



E. H. Gentry
Facility
Deaf. Blind. Limitless.

Information
Catalog

Welcome to E. H. Gentry Facility



Before reading this catalog to explore what E. H. Gentry Facility (EHG) has to offer you, a family member, or a student/client, please allow me to share how EHG changes the lives of those who attend our program:

Training within EHG teaches adults to advocate for themselves, learn how to succeed in the real world, and to prepare for their future. Our programs develop essential job readiness and independent living skills while building confidence and self-esteem. The EHG staff daily witnesses the amazing transformations of students, some of whom arrive insecure, timid, unsure of what to expect, but after exploring their self-identity and gain the skills needed, they leave with a new image of themselves and what they can accomplish.

After more than 25 years of service to the Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB), I truly can attest to the limitless potential of the students served by AIDB and EHG. Regardless of students' future goals, EHG can help navigate and explore their individualized career pathways. We welcome your inquiries and will be happy to provide you with a guided tour of our programs and facilities.

Jessica L. Edmiston

Jessica L. Edmiston,
E. H. Gentry Facility Executive Director



E. H. Gentry Facility (EHG) is a full-service vocational and educational rehabilitation program that serves adults who are Deaf, Blind, DeafBlind and those with other or multiple accommodation needs. A component within the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB), EHG was established in 1968. EHG's mission is to provide quality job skills, adjustment, and academic services to individuals with disabilities, which will promote independence and lead to employment. Our primary goal is to help students discover their limitless potential by achieving economic and personal independence through employment training, college preparation classes, and independent living skills – whether onsite or via distance learning.

Utilizing the latest technology and training methods available, EHG creates customized programs for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, low vision, blind, deafblind, and/ or have other disabilities. EHG's campus facilities are specifically designed to accommodate the individualized needs of students. Accessible kitchens are fully equipped for learning independent living skills. Wide hallways accommodate students who are blind as they learn and practice orientation and mobility skills. Computer labs are equipped with the latest assistive technology and classrooms feature SmartBoards for visual learners. A variety of work experience areas are designed to provide safe and realistic environments to learn crucial pre-employment skills.

EHG offers a variety of support services for all students, all conveniently located on campus:

Case Management - Because each student's program is unique and individualized, case management services are provided by professionals who work closely with each student. Case managers who have expertise in deafness, blindness, and other disabilities, supervise student programs, develop and adjust schedules, and handle other personal matters, such as transportation and referrals for medical, financial, or counseling issues.

Student Services Department - EHG students gain crucial hands-on experience in applying and practicing self-advocacy and independence under the supervision of the Student Services professionals. An experienced staff provides support services, such as practicing money management and banking procedures, including the use of an onsite Region's ATM and individual student management banking accounts. The staff assists students in arranging various types of appointments, securing transportation, managing Social Security issues, and a variety of other services.

Campus Security - The safety and well-being of students is a priority at EHG. The campus is routinely patrolled by AIDB security and the Talladega Sheriff's Department, including a dedicated school resource officer. Cameras, staff/student ID's, badge-accessed secured entries, and required visitors' passes are some of the measures taken to maintain a safe environment. EHG conducts periodic drills to prepare students for emergencies such as fires, tornadoes, and unwanted intruders. One of three AIDB Tornado Shelters is located on EHG's campus. These shelters which cost a total of \$1.5 million were made possible by grants from FEMA and are able to withstand winds up to 250 miles per hour.

Food Services - Students have access to various food options, including the EHG Cafeteria which prepares three meals each day, plus of ers additional salad bar and special menu items during lunch hours, Monday through Friday. The EHG Café, located in Grider Hall and operated by students and staf o f the Business Enterprise Program, of ers breakfast, lunch, and snack options on weekdays, Monday through Friday. In addition, vending machines, microwaves, and other food service amenities are of ered in Grider Hall and the Adult Residence Hall.

Nursing Services - EHG has a nurse on duty from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. on Monday through Friday within a nursing station in Grider Hall. The nursing staf i s available for consult by phone after hours and on weekends. Our nurse handles routine medical issues such as dispensing medication to those students who require assistance, providing f rst aid, instructing students on how to f ll their own med planner, and assisting student with medication ref lls. The nursing staf w orks closely with our counselor and the Student Services staf t o schedule appointments, coordinate transportation, and obtain medication ref lls. An excuse from the EHG nursing staf o r a doctor is required for a student to stay in the Adult Residence Hall during instructional hours, Monday through Friday. Medical emergencies are referred directly to the local emergency room at Citizens Baptist Medical Center, Talladega.

Counseling Services - EHG also has a professional staf counselor who provides individualized support and psycho-educational group counseling. In addition, the counselor serves as a liaison between the EHG staf , students, and outside agencies, and coordinates with nursing and mental health providers regarding student psychiatric care. The counselor attends program review meetings and reviews f les for the EHG Admissions Team and provides training in-services to staf a nd students as needed and when requested.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Services - Reaching Independence through Supported Education (RISE) - is a program uniquely designed for students and individuals diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Sensory Loss and is a partnership with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS). RISE uses evidence-based strategies and comprehensive language and behavior assessments to address the immediate concerns of each individual, to foster skills that lead to independence.

RISE provides Individualized, 1:1 therapy, based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis, focusing on skills such as:

- Academic Performance
- Behavior Consultation
- Communication Skills
- Functional Living Skills
- Independent Living
- Parent Support Groups and Workshops
- Social Interaction
- Transition Skills
- Vocational Skills

Although RISE does not provide diagnostic assessments, we are currently seeking training opportunities to increase our understanding of diagnostic procedures, specifically as it r elates to individuals with sensory loss.

As RISE works with individuals to acquire necessary skills, we remain in constant communication with administrators, academic and residential personnel, and other stakeholders, providing them with the following:

- A listing of students we are servicing
- A schedule of when we will be present on each campus
- Critical updates that may impact service delivery

ADRS Liaison Of ce - An Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) counselor is housed on EHG's campus, providing a direct line of communication with other Vocational Rehabilitation counselors throughout the state.

