



February 2026 Newsletter



MIHS mentor Chloe Perla and her buddy

Mentor

I joined Athletes for Kids in my freshman year after a coach encouraged me to get involved, starting out by volunteering at different AFK events. At the time, I didn't realize the program would lead to the most meaningful relationship of my high school experience.

When I began my mentorship in my sophomore year, my buddy and I took the time to get to know each other. She was shy and hesitant to engage in

...and to get to know each other. She was shy and reluctant to engage ... conversation, so we focused on creating a calm, supportive space where she could feel comfortable at her own pace. We spent our first few meetings playing games at home and visiting her favorite stores, slowly building trust. Over time, I began to see quiet but powerful changes. She started initiating conversations, trying new activities, and approaching unfamiliar situations with growing confidence.

Now, our time together includes getting boba, doing science experiments, and hanging out at the mall, all moments that reflect how far she has come and how strong our bond has become. Being her mentor has taught me that meaningful change doesn't come from grand gestures, but from patience, reliability, and simply showing up, even in the smallest moments.

Mentee Parent

As a mom of a child with special needs, one of my biggest hopes is to surround my daughter with people who love her exactly for who she is. My daughter is a big-energy, impulsive child who doesn't always make things easy — especially in social situations. Autism, ADHD, and developmental delays have made it difficult to make and keep friends.

We joined Athletes for Kids hoping a mentor relationship could help build her emotional intelligence and social skills in a way that she felt supportive and genuine. From the start, Chloe has been reliable, mature, calm, patient, and completely unfazed by my daughter being who she is. Chloe meets her where she is and somehow manages to keep things both structured and fun. She looks forward to seeing Chloe, talks about her often, and after they spend time together, she's visibly happier, more regulated, and immediately asking when they can hang out again.

Chloe's family has also been incredibly welcoming, opening their home to our daughter for board game days, Taylor Swift watch sessions, and efforts at baking, all activities she loves. This relationship has been a gift to our family.

As Chloe heads off to college next year, we hope to stay in contact and keep this special connection going. We feel so fortunate to have her in our daughter's life.

Upcoming Event



Board Games and Bingo

Do you love playing games? Join us on **Saturday, February 14th**, from **1:15 to 2:30 PM** for a fun afternoon of board games and bingo at the Fall City Library. Bring a game and join the fun!

Mentors, buddies, and siblings are all welcome to participate!

[Click Here to Register](#)

With Gratitude



JOSHUA P. WILLIAMS FOUNDATION

A final thank you to the JPW Foundation

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering support from the JPW Foundation over the last 23 years. The yearly support has significantly enhanced the Athletes for Kids organization, allowing us to support our high school chapters, welcome new staff, update our technology, and provide scholarships to mentee families. Most importantly, JPW has championed the acceptance and inclusion of children with disabilities, a mission that lies at the core of our values. As JPW closes its doors, please know the final payment is deeply appreciated and will continue to make a lasting impact. It has truly been a wonderful partnership, and we are grateful beyond words.

AFK Moments



As we reflect on a month of memories, we look forward to more mentorship moments and embracing acceptance, friendship, and kindness every day.

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