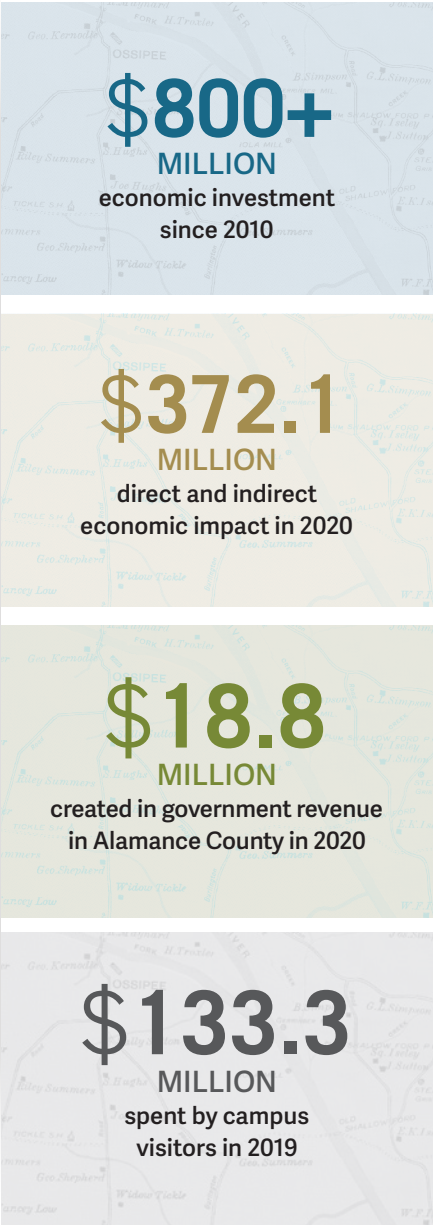
eight-week internship program, offered at no expense to the employers, partners businesses, nonprofit organizations and government entities in Alamance County with talented Elon University interns for a mutually beneficial experience. "Campus Alamance has helped expand [students'] horizons and their perspectives, not only for themselves and what they want to do long term, but also helping them to realize the opportunity and the possibilities that are right here around the Elon campus," says Robin Kazmarek, director of internships for the Martha and Spencer Love School of Business. The program addresses two of the most significant reasons why students forgo summer internships — lack of financial opportunity and access. It offers participating students a \$2,500 stipend, given by the university. One of the intentions of the program is to build a pipeline of talent for employers in the Alamance County area. The program has doubled in community participation, a direct response from Alamance County employers seeking to get involved with talented Elon students and hoping to retain them in the area after they graduate. "Somebody helped me along the way, so this is a way of giving back and helping students get to experience what real work is like," said Frances Lee, human resource manager with GKN Driveline. "I see it as a win-win for both parties."

# Fueling the local economy

For more than 130 years, Elon has been a significant contributor to the Alamance County economy. Since 2010, Elon has pursued the most transformative period in the university's history, making an investment of more than \$800 million. In the 2020 fiscal year, Elon generated \$372.1 million in direct and indirect economic impact in Alamance County, according to a report by consulting firm Tripp Umbach. The university's operations created more than \$18.8 million in government revenue in Alamance County, which includes the direct taxes paid to state and local government as well as additional indirect tax payments. In the 2019 fiscal year, Elon attracted 136,882 visitors to campus whose spending totaled \$133.3 million and generated \$17.5 million in government revenue. Elon is one of the four top employers in Alamance County, along with the Alamance-Burlington School System, LabCorp and Cone Health Alamance Regional Medical Center. One out of every 10 jobs in Alamance County is attributable to the university. As of the 2020 fiscal year, Elon operations supported 5,702 full-time and part-time jobs within Alamance County, including



