



The Elsie Foundation™

Changing lives, one student at a time.

Mission: To provide new computer equipment and financial literacy education to financially disadvantaged students and their communities to give them a better chance at future success.

Who was Elsie Alberghini Kandrak?

Elsie was a woman who devoted herself to teaching for more than thirty years. When asked about her teaching career, she always brightened saying, “If you can reach one student and change his or her life, all the sacrifice is worth it.” Elsie touched many students’ lives throughout her career, counseled many teachers, and mentored countless individuals—including her four children.

From 1955 through 1959, she attended Danbury Teacher’s College in Connecticut on a Fellowship Grant from the Ford Foundation. She was one of seven women who participated in a joint program of study with Yale University titled, “The Yale-Fairfield Study of Elementary Teaching.”

After graduating, she taught at various schools in Connecticut before moving to New Jersey with her husband, George, where she opened the Catalina Hills Nursery School in their Magnolia home. She operated the Pre-kindergarten School for more than 25 years before finishing her career as a third-grade teacher at St. Agnes Catholic School in Blackwood. Many South Jersey locals fondly recall being taught by Mrs. Kandrak.

Elsie’s unexpected passing on August 3, 2015, was a striking blow to her family, who found comfort from the former students and teachers who rallied around them to honor Elsie and support her family. Inspired by her mother’s work, her daughter sought to keep her memory and her life’s passion alive by reaching out to students in need and helping to change their lives, one student at a time.

Opportunity knocks

Elsie’s daughter, Deb, and her husband, Jamie, sponsored a small three-year scholarship at their alma mater, Widener University, in Chester, PA. One day, in the fall of 2015, while touching base with Dustin, a beneficiary of their scholarship, they uncovered a surprising need: many students, like Dustin, attend college without the advantage of having their own computer. University computer labs are available, but often offer out-of-date or broken equipment and minimal staffing because most students have their own computers.

Upon learning about Dustin’s plight, Deb and Jamie decided, “No scholar of ours is going to be disadvantaged—let’s get him a laptop!” The small purchase made a huge impact on Dustin’s educational journey. Dustin was overcome by emotion and so appreciative of the gesture. Deb and Jamie, who until then, like many of us, took for granted the luxury of having a personal laptop, quickly concluded that helping students like Dustin was exactly the kind of thing Elsie would do—and **The Elsie Project™** was born.

Call to action

Fundraising is underway for The Elsie Project. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit. All donations to The Elsie Foundation & The Elsie Project are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. Thank you!

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Dustin & Deb at Widener University, December 2015