EHG's goal is for students to achieve their maximum potential and exhibit job skills that facilitate a successful transition into the community of their choice. Additionally, EHG works cooperatively with ADRS and Job Developers within the 10 statewide AIDB Regional Centers to accomplish this goal. The length of a student's program at EHG varies since goals and instruction are individually designed based on evaluations and assessments. ■

Evaluation Services



EHG has a team of experienced evaluators who perform assessments to learn about each client's strengths and challenges related to his or her independence, employment goals, and educational opportunities. Whether their goal is to seek employment, enhance independence, or participate in additional post-secondary education and/or training, most students will participate in the evaluation program which may include the following:

Academic Tests - Various tests are administered that measure academic achievement, functional abilities, and potential pertaining to reading, mathematics, and language skills.

Aptitude Testing - Students are given specif c tests which are used to predict the potential for success in vocational and/or educational settings.

Interests/Preferences/Career Explorations - A key factor in designing a program for new students are their personal interests. Evaluators use tools to identify work interests through expressed, tested, or demonstrated assessments.

Assessments - EHG provides individualized assessments in assistive technology, computer/keyboarding, orientation and mobility, independent living, money management, and communications, such as Braille, American Sign Language, and assistive devices.

Situational Assessments - Employment specialists, job developers, job coaches, and evaluators work together to conduct a variety of physical, behavioral, and occupational assessments that evaluate a student's potential to participate in training for future employment. These vocational/situational assessments play a key role in determining a student's placement within EHG's Employment Training programs.

An evaluation meeting including EHG professionals and an ADRS counselor will be conducted to discuss assessment results and to either design a program at EHG or make recommendations. ■

Academics



"As instructors, we play a vital role in helping students achieve their academic and/or workplace goals. From skill development to training and coursework, we want our students to leave us better prepared for the next phase of their journey."

– Renee Linn, Adult Ed Instructor

EHG has a team of certified Adult Education instructors and trained rehabilitation and employment specialists who serve students with varying academic abilities and goals. Specialized classrooms are equipped with assistive devices selected to meet the educational and instructional needs of students who are Deaf, Blind, DeafBlind, and General Services students. Based on the results of academic testing during the evaluation process, a student may be recommended for academic classes to enhance their employment or post-secondary goals. Depending upon the student and their goals, distance-learning may also be an option.

"I have a lot of good experiences in Deaf Services while being able to surround myself with different groups of people here at EHG. I have had the opportunity to learn things that I have never learned before while getting to know my weaknesses and working on those for the future. My experience with the College Prep program has been a good experience as well. I have an amazing teacher who pushes me to be the best I can be and provides me with the right tools to be prepared for

college. The instructors are very strict, but I understand that there is a reason behind their strictness for it is to push us to be ready for college and be able to work under that pressure. They give us an idea of what college is going to be like. This program has also boosted my confidence quite a bit in the long run as well. I have no doubt in my mind that I will be ready for college in the future."

– Cade Henson

Listed below are some of the academic goals which a student may develop while at EHG:

Academic Proficiency - Students often arrive with specific weaknesses which may limit or prevent a successful transition into the college, post-secondary, or employment setting. EHG Adult Education instructors provide academic remediation needed in all subject areas for them to pursue and obtain a GED or Alabama High School Diploma.

Academic Remediation - Some EHG students have been away from the classroom environment for an extended period and may need to review or develop literacy, math, composition, or other skills required for further training or employment. EHG's Adult Education instructors have experience developing individualized instructional programs which assess and improve student performance on standardized tests such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS), ACT, and WorkKeys exams.

Communication/Vocabulary Enrichment - Some adult students need assistance in mastering new vocabulary or terms specific to their chosen field of study. Many require help to develop or improve written, manual, and oral communication skills in self-expression.

Money Management - This course is taught at various levels depending on each student's prior knowledge and experience. Basic skills may include identifying coin and paper money, counting, change-making, and progress to higher-level skills such as checking/savings accounts, discounts, receipts, taxes, insurance, and investment strategies.

Tutorial Support - EHG's Adult Education instructors provide additional tutoring for students taking college courses within EHG's College Preparation/Dual Enrollment Program. These services vary depending on the courses being taken and range from traditional academics to vocational classes such as certified nursing



"One of the main things that I want students to take away from braille class is that although they are learning to read in a different way than they may be accustomed to, that there is no substitute for learning to be truly literate as a blind person!"

– Kayla Weathers, Braille Instructor

obtain training within the warehouse setting and obtain Forklift Certification. Employment specialists also teach and prepare students for the Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Certification test.

- Blind Services Adult Education instructor and instructional aides provide practice and training for students to obtain certification on the Minnesota Braille Skills Inventory (MBSI). ■

or medical assistants, instructional or residential aides, welding, and cosmetology.

Ready to Work - Academic instructors, job coaches, employment specialists, and certified rehabilitation specialists teach various portions of the Ready to Work curriculum. Students who meet the prerequisites for enrolling in the program develop their vocabulary, knowledge, and communication skills for the workplace and may earn their Alabama/National Certified Worker's Certificate.

Specialized Test Preparation - EHG also provides instruction designed to help students with educational goals which may require them to pass specific specialized tests.

- Driver's Education is also provided by a full-time, as well as a part-time, certified contract instructor to prepare students for the written Alabama Learner's Permit Test and driving/road skills portion of the Alabama Driver's Test. In conjunction with Adult Education instructors, students have practiced for the Alabama Commercial Driver's Test as well.
- Instruction designed to assist students in obtaining certification in Computer/Technology, such as the Alabama Certified Typing Test, A+ Computer Certification, and Microsoft Office Specialist is available within EHG's Assistive Technology for the Blind and Assistive Technology for the Deaf classes.
- EHG's Business Enterprise Program (BEP) instructor and instructional aide assist students whose goal is to obtain their Serv-Safe certification which is a requirement for continued participation in their program. In addition, they also prepare students for their comprehensive BEP Licensure Exam.
- The Employment Services staff prepare students to

Rod Skene's story is special - not only because he's a valued E. H. Gentry Facility (EHG) director and former instructor who serves students who are visually impaired or totally blind, but because he started his journey as an EHG student himself. Rod has a genetic disease which caused a progressive vision loss which impacted his chosen career as a landscape designer and business owner. Former EHG instructor, Ms. Patty Harper, was instrumental in his rehabilitation as an EHG student. "When I first started my program, I did not have any expectations or vocational goals. Ms. Harper helped me develop many goals during my time in her braille class, but none more important than my career goal. She not only taught me braille, but she took a sincere interest in my future." EHG Case Manager, Jerry McKee, shared that EHG's College Prep program helped Rod register for the GRE Exam and assisted in his transition to UAB. Rod went on from EHG to earn his Master's degree and returned here to work at EHG in 2008 as the Communication for the Blind instructor teaching Academics and Braille. Rod helped over 20 students earn their GED certificate and provided tutorial support for students in EHG's Dual Enrollment program at CACC. He is a role model and strong advocate for both blind and visually impaired students and staff, working to ensure that all materials are accessible. In 2020, he took on a staff support role in the Services for the Blind department as its director, and some of his recent successes include assisting with the implementation of the new outreach vocational evaluation service and growth of the distance learning program. ■



