

APRIL IS  
AUTISM  
APPRECIATION  
MONTH

Newsletter - April 2021



Mentor Ian Loo and buddy

I remember when I first met my buddy; I could tell he had a lot to say, he just didn't know how. He would get excited about topics like Mario Kart but then immediately return to his state of introversion. When thinking about what I wanted to give my buddy through this mentorship I remember thinking I wanted to be a role model, but I also wanted to help him in school, and his relationships, and the list goes on. I started meeting with my buddy every Wednesday after school. Our hangouts range from going to Uncle Games, playing with RC cars, or simply eating out. Since the first time meeting my buddy, our relationship has bloomed. A year ago, I would not even dare to think about how comfortable my buddy could become, I was merely focused on getting to understand and know him; now, his face lights up when he sees my car on his street; he describes the challenges he faces due to his disability, and he tells me about his biggest aspirations in life. The tangible progress my buddy has made through this mentorship has not only been beneficial to him, but it has also taught me the

importance of patience and kindness. Mentees in the AFK program face challenges that, to many, are unfathomable. Being a mentor has expanded my lens into the struggles people can face, yet it has also given me a new perspective into how people can find joy through other people. Recounting my years of mentoring and all the lessons I’ve learned, the biggest takeaway for me (and what I think is for most mentors) is: before being a mentor, teacher or role model, be a friend.

Where do I start?! I don’t know how our son would have fared, had he not had a mentor as great as Ian. He looks forward to his weekly visits with Ian. It is fun to watch him plan what they will be doing for their weekly outing. Before COVID, our son had a blast going to Ian’s home and baking with him. Our son has grown and matured so much because of having Ian as a mentor. We look forward to their continued friendship.

**Upcoming Events**



**Let's go to the beach!**

Join us on Sunday, April 18th from 11:30 to 12:30 pm for a virtual experience at the beach! Put on your favorite tourist attire and join us for an hour of beach trivia, a virtual dolphin tour and an art activity.

[Click here to register](#)



**April 25-June 17, 2021**  
**Do it your way**  
**5K, 10K or 54 miles**

Register at  
<https://allinforautism.org>  
**#doityourway**



**All in for Autism Virtual Run/Walk**

Together, let’s make a difference for children with autism and their families!  
[Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club](#) welcomes all Athletes for Kids mentors and

buddies to sign up for the [All in for Autism 2021 Virtual Run/Walk](#). This year, All in for Autism is a virtual event so you can **do it your way**. There’s no need to get up before the crack of dawn on a Sunday morning or even face the cold. You can do a 5K, 10K or 54 miles whenever and however you choose from April 25-June 17, which happens to be a 54-day period. We’re big on 54 because according to the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 54 children in the U.S. is diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and we want to raise awareness about the prevalence of ASD in our society, which affects thousands of families. We’re excited about the energy you will bring to our **#doityourway** social media campaign.

**Save the Date: Senior Mentor Celebration**



**Senior Mentor Celebration**

Mark your calendars for a virtual Senior Mentor Celebration on Sunday, May 23rd from 4:00-5:00pm. Join us as we celebrate our graduates and thank them for the time they have given to the program and most important, their buddy. Registration information will be in the May newsletter. Don’t miss this very special event!

**With Gratitude**



**Thank you Benchmark Motoring**

We are thankful for the support of our 2020 Auction Sponsor: Benchmark Motoring. Quality workmanship and attention to detail are what set Benchmark Motoring apart from any other mobile electronics dealer. More than just a retail store or installation center, Benchmark Motoring is staffed by a highly specialized team of experienced professionals who will consult with you to learn your performance expectations, compare and select the correct components, and answer any questions you may have. Benchmark Motoring is unique among its peers in that it embraces every aspect of vehicle personalization, inside and out.

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**AFK Moments**





As we look back to a month of moments shared with friends we welcome April and celebrate World Autism Appreciation Month as we spread awareness, increase understanding and promote acceptance and inclusion.

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