1,782 direct jobs at the university along with 3,920 additional jobs maintained by other employers due to the university's operations in the county. **Staff Volunteerism** Elon University recognizes the importance of being a good corporate citizen and the responsibility to help our surrounding communities. Staff are encouraged to become involved in the community by volunteering with programs that positively impact the quality of life within these communities. Regular full-time staff are granted up to 16 hours of paid volunteer service leave per calendar year with one of the university's active community partners, which include education, government and nonprofit agencies throughout Alamance County. In the 2022-23 academic year, staff completed about 633 hours of service through the Alamance-Burlington School System, Habitat for Humanity of Alamance County, Special Olympics and more. Elon employees also volunteer to serve on many local boards, including the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce, the United Way of Alamance County and Impact Alamance. **Partners in Community** Elon is proud to be Alamance County's hometown university. The Partners Program is designed to better connect local businesses and Elon through a shared partnership in order to provide greater exposure to varied audiences. This free program signals to Elon faculty, staff, students, families and visitors that they are welcome customers at local businesses, and offers benefits to business owners.







Opposite page: The 2023-24 cohort of Elon Year of Service Fellows. Above: The Center for Financial Literacy. Right: The Live Oak Communications office. Below: Elon students tend crops at Loy Farm.

Locally Grown

A Center for Environmental Studies initiative, Loy Farm is a 20-acre intensive teaching and research farm that provides sustainably grown produce and food system education for Elon and its surrounding communities. The farm gives back to the university and the larger community by providing produce to Elon Dining, Elon Campus Kitchen and Allied Churches.

Alumni in Action

For many Elon graduates who call Alamance County home, changing the world begins right in their backyard. From holding local and statewide political offices, serving on community boards, leading nonprofit organizations, coaching youth sports and owning successful businesses to serving as firefighters, police officers and victim advocates, Elon alumni are actively putting into practice the lessons learned in the classroom for the betterment of all members of the community.

Personal Finance Resources

The Center for Financial Literacy aims to

provide objective, high-quality resources to assist individuals in making personal financial decisions. The CFL helps students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members develop financial skills. Programming includes workshops and speakers on a variety of topics, including saving for retirement and making money to pursue one's passion.



Supporting Local Business

The Martha & Spencer Love School of Business supports Alamance County through professional development and workshops hosted by centers within the school; service-learning partnerships that connect hands-on student learning with businesses, nonprofits and entrepreneurs; and student interns who bring value to local companies. Faculty also serve on the Alamance County Economic Development Committee and produce economic impact studies.

Communication Services

Live Oak Communications is Elon's award-winning, student-run communications agency. The agency has implemented campaigns both nationally and locally, including website design, video production, media relations, print and broadcast advertising, event management and more. Local clients include United Way of Alamance County, The Village Grill and McPherson Cleaners.



Enacting Positive Change

The Elon Year of Service Fellows Program is a 12-month, post-graduation program connecting Elon graduates with community partners to help tackle challenges in health, education and economic development unique to Alamance County. Fellows utilize their knowledge and skills in collaboration with their partners to strengthen the community and facilitate lasting change. Six local agencies participate in the program: Alamance Achieves, the Alamance County Health Department, Alamance Regional Medical Center, the City of Burlington Economic Development Department, the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation and Impact Alamance. Throughout their year of service, the Fellows receive strong mentorship from their site supervisors and Elon faculty mentors. Participants are also

eligible for an incentive stipend at the completion of the one-year program if they attend graduate school in North Carolina or accept employment in Alamance or a surrounding county. To date, 71% of program alumni have either accepted a job or attended graduate school in North Carolina the year following their fellowship.

**Honoring Our Region's Roots**

Elon University strives to honor the legacy of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation (OBSN), the indigenous people on whose land the university stands, and in partnership with the local tribe is exploring more opportunities to center the Occaneechi people and their impact on this region. The OBSN adopted an official land acknowledgement in 2022, and Elon joins with the tribal community in encouraging all to treat this land with the respect, love and care that generations of Occaneechi exhibited.