College Prep-Dual Enrollment



"I have always considered myself independent. I had enrolled in college on my own, but things fell apart faster than a house of cards. I felt so defeated by my failure. I came to EHG and joined the College Prep program mostly on a whim and a little bit of hope. I knew nothing about EHG or College Prep. I just had nothing to lose. This was the best decision of my life. It really was eye opening to learn all the puzzle pieces that are needed in successfully completing higher education as an adult student with a visual impairment. College Prep aims to give me the skills to be self-reliant and confident. It also firmly aligns with my professional career overall. There is so much love for the students. I was so lost on how to go forward, but now I am taking steps down the path. I was blind to the opportunities around me, but now I see."
-- Lianna Cofer

E. H. Gentry Facility's College Preparation-Dual Enrollment program is designed to empower students with strategies to reach their personal, educational, and career goals as they transition into successful college graduates and enter the world of work. The college preparatory program prepares students to navigate the challenges of higher education and to improve self-advocacy skills by accessing support services and requesting accommodations.

College Preparation - Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Counselors and EHG's academic instructors may recommend students to the College Preparation program. Students are required to post prerequisite academic proficiencies and complete a Career Exploration class before transitioning to College Preparation. While enrolled in College Preparation, students can continue to improve their academic skills and practice for standardized tests, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), ACT, and the ACCUPLACER college placement test within EHG's academic programs. Students complete various assessments and complete questionnaires which identify their specific learning styles then incorporate and develop methods that improve effective learning. Students also learn key skills in self-motivation, scheduling, relationships, task completion, and time management. Students learn vital information regarding scholarships, loans, work-study programs, and internships which impact the cost of their post-secondary training. Additionally, students develop knowledge of how to request accommodations such as interpreting services, note-takers, transportation, tutorial support, and develop key self-advocacy skills needed for success within the college and post-secondary training environments.

Dual Enrollment - EHG's Dual Enrollment program provides opportunities for students to enroll in

undergraduate courses at Central Alabama Community College (CACC) and Gadsden State Community College (GSCC) and continue to receive adjustment and support services at EHG. Students complete the application and admissions process or an application to the college of their choice. The instructor assists in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA), researching and completing applications for scholarships, and the Alabama Disabilities Act (ADA) Intake Interview. Through EHG's community partnership with CACC and CACC, students are allowed to take the ACCUPLACER college placement test and the ACT, with accommodations, on EHG's campus. While enrolled, students develop effective self-expression and listening skills, including written, oral, and electronic communications. Dual Enrollment students are required to practice these skills when communicating with their college and EHG instructors and ADRS counselors.

Transition Services - When transferring to the college of their choice, Dual Enrollment students complete all aspects of the admissions process by touring the campus, applying for scholarships, and completing the admissions and financial aid process. The instructor facilitates a smooth transition by linking the student with Disability Support Services to request appropriate accommodations during their ADA Intake Interview. ■

Independent Living Skills



"Our staff teaches the students how to empower their own lives through Academics, Independent Living, Work Adjustment and Employment Services. Students are taught skills which will help them to advocate for themselves in all settings including home, social and work settings."
--Beth Richards, ILS/VRT Instructor

Some students may be recommended for classes in personal management, home management, and daily living skills. EHG's Independent Living Skills (ILS) instructors have experience teaching students with varying abilities and challenges, including specialized Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) services for students who have low vision or who are totally blind. Each caseload conducts training within fully-equipped kitchens with adaptive equipment. Students also have access to dorm rooms and apartments which provide them with various realistic settings to practice their skills.

Listed below are some of the skills which may be developed and practiced within the Independent Living Skills (ILS)/Vision Rehabilitation Therapy (VRT) areas:

Money Management/Budgeting - While math and money management may be covered in a traditional academic setting at EHG, skills like meal planning and comparison shopping are also developed and practiced within the real-life settings of ILS and VRT classrooms as well. Students develop budgets for current and future personal income and then practice banking skills such as spending and saving through personal student management accounts within EHG's Student Services.



Personal Management - Students develop and manage personal care issues, such as hygiene, grooming, and appropriate dress for employment and other special outings and activities. Routine issues related to daily living, including time management, stress management, and family planning are taught.

General Housekeeping - Proper methods for maintaining a clean and safe living space are taught including laundry and operating household appliances.

Food Science and Nutrition - Methods of instruction for the food preparation component of ILS vary greatly between students of each caseload. Regardless, each department's ILS/VRT instructor will assess a student's prior experience and knowledge and design activities that incorporate cooking methods that can be safely utilized after they leave EHG. Adaptive cooking techniques, specialized equipment, and other strategies are incorporated by trained specialists in VRT who work with individuals with vision loss to live safe, productive, and independent lives. When possible, students develop menus, shop for groceries, and practice skills such as comparison shopping, using coupons, and staying within a budget.

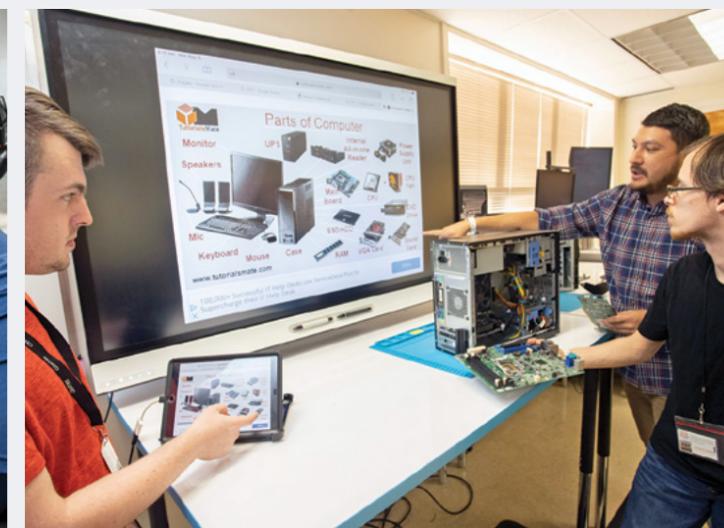
Life Skills - ILS instructors assist students in developing their interpersonal social skills and accessing community resources. Often planned in conjunction with EHG's Extended Day program and Recreation Therapy, students can practice skills within a variety of settings such as restaurants, malls, and special events like festivals, dances, picnics, cookouts, and other seasonal events. ■



