

AFK Youth Mentoring



Newsletter - January 2021



Mentor Brandon and buddy

"As a sophomore, I joined the Athletes for Kids program. Through this great program I have gained new public speaking skills, a passion for trying to help others, and most importantly a new friend. My buddy and I got to the point where we both worked time out our schedules to see each one another each week. Over time we got to know each other better and we made totally mature inside jokes (The infamous stinky cheese!). If one of us missed a shot in basketball, we would use very advanced hand phones and pretend to call his mom to report it. I found myself prioritizing hanging out with him, carving out time every week to see him. It is a privilege to be a part of the community that rallies around my buddy and supports him. Every time we hang out it's just fun and there are no expectations or stress attached to it. This program is geared towards helping the buddy, but I can honestly say it's helped me a lot too.

We signed our son up for the Athletes for Kids on the urging of a friend, and we are so glad we did! Once we got connected with Brandon, he has made such a difference in our son's life. Our son is almost 16 and has Down Syndrome. He

loves to interact with friends, and he loves sports -- but both of those are more difficult given his disability. We are so grateful that Brandon has stepped in and helped fill some of that gap! Brandon has consistently come almost every week and hangs out with our son (with a reprieve during COVID). They play a lot of basketball (even in rain!) or toss a ball around or play Uno (another favorite) and Our son so looks forward to Brandon coming over. It has created a connection that our son does not otherwise have! They joke and tease each other and just have a good time. Every single time Brandon leaves, our son stands on our porch and hollers, "come back!" And we are so grateful that Brandon always does!"

January is National Mentoring Month

Launched in 2002 by MENTOR and the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, National Mentoring Month focuses national attention on the need for mentors, as well as how each of us can work together to increase the number of mentors to help ensure positive outcomes for young people.

AFK is a proud member of the [Mentoring Connector](#) which has over 600 programs serving youth with disabilities and special needs.

If you are a past or present mentor or mentee family, [CLICK HERE](#) to share your child's experience with their mentor. This month, make sure to visit our Facebook page as we share with you moments, pictures and quotes to celebrate AFK mentorships.

Upcoming Events



Art and Bingo!

Join us on Sunday, January 24th from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm for art and bingo! We will draw and have a fun bingo game. Mentors, buddies, siblings and friends can all Zoom in for a great time.

[Click here to register](#)

With Gratitude



Thank you Thom Stuart

As we begin 2021, Athletes for Kids would like to give a special shout out to our controller, Thom Stuart. Thom has been working for Athletes for Kids for five years and his financial expertise and attention to detail are just two of the many things we admire about him. Thom has a true passion for all things numbers, and we are grateful for his expertise in his craft, his knowledge of all things budget related and his commitment to the mission of the organization. Thom's other passions include his love of music and spending time with his beautiful family and three dogs! Thank you Thom! We appreciate you!

AFK Moments



As December comes to a close, we welcome January and say goodbye to another year shared with friends and continue to celebrate the impact of kindness, acceptance and inclusion in mentors, buddies and our community.

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