## Deliberative Dialogues

A partnership between Elon University, the African American Cultural Arts and History Center, the Mayco Bigelow Center and Burlington Parks and Recreation, the Power + Place Collaborative strives to preserve and present stories from and about the people, places and moments of Alamance County's Black communities. Since 2018, collaborators have digitally recorded the oral histories of more than 40 people to ensure future generations can learn from the experiences of their predecessors.

"The goal was to collect stories about this place so our students understood and the larger community understood the power and the history and the richness that is in this soil," said Associate

Professor of Human Service Studies Vanessa Drew-Branch, who works with the collaborative. "It's important for students to understand they aren't transient here. They live here for four years, and sometimes longer. They can become a very integral part of this community."

The digital stories participating students produce each year are presented at public screenings. The Power + Place Collaborative also facilitates educational workshops for K-12 schools, afterschool programs and college students; social media campaigns; walking tours; art exhibits; book clubs; intergenerational community dialogues and more.

The collaborative's scope has expanded to include highlighting Muslim experiences. And in 2023, the collaborative was awarded a \$10,000 grant from Impact Alamance and a \$20,000 grant from North Carolina Humanities, a state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, that will allow its efforts to grow even further. Over the next two years, the collaborative will team with diverse faith-based partners from marginalized communities to organize a series of community engagement events for youth and community elders to exchange their experiences.

"We need to let these stories be heard and live on. We don't want them to be lost," Danielle Lake, director of design thinking and associate professor of human service studies, told the Burlington Times-News. "These are stories of leadership, love, activism, connectivity, engagement and belonging. They belong to everyone."

*Above: Elon students and community members attend a Power + Place Collaborative "Building Bridges" screening and discussion. Top right: Members of the Elon Votes! organization during the 2022 midterm elections. Bottom right: Volunteers with the CityGate Dream Center.*

### Choosing Hope

In 2021, Impact Alamance began working with The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation to find ways to bridge divisions within Alamance County. After a series of in-depth conversations and interviews, the institute produced a report, Alamance Choosing Hope, which catalyzed people and groups in the community, including Elon University, to work together to spearhead efforts aligned with the community's priorities.

### Making Dreams Reality

Innumerable Elon students volunteer at the CityGate Dream Center, which supports the growing Latinx community in Alamance County. Dedicated to creating a sense of belonging within the community to inspire, develop, train and advocate for children, students and families, the Dream Center has become a hub for connection and empowerment. CityGate partners with community groups, schools, churches and individuals to provide life-changing opportunities and resources.

### Engaging Across Faiths

Winterfaith is an opportunity for the university community and the surrounding Elon community to engage with and learn from each other about different expressions of religion and spirituality.



Each winter the three-day symposium features a variety of panels and speakers on topics such as The Baha'is, Franciscan Catholicism, and Spirituality and Land Justice. The program is a collaboration with the Elon Community Church.

### Advancing Accessibility

A joint initiative between Elon University and the Town of Elon, the Elon Community Accessibility Network aims to advance an accessible and inclusive environment for all members of the Elon community. The team's work is structured to promote communication and cooperation across several units within the university and town, with a focus on education, training, compliance and advocacy related to people with disabilities.

### Supporting Voter Participation

Elon was named a Voter Friendly Campus by the Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA — Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. The designation was awarded, in part, for the university's work with the 2022 midterm elections. Elon collaborated with the Alamance County Board of Elections to host a one-stop early voting site in South Gym, utilized by 4,605 voters, including students, faculty, staff and community members.