Assistive Technology

Assistive Technology Blind (ATB) - Blind Caseload

Assistive Technology Deaf (ATD) - Deaf and General Caseloads



After a vocational evaluation is complete, students may be recommended for remedial classes to improve their typing skills, to learn or expand computer literacy, and/or to become familiar with various assistive technology which can improve their quality of life or prepare for future employment. Two different computer labs are equipped with various assistive devices, computers with software geared specifically for Blind (ATB), Deaf (ATD), and DeafBlind consumers. Consumers can develop their knowledge and skills with the assistance of EHG's trained assistive technology specialists. EHG's Assistive Technology staff also travel throughout the state of Alabama to evaluate, install hardware and software, and train consumers within their homes or within the AIDB Regional Centers. In addition, this department works with employers to evaluate and recommend assistive devices for consumers who are experiencing challenges within the workplace. EHG's ATB/ATD departments strive to expose and train consumers using the latest technology, software, and assistive devices with a goal of facilitating success within workplaces, educational settings, or their personal lives.

Computer instruction helps consumers understand or develop their knowledge and use of computer operations and software applications for personal and professional use. Instruction is individualized and

"Here at E. H. Gentry Facility, we strive to meet our students where they are in life, from independent living to technology, and make them limitless. I am a former student, and I now work here, imparting my knowledge into our students."

-- Devin Prater, Assistive Technology Specialist

based on a consumer's current skill level and accessibility needs and may range from learning basic keyboarding to obtaining advanced certifications in Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS), core technologies such as Internet Core Competency Certification (IC3), and the Alabama Typing Proficiency Certificate.

Assistive Technology for the Blind (ATB) - EHG's Assistive Technology for the Blind Department has provided training and field services to consumers who are blind or visually impaired throughout the state of Alabama for over 25 years and was recently recognized by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) International, as one of the top five programs of its kind in the nation.

Team members, housed on EHG's campus and within AIDB Regional Centers, provide comprehensive services that improve quality of life and empower consumers to succeed in fields that were once unavailable or unattainable. Field services and training opportunities are enhanced by the availability of technology labs located throughout the state. This extension of services improves our ability to smoothly transition consumers to or from the EHG campus and/or to provide distance learning instruction where applicable.

The ATB staff works closely with individuals, teachers, K-12 public school systems, universities, hospitals, corporations, and federal agencies, such as NASA, the Veterans Administration, military bases, and the FBI. State-of-the-art assistive technology devices, assistive software, and mainstream applications are combined with advanced hardware to broaden accessibility for our consumers. Instruction and training in the use of three-dimensional printers, voice assistants, and home automation controls are some of the latest technologies taught within this program.

EHG's ATB Department's role includes vital computer and technical services. The staff strives to inform consumers of the availability and benefits of the latest assistive devices. Trained professionals perform detailed assessments to help determine the best solutions to an individual's current skill level and accessibility needs. Accommodations may include the use of screen readers, screen magnifiers, speech recognition, and various hardware devices. With a low student to instructor

ratio, the ATB staff can provide individualized training to consumers in the use of various technologies, both hardware and software. Staff professionals recommend the most appropriate technology solutions and provide the support that allows consumers to achieve maximum productivity.

Assistive Technology for the Deaf (ATD) - Assistive Technology for the Deaf maintains an inventory of the latest devices to help consumers with hearing loss within the home and employment environments. Alerting devices for doorbells, smoke detectors, alarm clocks, and phone/videophones are shown and clients are instructed on how to program and use these vital tools. Students are exposed to various applications (apps) for their smartphones or other devices which keep them informed during weather emergencies.

Students are given a Digital Literacy Project assessment which defines basic skills needed to perform tasks on computers and online. The ability of adults to perform these tasks can be assessed through online, self-guided modules. Included are basic computer digital literacy standards and modules in ten main areas: Basic Computer Use, Internet, Windows Operating System, Mac OS, Email, Microsoft Word, Social Media, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Information Literacy. Students may also achieve A+ Certification, Microsoft Specialist Certification, and A+ Certification. ■

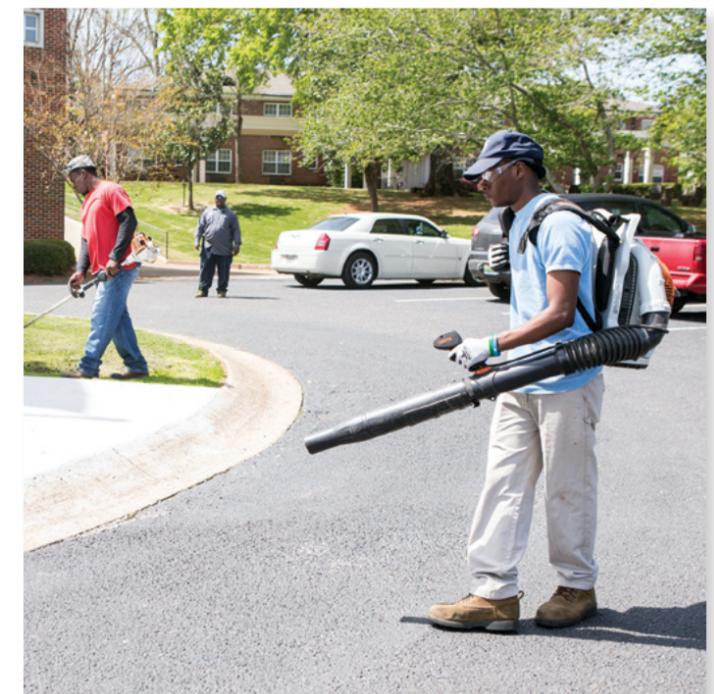


"Here at EHG, we are all one team working together to make a positive impact in the lives of the students. It's exciting to see someone's reaction to the various technologies and life-changing opportunities available to people with vision loss. WE ARE LIMITLESS!"
- Heather Lease, Assistive Technology Specialist

Employment Training



EHG's Employment Services provides students with the necessary tools and technologies needed to develop and enhance their employment skills. The first step begins within the evaluation process where students are given various aptitude and vocational assessments by EHG evaluators, work experience staffers, job coaches, and/or employment specialists. These assessments, combined with personal interest inventories, allow a student to explore various career choices. Job coaches, employment specialists, and job developers work with students to provide hands-on experiences in various workplaces which develop key pre-employment skills, build confidence, and prepare them for a successful transition to employment in their home communities through partnership with Job Developers in AIDB's Regional Centers. Many former EHG students have obtained employment in the manufacturing industry, daycare facilities, retail stores, landscaping, environmental services, residential care, automotive, and food service/hospitality.





