

June 1, 2016

Maria Strada, Executive Director
Middle Earth
520 North Bridge Street
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Dear Maria,

I am writing this letter to express my sincere gratitude to Middle Earth for providing one of my students with a lunchtime mentor this school year. I currently teach third grade at Lafayette School in Bound Brook. At the start of the school year, I began having difficulty with one of my students. His behavior, from the first day of school when he was suspended for punching another student, was unpredictable and erratic. He would have one good day and then two or three bad ones. His negative behaviors progressed as the year went on and he received suspensions and detentions numerous times. Despite his lack of self-control and poor choices, as well as his lack of a strong male figure in his life, I knew he was a good boy who needed a good role model. It was then that I turned to Middle Earth.

Having been an employee of Middle Earth previously, I was aware of the lunchtime mentoring program and believed that this could help my student. Had I known the impact that a strong mentor would have on my student, I would have contacted you at the very start of the school year! Isaiah Davenport was paired with my student, and began coming to meet with him once a week during his lunch/recess time. After the first meeting, my student was already asking when Isaiah was coming back and looked forward to spending time with Isaiah. Within about a month, Isaiah and I were collaborating on a behavior reward system that allowed my student to earn rewards for displaying positive behaviors in the classroom. The results were amazing. My student consistently earned "smiley faces" each day and couldn't wait to show Isaiah his smiley face charts. His behavior and his general attitude in school improved greatly, and I now often use his behavior as an example to the other students about what they should be doing! By the last week of their time together, my student was running to the door to hug Isaiah when he came in the classroom to get him. My heart melted, and I knew then that Isaiah has had an immeasurable impact on my student's life.

The partnership, or more accurately the friendship, that Isaiah and my student developed this school year was everything that one would hope for out of a mentoring relationship. Isaiah was consistent, reliable, strong when needed, and understanding when needed. He established clear goals with my student, both at home and at school, and monitored and supported him as he worked to accomplish them. Isaiah provided such a good, respectable male role model for my student and in turn my student started taking on those same characteristics. I couldn't have asked for more out of this partnership.

I offer my heartfelt thanks for making this program available to our students. It allowed my student to have a successful year and more importantly to see the value in respect and friendship. Isaiah is a treasure and I will always be grateful to him for

helping my student have a positive year. Your lunchtime mentoring program most certainly has had a real impact on my student's life. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gina Petrusky