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 4,605

voters utilized Elon's one-stop early voting site during the 2022 midterm elections

# 74%

Elon's student voting rate in the 2020 election, up 25.2 percentage points from 2016

# 2,346

hours volunteered by 139 Elon students in 2022-23 with CityGate Dream Center to support Alamance County's growing Latinx community

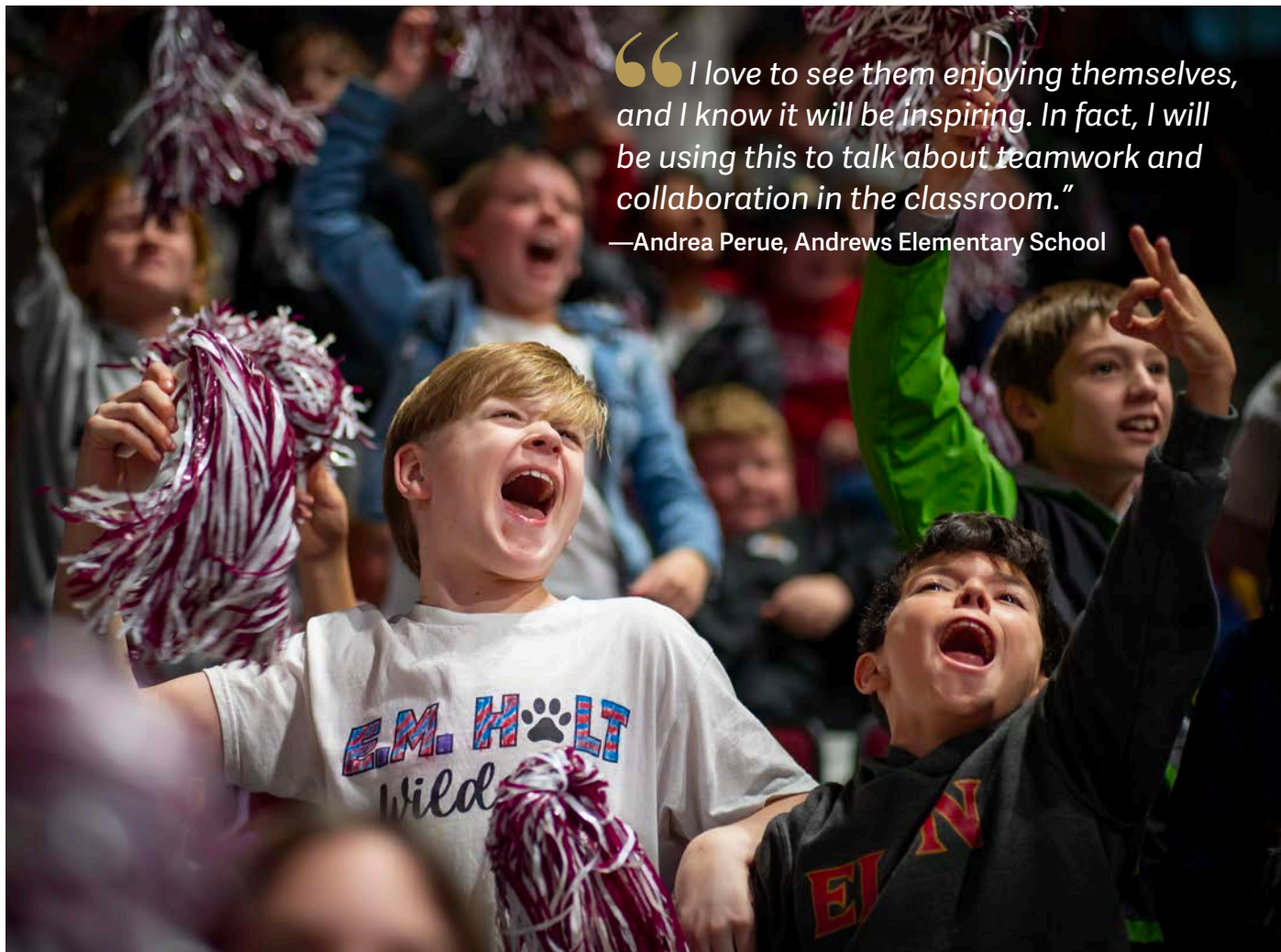
# 40+

oral histories from diverse Alamance County community members have been preserved by the Power + Place Collaborative

# 50 to 100

student and community members attend each of the Power + Place Collaborative's public screenings and community dialogues





“I love to see them enjoying themselves, and I know it will be inspiring. In fact, I will be using this to talk about teamwork and collaboration in the classroom.”