EHG provides academic remediation to help students prepare for the WorkKeys® Tests. EHG is an official testing site for WorkKeys®, a nationally recognized test produced by the ACT which assesses reading, language, and math for the workplace. Student performance on these tests is the criteria for obtaining a WorkKeys® Career Readiness Certificate (RTW) which is a prerequisite for enrollment within the Ready to Work program. Academic instructors, job coaches, employment specialists, and certified rehabilitation specialists teach various portions of the Ready to Work curriculum. Successful completion of all modules of the RTW program is required to obtain an Alabama Certified Workers' Certificate which provides employment leverage when applying for skilled manufacturing jobs.

An evaluation report may recommend some of the following services to develop and enhance a student's work readiness:

Workforce Development teaches soft skills and work habits that will assist students in seeking, applying, and interviewing for a job. Some individuals who enroll at EHG have little or no work experience while others may have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time. Yet another segment may be adjusting to a new or progressive disability and may benefit from exposure to new techniques or accommodations for the employment setting. EHG's Workforce Development program focuses on building or enhancing skills needed to be successful in today's employment market including:

- Career exploration
- Communication for the workplace
- Conflict resolution
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Disclosure of disability/request for accommodations
- Interviewing skills preparation
- Job Application
- Job search assistance and networking
- Resume development
- Workplace ethics

Job Skills Training offers students an opportunity to gain experience in an actual work environment and allows students to receive pay for their work time, simulating actual employment. EHG provides job training in the following areas:

- Automotive care and maintenance
- Basic and advanced computer instruction
- Carpentry
- Childcare/residential services
- Customer service
- Environmental services
- Food service
- Forklift

- HVAC prefabrication
- Landscaping
- Laundry services
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Warehouse

While enrolled at EHG, students can obtain the following certifications:

- Alabama Certified Workers Certification
- ASE – Automotive Service Excellence
- CNA – Certified Nursing Assistant
- CPR/First Aid
- Forklift Certification
- National Career Readiness Certification - WorkKeys
- ServSafe Certification

EHG instructors assess student performance and may recommend additional training to their Vocational Rehabilitation counselors. Training may include placement in post-secondary or vocational programs within the community college setting or introductory classes before transitioning to full-time vocational programs, apprenticeships, or training programs.

Job Placement assists students with obtaining employment and incorporates job coaching services

designed to ensure a smooth transition into the workplace and into the career of their choice.

Job Coaching provides individualized instruction and orientation in the actual work setting. A job coach supports both the employee and the employer, helping each make the appropriate adjustments and following up with mentoring and advocacy. Students are instructed regarding their job responsibilities, safety precautions, and the expectations of their employer. Success at work may be supported by on-the-job training, educating employers on a client's disability(ies) and accommodations, plus developing effective communication strategies and continued ongoing communication with the supervisor.

Regarding Transition, Employment Services carefully evaluate both the prospective employee and job placements to ensure that each person's skills and abilities are matched to the specific employer's needs. Students who consistently exhibit marketable job skills are transitioned to competitive employment. EHG strives to provide Alabama employers with pre-screened, qualified applicants for a wide variety of job openings. The staff also provides employers with information on financial incentives, including on-the-job training and tax credit assistance. EHG works with Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and Job Developers within the AIDB Regional Centers to discuss services in the student's community of choice. This team of professionals will work to provide a student with opportunities to gain optimum experience for future employment. ■



After completing his program at EHG, **Dakota Stone** was employed at Ace Hardware in Talladega. He shared that EHG “prepared me academically, socially and emotionally for work. I was quiet and timid when I first started the program. I left feeling prepared and confident.” Mr. Stone was given a promotion and a raise and ultimately became employed by AIDB’s Maintenance Department where he continues to be successful.



Ja’Kell Stone shared that she enjoyed her Job Skills training so much that she opted to seek permanent employment at Ace Hardware. The staff at Ace Hardware shared that customers are often willing to wait just to be served by Ms. Stone. Ja’Kell Stone has been employed at Ace since October 2017 and shared, “EHG helped me become more confident and learn how to work under pressure. I learned how to keep a positive attitude. The staff helped me to learn to be professional and to always keep my head up, even when I have a bad day.”



Joey Woodle is a EHG success story. Profoundly deaf, his goal has always been to become a commercial truck driver. Mr. Woodle possessed knowledge and personal experience since his father and brother have both worked in this industry; however, he was unable to pass the Commercial Driver’s written permit test. With the combined efforts of ADRS and AIDB/EHG, Mr. Woodle began a program at EHG to expose him to the linguistic structure, question format, and vocabulary in addition to the rules and regulations which govern commercial truckers. He obtained his permit and enrolled in a course at Central Alabama Community College in Alexander City. Mr. Woodle obtained his Commercial Driving License and is ready to hit the open road.



Michael Davis completed his program at EHG and has been employed by Wal Mart as maintenance/stocker for one year. Mr. Davis shared that “attending EHG helped me prepare for the interview process and I learned how to dress appropriately. Going to EHG was so helpful to me. It helped me to improve in my weak areas, such as math, and helped me gain the skills to better myself.”

Business Enterprise Program



The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) at EHG affords training to individuals who are legally blind which can result in self-employment opportunities in the vending and foodservice industry. This program, enacted by the Randolph Sheppard Act, has a presence in most states. Persons licensed under BEP operate businesses ranging from vending, food service, micro-markets, snack bars, limited food prep, dining halls, and cafeterias within federal, state, or private entities.

