AFK Youth Mentoring



November 2026 Newsletter



November Impact Story: Lake Washington HS Mentor Nick

Mentor

I first met my buddy in the summer between my freshman and sophomore year of high school. Looking back, I didn't fully know what to expect from an AFK mentorship, but I quickly realized how much I would enjoy the time we spent together. Since then, we've gone to the program's events side by side, and those shared experiences have become some of the best parts of being involved.

What stands out most is how much we've both grown. I've watched my buddy become more confident and comfortable in new situations, and being around him has taught me a lot in return. In many ways, he's been a role model for me just as much as I've tried to be one for him. Seeing things from his perspective, what a younger kid notices, what he looks up to, and how he approaches the world, has given me a clearer sense of what it means to show up for someone.

One of the biggest things I've learned is patience. Early on, I sometimes felt like I needed to hurry things along or guide him toward a specific outcome. Over time, I stopped rushing. Instead, we figure things out together. We talk through what needs to get done and find a way that works for him. That shift has made our time together more meaningful, and it's changed how I handle challenges in other parts of my life too.

AFK is the reason any of this happened. Our connection has flourished over the years in a way I never could have predicted. My buddy has become part of my family, and I've become part of his. That kind of closeness is something I don't think either of us would have found without this program. We help each other, and that's what makes it matter.

Mentee Parent

Nick has been our son's AFK mentor for the last 2+ years! He's shown up for him just about every Sunday since then and helped him grow from both a personal and social standpoint (where our son struggles most). Nick has been a beloved extension of our family as a profound role model for our child that's really made an impact in his life and growth during critical years.

What sets Nick apart is his extraordinary capacity for emotional intelligence, consistency, and active/engaged leadership. Mentoring a younger child requires a rare level of patience, and Nick has shown up for our son through every imaginable milestone – from everyday conversations to teaching him how to bake cookies, how to ice skate (which is extremely frustrating for any beginner), to navigating slopes as a novice skier, and tubing on local waters.

For each new activity that our son broached, Nick was able to work through removing emotional and/or psychological obstacles in the way by providing a safe, nurturing, and educational environment where he explained the goal, how they were going to get there together, and made him feel comfortable with initial failure.

Nick understands that real relationship-building takes time, energy, effort, and patience. Through his steady presence, Nick never pushed or forced connection and/or results; instead, he mastered the art of patient humility, giving our son the space to naturally grow, open up, and thrive while always maintaining a safe environment. We're so thankful for the AFK program & lucky to have Nick in our lives!

With Gratitude



Thank You for Making Boots & Bling for Buddies 2 a Success!

What an incredible night at Boots & Bling for Buddies 2! On behalf of everyone at Athletes for Kids, thank you to each and every person who came out to support our mission and celebrate the power of friendship, inclusion, and mentorship. Whether you attended, donated, sponsored, volunteered, or helped spread the word, your generosity and enthusiasm made the evening truly special.

The room was filled with community spirit, smiling faces, and a shared commitment to creating meaningful connections for the children and families we serve. We are deeply grateful for the support of this amazing community and are honored to ride alongside so many people who believe in making a difference. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for helping make this year's Boots & Bling for Buddies a memorable success!

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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