—Andrea Perue, Andrews Elementary School

## Connecting Athletics with Education

In a renewed partnership with the Alamance-Burlington School System, Education Day brought nearly 2,500 elementary school students to an Elon Women's Basketball game against the University of Richmond on Dec. 15, 2022.

According to Head Coach Charlotte Smith, Education Day was an opportunity for the children to see how education impacts student-athletes and opens doors for them to continue doing what they love, on and off the court. "I've been really excited since the idea was proposed," she said.

Leading up to the game, Elon Women's Basketball team members visited elementary school classrooms, answering questions about their experiences at the university, from the classroom to the court. They even showed them a few moves.

Third-grader Adeline Caulder from Andrews Elementary School said that she enjoyed the players coming to her classroom earlier in the week leading up to Education Day because she plays basketball, too.

Maya Johnson, a recent marketing graduate, visited Altamahaw-Ossipee Elementary School and spoke with fifth-grade students. "I wish I had college students talk to me when I was their age," Johnson said. "It was nice to talk to them about how important education is."

While the visits and other pre-game activities were fun, nothing got the elementary schoolers more excited than the game itself. The sound of 3,087 enthusiastic people made for a very loud and energetic experience. Raucous cheering was

encouraged as the most spirited school won a postseason pizza party with the team. There were also opportunities for each school to adopt a Phoenix player to support during the game.

Education Day was an experience for local elementary school teachers, too. Andrea Perue teaches at Andrews Elementary and plans to use the experience in her teaching material. "To me, this is education," she said. "We are emphasizing the fun in learning."

"Overall, this is positive energy, I love to see them enjoying themselves, and I know it will be inspiring," Perue added. "In fact, I will be using this to talk about teamwork and collaboration in the classroom."

The next Education Day game is scheduled for 11 a.m. on Feb. 2, 2024.

## Athletics Community Engagement at a Glance

### Christmas Cheer

Every holiday season, Elon Athletics works to ensure families with financial need have presents under their tree through Christmas Cheer of Alamance County. Each of the 17 Phoenix sports teams raise funds, package and distribute gifts to a different child.

### Read Across America

Student-athletes across Elon's sports teams regularly volunteer with Read Across America, reading to students in local elementary school classrooms as part of the National Education Association's initiative to motivate children to read.

### Phoenix Field Day

Several Phoenix sports teams partnered with the Boys & Girls Club and the Kernodle Center for Civic Life to host a field day for local children at Elon's intramural fields in April 2023. The day of fun and physical activity will be an annual event.

### Allied Churches of Alamance County

Elon Athletics has partnered with Allied Churches to support the community's homeless population, including holding a clothing drive in which all teams collected and donated new pairs of socks, one of the most requested items for those in need.

Opposite page: Elementary school students cheer on the Elon Women's Basketball team on Education Day. Left: Elon sports teams and local children enjoy Phoenix Field Day.



## BY THE NUMBERS

In the 2022-23 academic year:

**115,000+**  
people attended Elon Athletics sporting events

**1,300+**  
hours of community service contributed by student-athletes

**25,280**  
people attended speakers, performances and other cultural events at Elon

**127**  
cultural events offered at Elon University

**330**  
Alamance County athletes competed in the Special Olympics held on Elon's campus





Elon Athletics offers affordable group pricing for all NCAA Division I athletics events, and the community is encouraged to explore unique game day experiences, tailgating and great seating options. Visit [ElonTickets.com](https://ElonTickets.com) or call the ticket office at (336) 278-6750 to learn more.