The BEP State Licensing Agency (SLA) requires candidates to meet the following criteria: legally blind, a U.S. citizen over the age of 18, and a domiciled resident of the state of Alabama. Potential candidates are referred to EHG for a BEP vocational evaluation which includes physical, academic, orientation/mobility, independent living, assistive technology, and mental math assessments. In addition, candidates are required to possess a reading and writing medium to effectively communicate during training within the classroom and work settings. BEP program participants

are required to post scores on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at or above the tenth-grade level in reading, language, and math. Students who do not meet these requirements will be required to participate in remedial classes in academics, assistive technology, orientation/mobility, print/braille, and/or independent living classes with a goal of improving their performance to meet the established prerequisites.

Participants who meet the requirements will follow an established BEP curriculum written and developed by Auburn University. The curriculum includes the mastery of the following topics and skills:

Federal/State Guidelines for BEP - Demonstrate mastery of federal and state guidelines related to recruitment, training, licensing, and placement of individuals who are blind. The Randolph Shepard Act of 1936 includes the federal guidelines which were first enacted to enhance employment opportunities for trained, licensed blind persons to operate vending/food service

Specialized Classes



EHG Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist Amber James shared that "an individual can come here (to EHG) wanting assistance no matter their life experiences or stage in life and we form a program that is unique to their needs and their goals and teach them that they are still capable, they are still important, they are still an individual vital to the world in which we live!! They may just go about reaching all of their potentials in a little different way than their neighbor."

facilities. Over the years, the original federal act has been revised, and in addition, each state has developed its own Mini-Randolph Shepard Acts which include guidelines and regulations that differ from state to state. EHG BEP candidates are trained according to Alabama guidelines and their training/certification, while recognized throughout the state, will not be acknowledged or transferrable to other states.

ServSafe - Participate in classroom instruction and practice skills needed to pass and obtain a ServSafe: Food Protection Manager Certification. Students practice safe food handling techniques within the EHG Café under the supervision of the BEP instructor and/or the BEP classroom work experience technician.

Small Business Operation - Outlines procedures for maintaining business financial records required to operate a productive and profitable vending business. Students learn key skills, such as how to recruit and hire employees, maintain and report staff records, and apply for a business license. Inventory management skills including ordering, receiving, and stocking are developed. BEP students also receive instruction within EHG's Assistive Technology Department and learn computer software applications that can be used to record data and generate spreadsheets on vending machine costs, expenditures, and profits.

BEP instructors teach and supervise students as they practice money-handling techniques such as using coin separators and electronic bill identifiers, rolling coins, plus making bank deposits.

Vending Operation - Participants learn vending machine components, operation, and maintenance and are exposed to a variety of vending machines which are maintained on EHG's campus for training purposes. Additionally, BEP students are afforded hands-on experience stocking vending machines on multiple AIDB campuses.

Snack Bar/Cafe Operation - Classroom instruction and work experience within the EHG Café allow BEP students to learn and practice their culinary skills and safe food handling methods, plus develop key customer service skills such as stocking, purchasing, and managing inventory, and operating a cash register.

Experiential Learning - EHG offers BEP students diverse experiences including field trips to various BEP vending sites, along with opportunities to attend professional conferences and meetings of federal, state, and local organizations which advocate for the blind or visually impaired. In addition, vendor job shadowing provides hands-on experience working with an experienced BEP vendor to provide practical work experience and enhance personal BEP work skills. ■

E.H. Gentry Facility also offers various classes which teach skills to students with specific academics or independent living goals. American Sign Language, Driver's Education, Braille, and/or Orientation and Mobility instruction are taught to students who may need a refresher or for those who have little or no experience in these areas.

American Sign Language (ASL) – Some individuals arrive at EHG with no experience in sign language, have a desire to learn ASL, or need to improve their manual communication skills. New students are introduced to differences between ASL and English, such as syntax, semantics, word order, plus the use of body language, facial expressions, spatial referencing, negation, and indexing. After acquiring a sufficient number of basic signs/glosses, students will be able to make introductions and share personal information about self, family, basic desires, and interests.

ASL students interact with students who are Deaf to practice sharing information about themselves, their family, their surroundings, and by giving and receiving directions. Receptive comprehension skills are developed simultaneously as they develop their

expressive signing skills. Students will be exposed to various aspects of Deaf Culture and "Signing Do's and Don'ts". Interaction with students and staff members who are Deaf allow ASL students to practice their new skills within various settings including the classroom and extended day program. In addition, specialized ASL instruction is provided for students who are DeafBlind and need to develop an alternative manual communication system and are often assessed and encouraged to learn one or more alternative modes of communication such as ASL, tactile sign language, Pro-tactile, Haptics, Braille, raised alphabet cards, print-on-palm, and Braille-to-print devices.

Driver's Education – EHG provides instruction that prepares students to obtain their Alabama Driver's License. Classroom instruction includes driver's



education topics, such as driver's license requirements, facts about young drivers, the basic responsibilities of a driver, rules governing the basic operation of a vehicle, traffic laws and signs, and how to react to different driving conditions. After completing the classroom portion of the Driver's Education course, students take the Alabama Learner's License Test and can begin the Road Skills Training. Students are scheduled to drive in various environments in different conditions under the close supervision of the instructor. EHG's Driver's Education and Adult Education instructors have also worked in conjunction to prepare students for the Alabama Commercial Driver's Permit while EHG's College Preparation and Dual Enrollment program facilitates further training at Central Alabama Community College.

Braille - Technological advances have enhanced the use of braille, making devices smaller and more portable and braille displays more efficient. While technology is rapidly changing, it will never replace the need for blind individuals to learn braille. Many students served within the public school, mainstreamed environment are not exposed to the use of braille while in the K-12 setting; however, if students cannot comfortably read eighteen-point font within a normal distance via a computer monitor then the use of braille is indicated.

During their evaluation, students are given a reading media assessment which will determine if reading print versus braille is recommended. EHG students progress through the following sequence to learn and develop their skills in braille:

1. Pre-braille - Instructors will assess a student's sensitivity in their fingertips which may be affected by medical issues. The use of a braille, how to load paper into the braille machine, the composition of the braille cells including two columns/three rows, and the basics of tracking are introduced. Letters of the alphabet, numbers one through zero, capitalization, and punctuation.

2. Uncontracted braille - Students are sequentially introduced to the first five letters of the alphabet and how to type and emboss using a braille. Some students may be referred for functional braille which includes the use of uncontracted braille for the home and environment such as labels and signs to help in navigating public spaces. Instructors expose students to various types of braille such as manual and electric, and even one-handed models. Letters of the alphabet, numbers one through zero, capitalization, and punctuation are covered. Students progress through a sequence that builds skills such as recognizing letters and cells, practicing decoding, and synthesizing words to facilitate overall reading comprehension.

