

# hello SUMMER

## Newsletter - July 2020



### ***Jake and Buddy***

My first year of friendship with my buddy has been amazing and I could not have asked for a better mentoring experience. Especially during quarantine, my buddy brightens my day whenever I see him. We have had to shift from in-person experiences like playing ping pong, pool, marbles and just having conversations, to FaceTime activities like sharing knock-knock jokes, playing "Would you rather?" and Family Feud. I enjoy every minute.

When I first joined the Athletes for Kids program, I wanted to make a difference in the life of my future buddy. What I didn't realize at the time was that my relationship with my buddy would change my life as well. I have become better at time management and more compassionate overall. I love watching my buddy grow in every aspect of his life and I am so lucky to be at his side. Being with my buddy has taught me a lot about myself as well, and I'm sure that we both will continue to grow in the future.

I'm so thankful to have such an awesome buddy. I can honestly say that my friendship with him is one of my most valued. I truly look forward to growing

alongside him during my Senior year, and I can't wait to make more memories!

My wife always says that Jake is our son's angel! The AFK program has been so amazing, but the more amazing part is how meaningful the relationship with Jake is to our son. We are so happy and grateful for the opportunity for our son to develop a relationship and spend time with such a compassionate young man.

Having a mentor like Jake that he can look up to and learn from has been such a boon for our son. We have been continuously pleased and surprised to receive weekly postcards when they are unable to meet and gifts on special occasions. These extra gestures of kindness, generosity of spirit and consideration have continued through the course of their friendship, and especially now during the quarantine Jake has been diligent in coordinating almost daily FaceTime calls.

It's difficult for us to properly express how grateful we are for the time that the two of them have spent together and for the future friendship that they will enjoy! Through Jake's interactions with our son we also get a glimpse of how much his parents love him and how their love overflows to our son.

## Upcoming Events



### *Virtual Drawing Workshop*

Back by popular demand! Join us on Saturday, July 18th from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm on Zoom for a fun afternoon of virtual drawing the whole family will enjoy. Mentors, buddies and siblings are welcome!

[Click here to register](#)

## AFK Team 365



### *Impactful Giving, One Dollar a Day*

Our AFK Mentors & Buddies share the gift of acceptance, friendship and kindness. Every day. As a member of Team 365, you can help support their relationships.

Every day. Mentors & Buddies build their extraordinary relationships one day at a time, and their cumulative effect is powerful. Our new Team 365 giving level is the same way: a small investment every day adds up to something powerful.

Please join team 365 and help support the programs, training, activities that build mentor and buddy relationships. Every day.

[Click Here to Join AFK Team 365](#)

## Blast From The Past



**Each month we will be presenting a short feature highlighting special memories from former AFK mentors.**

This month, we are featuring **Steve Dowden**, a 2012 graduate of Eastlake High School who was an AFK Mentor during his junior and senior years (2010 – 2012) in Sammamish. He is now working for Pacific Capital Resource Group in Bellevue as a financial advisor after graduating from Washington State University with a double major in Finance and Marketing.

**AFK:** *Steve, what are some memorable insights about your Athletes for Kids experience?*

**Steve:** “Athletes for Kids had big impact on my life...more than I realized at the time.

The experience really taught me how to be patient and how to really open up to someone. My buddy was a pretty shy kid, but that forced me to be creative and come up with activities that would help us get to know each other. It’s kind of funny to remember what our breakthrough experience was:

We discovered that we loved basketball. My buddy had a Fisher-Price basketball hoop that he loved playing with, so we started shooting a lot of hoops together. As we were playing, I came to learn that my buddy also had a deep fascination and amazing knowledge about U.S. Presidents. We somehow managed to combine the two. Our game morphed into us shooting hoops... while pretending to be famous Presidents at the same time!

He loved pretending to be George Washington, and I started out being Thomas Jefferson. After a while, he really wanted me to be Richard Nixon instead of Thomas Jefferson, so I went with it. That still makes me smile...we had such a blast...and it started a really strong connection.

Overall, it felt great to help my buddy and help his family. In turn, the whole experience made me realize how much I love helping people. It continues to guide me to this day.”

## With Gratitude





### ***Thank You Rahul Bhatt***

A very special thank you to Rahul Bhatt for helping Athletes for Kids update, design and improve our website. Rahul's willingness to volunteer his time is very much appreciated.

Rahul is the son of AFK's longest serving employee, Agni Bhatt. He attends Eastlake High School and will be a senior next year. In his free time he likes reading, writing and music. We are so grateful for your support Rahul!

## **AFK Moments**



As we say goodbye to June and celebrating our graduating seniors, we welcome sunny days and friendship moments to come.

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