### Supporting Young Athletes

The athletics department hosts summer camps by 12 Phoenix teams annually. These residential programs provide young students with the opportunity to learn from Elon coaches. Elon sports camps prepare students to be better teammates while fostering technical skills. Offerings and levels differ by sport based on NCAA regulations. Each coaching staff determines the priorities of their respective camps. For more information and to register, visit [eloncamps.com](https://eloncamps.com).

### Hometown Athletics

Elon is a member of the Coastal Athletic Association, with 17 intercollegiate men's and women's sports in NCAA Division I (FCS football). Men's sports include baseball, basketball, cross country, golf, football, soccer and tennis. Women's sports include basketball, cross country, golf, indoor track, lacrosse, outdoor track and field, soccer, softball, tennis and volleyball.

"We could not be more thankful for our partnership and relationship with the Elon, Burlington and Alamance County community," said Jennifer Strawley, Elon's athletics director. "Whether it is through a community service engagement, hearing the cheering of our community for the Phoenix at an athletics event or through corporate sponsorships with local companies, the partnership with this community enhances the lives of our student-athletes and creates an incredible sense of community and engagement around our institution and our athletic programs."

*"We could not be more thankful for our partnership and relationship with the Elon, Burlington and Alamance County community."*

—Jennifer Strawley, Elon University athletics director

### Championing Athletes of All Abilities



Special Olympics at Elon is an opportunity for students to assist Special Olympics athletes during sporting events. At the spring 2023 Special Olympics, more than 330 athletes from Alamance County participated in three main events: track run, softball throw and a trial run of a long jump event. Elon students held leadership and volunteer positions that made the event possible.

*Opposite page, top: Phoenix football fans enjoy a game at Rhodes Stadium. Opposite page, bottom: Elon students assist athletes at the Special Olympics. Right: Astronaut Leland Melvin. Below: The Elon music theatre program's production of "42nd Street."*

For more information about Elon's cultural and special programs, visit [elon.edu/culturalcalendar](https://elon.edu/culturalcalendar) and [elon.edu/speakerseries](https://elon.edu/speakerseries).



### Professional-quality Performances

From musicals to plays to dance performances, Elon's Department of Performing Arts produces a wide range of high-quality entertainment open to the public every year. The university has built a reputation in the performing arts industry for producing mature, talented, energetic and creative performers.

The 2024 edition of The Princeton Review college guide ranked Elon No. 8 in



the nation in the "Best College Theater" category. The music theatre program in particular is highly competitive, with more than 1,600 students applying for fewer than 20 admissions each year. Alumni have gone on to make their mark on Broadway, in regional theater, in TV and film, and more. Playbill has ranked Elon alongside New York University, Yale and Julliard as one of the most represented colleges on Broadway.

Visit [elonperformingarts.com](https://elonperformingarts.com) to learn more about this season's productions and view ticket information.

### Dynamic Speakers and Events

Elon's Office of Cultural and Special Programs presents a rich and varied offering of special events that are open to the community every year, from lectures and poetry readings to art exhibitions and concerts. A signature offering is the Elon University Speaker Series, which welcomes distinguished thought leaders and change-makers who are actively taking on society's most pressing issues.

Elon places students and the local community in the same room with world leaders and scholars to inspire, to create bold ideas and to motivate new thinking. Past distinguished speakers include two former Secretaries of State, Madeleine Albright and General Colin Powell; former President George H.W. Bush; former Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom Margaret Thatcher and David Cameron; former U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch; CNN Chief Medical Correspondent and neurosurgeon Dr. Sanjay Gupta; actress and social activist Ashley Judd; Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak; pioneering astronauts John Glenn, Buzz Aldrin and Leland Melvin; astrophysicist and author Neil deGrasse Tyson; and renowned conservationist Jane Goodall.



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*Staying, eating or attending events at The Inn at Elon helps make a college education possible for many students, with all profits going toward scholarships at the university. Nearly 200 students have received scholarships from Inn at Elon funds totaling more than \$2 million.*