3. Contracted Braille - Students may continue building their proficiency in braille by mastering shorthand or contractions in which one or multi-cells represent portions of a word or entire words. Reading speed and accuracy in typing, decoding, and embossing is practiced and assessed with various tests including the MBSI, Minnesota Braille Skills Inventory.

4. UEB - Unified English Braille - Advanced students will be exposed to this new form of braille by allowing braille to incorporate bold, italics, underlining, and manipulate underlining and spacing which allows them to mimic print.

Orientation and Mobility - EHG offers orientation and mobility instruction for students who are blind or have low vision seeking to develop knowledge and skills needed to navigate safely and efficiently in various indoor and outdoor environments. Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialists (COMS) provide hands-on individualized instruction designed to build skills needed for independent travel. EHG's COMS will perform a functional assessment during the initial evaluation. If O&M instruction is determined as a need, an individualized program is developed and followed. Most often, instruction begins by learning how to move safely and efficiently around the EHG campus. Students learn the

layout of the campus and how to independently navigate between classrooms, the EHG Café and Cafeteria, Wooten Cottage, and the Adult Residence Hall.

Listed below are some of the skills taught by EHG's COMS:

- Orientation is an individual's ability to know where they are within a space.
 - Mobility is the ability to get from an individual's present location to the desired destination safely, efficiently, and as independently as possible.
 - Problem-solving skills require students to gather various forms of information which assist in resolving issues encountered in travel situations.
 - Students learn how to use Sighted Guide techniques and develop other pre-cane skills.
 - Basic cane techniques are skills needed when using the mobility cane to move about in various environments.
 - Students also develop their awareness of spatial and environmental concepts.
 - Instructors introduce mental mapping which allows students to take an abstract image and use it in a concrete manner for efficient travel through space.
 - Students develop their sensory efficiency or the ability to use senses including residual vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste to gather useful information about their surroundings.
 - Distance awareness is the ability to determine an essential awareness of events beyond the student's immediate personal space.
- The above skills are taught in a variety of locations including:
- On-campus travel begins by teaching the layout and location of buildings and classrooms, sidewalk travel, and introduction to compass directions.
 - Residential travel transitions a student to the residential area within a local community. Skills taught include knowledge of parallel and perpendicular traffic patterns, numbering systems, sidewalk travel skills, obstacle detection and resolution, and directional corners.
 - Students are exposed to business travel which involves learning how to navigate downtown areas including maneuvering through parking lots, crossing streets of multiple lanes, as well as, crossing at traffic-controlled signals and uncontrolled intersections.

"I am a current student enrolled in a full adjustment program at EHG campus. A full adjustment program tailored to my needs consist of Orientation and Mobility, Braille, Independent Living and Assistive Technology. I've only been at EHG since November 29, 2021. I did not start classes until December 3, 2021, and within this time, I have completed the final lessons of Braille and managed to score a level six on my final test which is the highest possible level to achieve. I am also reading 28 words per minute in Braille. Honestly, I feel this would not have been possible without the support of the EHG staff. I haven't been blind all of my life so upon entering EHG, my goal was to regain my independence. Learning Braille has allowed me to work at that goal and many others. I'm extremely happy in my decision to take Braille because I now feel better equipped to go back to college and finish my degree plan. One of my biggest worries with going back to college was trying to fathom how I was going to read the books and materials necessary to finish my degree. Now, not only can I do that, but I can also read other documents and sign up to be a Braille transcriber if I wish. Currently, in Braille class I am reading my first book that isn't a part of the Braille Book Series. I honestly don't plan on discontinuing Braille any time soon but plan to continue learning all there is to learn about Braille. I cannot wait to read many more books in Braille and possibly even become a Braille Instructor at EHG. I have gained so much from EHG in a short amount of time and would love to give back in any way that I can."

— Jonesti Steele

- More advanced instruction may include how to utilize various forms of public transportation including the use of buses, Uber, Lyft, and paratransit services.
- Students participate in a course that teaches how to create and execute a personal safety plan that helps them decide on how they would personally respond to abnormal situations in various environments. Simple breakaway techniques are taught which allow the student to free themselves when being forcefully restrained by another individual.
- EHG students may also participate in transdisciplinary trips designed to incorporate skills from various disciplines including Orientation and Mobility, Vision Rehab Therapy, braille, and money management to travel in unfamiliar settings. Special field trips or excursions to malls, restaurants, and movie theatres allow students to practice their newly acquired skills in realistic environments under the limited supervision of the EHG staff. •Students learn how to access and use standalone Global Positioning Systems, as well as apps available for smartphones. ■

DeafBlind Services



Students who have both hearing and vision loss receive specialized instruction within EHG's DeafBlind Services. Often individuals require instruction to adjust to a sudden or new vision/hearing issue due to a medical condition or injury, while others may experience issues related to a progressive decline in their vision or hearing. Whether their goals are employment or acquiring or improving independent living skills, students participate in classes designed to address their unique needs. EHG can assist in developing skills and work habits needed to compete for a job and/or improve the quality of their lives. The Assistive Technology Department plays a critical role in the assessment process to determine the most appropriate and latest adaptive equipment for clients with dual sensory loss.

Each client's unique needs are assessed during an initial evaluation and a program is designed which may include:

Alternative Communication - Individuals with dual sensory loss encounter a greater degree of isolation; therefore, instruction to develop an alternative communication system is often required to reduce loneliness and provide access to information. EHG students are assessed and encouraged to learn one or more alternative modes of communication such as tactile sign language, Pro-tactile, Haptics, braille, raised alphabet cards, print-on-palm, and braille-to-print devices.

Adaptive Independent Living - Personal Management teaches skills needed for self-care by instructors who are knowledgeable of the unique needs of individuals who are DeafBlind. Individual, group, and medical counseling related to health issues such as diabetes management are provided by counselors, nurses, and ILS/VRT instructors. Home management skills may be taught by either ILS Instructors for the Deaf or DeafBlind or VRTs for the

Blind, depending on the communication needs and residual sight of the consumer. Emphasis is placed on acquiring skills needed for independence and students are taught within specially equipped kitchens which specifically accommodate their hearing, vision, and communication needs.

