PRESS RELEASE 02.09.2020

Ambitious school project for children with special needs

A new school project has emerged in Billund. The project aims to embrace children with special needs and to eliminate the challenges that stand in their way of receiving qualified education.

Billund has a strong urban vision and a clear ambition: To be the Capital of Children. In order to fully succeed with this goal, the city need to get everyone onboard. This also includes children with special needs and learning difficulties who should have equal opportunities to access great education. And this will be the focus of the Drive Foundation when they start their project in Billund this September. Drive will initiate a series of programs and projects targeting children who are challenged either personally, socially or academically. Some of them suffer from school refusal, others lack motivation or has a general frustration with school. Drive is a not-for-profit foundation that has raised money from e.g. KIRKBI that has donated 15 million Danish kroner into the foundation.

Drive was founded by the two partners Christopher Moyell Juul and Michael Løhde, who both have extensive experience from working with children's mental health and special needs education. Through many years of experience in the field, they have gained great insight into both research and practice in the special needs area. The goal is to combine the best of the two worlds and thus form the basis for success with the ambitious goal of creating the world's best special needs school - initially in Billund, and long term internationally. Christopher Moyell Juul says:

"There is a lot of research in the filed of learning and in psychiatric diagnoses, but surprisingly there is virtually nothing about special needs schools. We want to change that. It is important that the approach and methodology of special needs schools are based on robust research and evidence of what works. The children deserve that. "

Flagship schools
According to Christopher Moyell Juul, special needs schools need a quality boost. Not just in Denmark, but globally. Therefore, the long-term goal is to establish a number of flagship schools around the world where other schools and educational institutions can come and be inspired.

"Our ambition with the project in Billund is to establish a professional beacon within special needs schools with the latest methods and tools, based on evidence and research. Here, others will be able to come and see how we help the children in practice and be inspired to use the best methods to create value for these children and their education", says Christopher Moyell Juul.

Drive's methods have been developed in close cooperation with some of the world's most talented researchers in the field of children's motivation, play, development and learning. The fact that Drive has chosen to establish itself in Billund is not a coincidence. Christopher elaborates:

"Billund is quickly becoming the world's knowledge hub for work with children, play and learning - just as Silicon Valley is for IT. We have no doubt that Billund will attract a number of the world's

leading companies and researchers in the field of children over the next 10 years, and of course we want to be part of that development."

Expert help for children at ISB and children with school refusal
The Capital of Children will be the home and starting point for the foundation's initial activities. Among these initiatives, Drive will commence a project at the International School of Billund, ISB, in September. At ISB, Drive's Motivational Specialists will work in partnership with the school's teachers to further improve the conditions for students experiencing challenges either personally, socially or academically. The objective is that during the school year, these children will rediscover their motivation to actively participate in life rather than giving up on themselves, their friends and their education.
In addition to the ISB project, Drive also offers a school refusal program to children who suffer from anxiety and school refusal. The school refusal program will target children at the city schools in Billund Municipality and the surrounding cities.

"*School refusal is sadly an increasing problem throughout Denmark. More and more children have a real fear of going to school. This anxiety of leaving their home causes great distress for the children first and foremost. But it also has major consequences for the parents, who may struggle in their jobs and their daily lives. In other words, if school refusal and the anxiety is left untreated, it can cause setbacks that have potentially devastating effects on future opportunities and success – for entire families. Those families therefore need expert help sooner rather than later so the children can return to school gradually - but quickly*." Christopher Moyell Juul finishes.

Contact
For more information, please contact CEO Christopher Moyell Juul, phone +45 60 29 95 19 and e-mail christopher@fondendrive.dk

Fonden Drive
Kløvermarken 35
7190 Billund
Mail: info@fondendrive.dk
Web: www.fondendrive.dk