



## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2023.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico  
Program Title: Playhouses: More Than Just Fun  
Program Category: Health and Human Services

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Brandon Hinton  
Title: Deputy County Manager for Administration  
Signature: 

## **Program Overview**

Students enrolled in the Henrico County Public Schools (HCPS) Advanced Career Education Centers had the opportunity to engage in practical learning experiences to support a community-based nonprofit organization. Those in the carpentry and Computer-Aided Drafting, or CAD, programs designed and constructed a custom playhouse for the “Home for Good” event, organized through Henrico County, Virginia, Court Appointed Special Advocates program (CASA). Henrico CASA is a nonprofit organization that advocates in court for childrens’ best interests and seeks to educate the community about the needs of abused and neglected children. Their “Home for Good” event features playhouses donated by area organizations, which are raffled to raise funds for CASA. Students in the Computer-Aided Drafting program met design requirements, approved the designs by CASA and then handed off the approved design to HCPS carpentry students to evaluate and construct. In partnering with the community organization, students engaged in a hands-on, meaningful project that reinforced and taught them new skills, including being productive citizens contributing to a community need.

## **Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality**

The school division’s Advanced Career Education centers are all about providing authentic learning experiences for students. The goal is for students to not only cover the theory of the content but to demonstrate the relevance of what they’re learning by using their learned skills in practical and hands-on ways. The partnership with Henrico CASA, which provides a much-needed service to the community, advanced this goal.

## **How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria**

This program should be recognized for several reasons. First, it was unique: the HCPS students were the only school organization involved in the program. This attested to the quality of the

instruction in the Advanced Career Education centers carpentry and CAD programs. The fact that it was the highest raffled playhouse affirmed the quality of the work involved. The program also helped provide students with meaningful learning experiences. Students got hands-on experience that was rigorous and relevant to the instruction they received. They were able to demonstrate, apply and expand on the skills they had learned. Finally, it provided an opportunity for students to connect in a meaningful way with their community. For students to see how businesses can be successful and how businesses remain grounded in their communities, is an important learning outcome that exceeds the boundaries of the classroom. It instills in them an appreciation for their community and helps them recognize the value of providing community service.

### **How Program Was Carried Out**

The “Home for Good” event serves as a fundraiser for Henrico CASA and, just as importantly, helps to raise awareness about the great work this community resource provides. The carpentry and CAD students of the Advanced Career Education centers were able to apply, demonstrate and enhance the skills they’ve acquired through the program through the design and construction of a playhouse for the fundraiser.

The design process for “Home for Good” took place from January to February, 2022. During this time, students in CAD reviewed the provided specifications from CASA to work on their design. Students in the year 1 and 2 CAD programs took on these requirements as a learning experience where they applied technical drawing and CAD skills to create their designs. Throughout the process, students received feedback from one another to hone design considerations, and the classes narrowed their choice to five designs. A lot of research was involved in understanding safety and how certain age groups would be able to interact with a playhouse. They considered age difficulties in interacting with the structure (e.g., using steps, climbing rock walls) as well as

playhouse designs that were in style. Once complete, the designs were submitted to CASA's committee for evaluation, and then the committee selected a design to be constructed.

Once the design was approved, it was shared with the carpentry students to begin construction.. Students got underway in mid-February, intending to finish the playhouse by the end of April. when the delivery would be made. The classes first assessed the design for potential setbacks, challenges, or additional skills students would need to learn to complete construction. Next, they created a list of required materials to start building and developed a timeline for the parts of the project. During the construction phase, students were involved with other learning experiences that helped them comprehend project management skills. The carpentry students were able to apply the skills they've learned in their program at the Advanced Career Education center. Laying out the project, framing, cutting, measurements, performing calculations and selecting materials were all a part of their process. Unique challenges such as figuring out how to construct a castle turret, helped stretch the math skills involved in the process (trigonometry). Students researched the best placement for hand holes for rock climbing; climbing designs, decking level construction, and even waterproofing considerations. They got feedback by visiting HCPS' Early Childhood Education program and speaking with the teachers, students and preschoolers to get guidance and make minor adjustments.

Partnerships with James River Exteriors and the W.M. Jordan Company were crucial to the carpentry and CAD students' success. Over a three-day period, James River Exteriors showed students how to properly do exterior stucco work on the playhouse. With James River Exteriors' hands-on instruction, students learned additional and transferable skills. The W.M. Jordan Company worked with the carpentry students on a list of needed supplies and helped to source and fund those supplies for the construction of the playhouse. This was an extension of an existing

relationship, where W.M. Jordan had worked alongside these students in other learning experiences.

### **Financing and Staffing**

Donations enabled higher end finishes and materials to be incorporated into the project. Approximately \$10,000 in materials were donated by the W. M. Jordan Company. Both companies generously donated the time and expertise of their employees to help make the project a success.

### **Program Results**

The castle-themed playhouse students constructed was on display in the community at the Short Pump Town Center outdoor mall for several weeks. As a result of students' creative design, ingenuity and commitment, they were able to design and construct a playhouse that drew one of the highest bids at the "Home for Good" event. The financial success of the program was a win for the Henrico CASA program.

While the financial gains were important, the support for a local nonprofit and the learning outcomes through the process were the most notable. Carpentry students learned to construct unique structures, such as a castle turret. They practiced the skills they've been taught in the program and even learned new skills, such as stucco application, through business partnerships. The CAD students were able to learn to work with specifications from a client, research the needs of a plan and be responsive to constructive feedback for further design development.

### **Brief Summary**

Carpentry and CAD students from the HCPS Advanced Career Education Centers were able to hone their crafts while contributing to a greater cause when they built custom playhouses for Henrico County's Court Appointed Special Advisors. Henrico CASA puts on the "Home for Good" event, which used these playhouses to raise funds and grow awareness for the children in need that they support. The CAD students put together the playhouse designs, and the carpentry students constructed those designs. Both parts of the process involved detailed analysis of safety and usability for different age groups, and local businesses were utilized as partners to make the students' visions come to fruition. The students' creativity and execution resulted in one of the largest bids at the "Home for Good" event, and they left the project with enhanced abilities in design, construction and collaboration.

**Playhouses: More Than Just Fun  
Supplemental Material**