Computer Instruction and Adaptive Technology - The unique needs of individuals with hearing and vision losses vary greatly depending on their vision and hearing loss plus their communication needs. Instructional and adjustment programs may be designed and taught within EHG's ATB or ATD computer labs. The staff of both departments facilitates the purchase and use of equipment that will meet the needs of the student within the home and/or workplace settings.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) - After an initial assessment, further instruction in this area may be indicated for students who need to develop mobility skills. Varying levels of instruction include basic mobility, such as the introduction to the use of a long cane to navigate the hallways and campus of E. H. EHG Facility. More advanced skills include residential and business travel and how to access public transportation. In addition, O&M training may be recommended during evening hours, if clients experience medical issues related to night blindness.

Job Development - Individuals who are DeafBlind often lose employment due to worsening conditions related to their vision and hearing. Job development may include adaptive technology which can assist clients in keeping or returning to a former job. If this is not an option, then alternative career pathways may be explored. Employment specialists, job coaches, and job developers design training programs that promote independence through employment.

EHG also holds the ICanConnect telecommunications distribution program for the state of Alabama, funded by the Federal Communications Commission, specifically for individuals, eight and older, with dual sensory loss who qualify. EHG also coordinates the Alabama Initiative for Children and Youth who are DeafBlind, a technical assistance and outreach program for instructors and caregivers, funded by the Office of Special Education Programs. ■



Extended Day Program



"EHG is unique because we not only equip students with the knowledge and training they need to accomplish their goals, but also by giving them the confidence and courage to pursue it."
-- Connie Johnson, Director of EHG's Extended Day

Students who reside in local communities in and around Talladega, Alabama, may choose to commute daily to the EHG campus for training. EHG has residential facilities and recreation programs for students who live outside the range for a daily commute. Housing options include the Wooten Cottage, Cottage Phase II, Adult Residence Hall, and Duplexes. Wooten Cottage provides structured supervision for students who need additional assistance, who have never lived away from home, and who may need to develop their independent living skills before transitioning to the Residence Hall. The Residence Hall offers varying levels of independent living and the opportunity to transition to semi-apartments and independent living duplexes located on the EHG campus.

Cottage Phase II is an opportunity for students who are ready to transition from the Cottage but who need additional support before fully transitioning into the Residence Hall. Four designated dormitory rooms located in the front of the Residence Hall have been designated for these students and offer more of a structured atmosphere yet more freedom than the Cottage.

EHG's Residence Hall includes various amenities including common areas such as outdoor patios, a gazebo, a covered pavilion for cookouts and dining, and other outdoor recreation areas including a basketball court/tennis court, and access to a nearby walking track. Dual occupancy dorm rooms with attached restrooms are furnished and equipped with cable and WiFi. Students are allowed to have personal televisions, laptops, tablets/iPads, and a dorm-sized refrigerator within their rooms. Students in the Residence Hall have access to washers/dryers, a computer lab, a vending/snack area, and recreation areas that include pool tables, ping-pong, a gaming center, and multiple television viewing areas.

Semi-Independent Apartments - Within the Residence Hall are units specifically designed to afford a higher level of independence. Students who participate in EHG's Independent Living Skills/Vision Rehabilitation Therapy

classes may practice and develop their skills during and after hours within this setting.

Independent Living Apartments - EHG has specially-designed duplexes located on campus which allow students to practice living independently under the supervision of the Independent Living instructors. Students are required to have successfully transitioned through EHG's residential program and demonstrated prerequisite skills such as room care, personal hygiene, and respect for self, others, and property. Students continue to independently practice meal planning, shopping for groceries, meal preparation, and general housekeeping skills within fully equipped apartments.

Residential Advisors - Students from each caseload have the opportunity to interview for Residential Advisors within the Extended Day as part of their training on campus.

Exercise Room - EHG students have access to a fully-equipped exercise room which includes free weights, step climbers, a rowing machine, aerobic and weight-training equipment. This facility is staffed by a trained recreation specialist and/or aide.



Recreation - The Extended Day program offers a variety of recreation services including formal Recreation Therapy instruction. Instructors plan and implement hands-on activities which develop students' interpersonal skills and promote interaction within the community. Instruction may occur within EHG's Arts and Crafts/Ceramics class during the academic day and extend into the afterschool hours.

EHG's Recreation Therapist plans regular activities such as dining out at restaurants, shopping at local department stores and malls, and special events like festivals, dances, picnics, cookouts, and other seasonal events, including the Winter Ball, the Talladega Christmas Parade, and EHG's Activity Day scheduled each year in May. EHG students may also be invited to sporting events, community programs, or social events which occur at AIDB's other facilities: Alabama School for the Deaf, Alabama School for the Blind, Helen Keller School of Alabama, or the Talladega Regional Center.

Additionally, EHG's Recreation staff plans weekly activities and social events including table/board games and tournaments, movies, video gaming, and visits to seasonal sporting events, fishing at area lakes, and theatrical productions. A monthly and weekly schedule of events is accessible to all students and is posted in braille and large print.

Student Advisory Council - Students from each caseload are selected to become student representatives. These representatives meet regularly with the Director and staff of the Extended Day program to discuss upcoming events, fundraising efforts, field trips, and share student concerns or recommendations for improvements.

Laundry Services - The AIDB Laundry, housed on EHG's campus, is also accessible for students who may choose to utilize professional laundry or dry-cleaning services.

EHG's Cafeteria - Students have access to three prepared meals daily in EHG's cafeteria. They may also purchase snacks and other needed items in the vending area of the Residential Hall which also provides access to microwaves and coffee machines. ■

Hours of Operation: Classroom hours

Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m.- 3:30 p.m.

Office hours

Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.
P.O. Box 698 • 1105 Fort Lashley Avenue
Talladega, AL 35161
1-888-774-2335

"My experience as a Residential Assistant (RA) was a great journey. I was able to learn from each student about their disability and what they can do. I was able to greet everyone with love and make them feel welcomed. As a RA, I was able to allow students to vent and able to feel heard without judgment. If they knew I had a genuine heart, they opened with joy and learned to show respect to others. Sometimes they wanted to give up, but I encouraged them to push forward and never give up. There were life lessons taught that are still useful. We are all like family. I am glad I was able to be a part of this journey."

— Sierra Goosby



E. H. Gentry
Facility

Deaf. Blind. Limitless.

Hours of Operation:

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