

Lunch-Time Mentoring Success Stories

Anthony:

When I first began meeting with Anthony, he was in 7th grade and was very quiet and kept to himself. His father had passed away in the past year and Anthony did not know how to express his feelings regarding this devastating loss. His mother began dating recently and Anthony did not know how to handle that either. These changes had a big impact on him and both his grades and behavior in school. He was not completing assignments and he was characterized as a bully at times because of frequent altercations with other students. We began by playing board games and I allowed Anthony to talk at his own pace. After a few weeks, he felt comfortable with me and our general conversations turned more specific. He began to open up to me and talk about his feelings of loss and of confusion about his mother dating someone new. I was able to listen to him and offer guidance and support. We discussed the goals that Anthony wanted to work towards and I helped him to break them down into smaller, more achievable goals so that he could experience success. Over time he showed great progress. He began to improve his grades and he also stopped getting into fights with others. More importantly, he was able to talk much more openly about his feelings and this helped him to move forward in a positive way in his life.

John:

When I first met John, he was third grade student filled with boundless energy. Both the guidance counselor and his teacher felt that he had great potential to be a good student but he often got distracted in class and displayed behavioral issues. John came from a single parent home. He had extremely limited contact with his father and the family had an open case with DCP&P. Because his behaviors were so challenging, I met with him twice per week throughout the school year. I helped to explain appropriate classroom behavior and what is right and wrong in specific situations. I worked closely with his teacher to develop a behavioral reward system that would help him to improve his behaviors in the classroom. His teacher reported that John asked every day if I was coming to see him. As the weeks passed, John made incremental positive changes in school. His behavior became much more appropriate and his grades improved. His teacher felt as if he was doing very well. I saw John at the park over the summer and he ran up to me with excitement asking how I was. His mother was with him and she thanked me for helping him to have a successful year. He demonstrated what his teacher believed....that he was a great kid who just needed a positive male role model and some guidance and support.

J

I began working with J at the end of the 2015 school year. I had already worked with him in our 21st Century After-School Program, and was well aware of how demanding it could be to work with J in the classroom. He seemed to have a need to be the center of attention and was always up and out of his seat when expected to remain quietly working. He was always finding his way into trouble, but was an exceptionally bright and friendly young man. By the end of the school year, J had been referred to me for Lunchtime Mentoring and we began to meet weekly. What

had, at first, appeared as a flare for the dramatic turned out to be a lifelong battle with attention problems. J struggled with an ability to remain focused throughout the day, to the point where his school work had suffered and he was getting into trouble with teachers on a regular basis. J knew that he needed to do better, but did not know how to begin doing so. I established rapport with J, knowing that this may be a long mentoring relationship, based on a mutual love of sports. At first, our mentoring meetings were simply a way for J to cut loose and let out his energy for an hour, which began helping him feel ready for the second half of his day.

When the following school year began, we again met weekly. J started strong that year in school, and began talking more openly about his family history and his thoughts on how to remain focused in school. As trust began to grow between mentor and student, I worked closely with his family and teachers to develop a strategy for keeping J focused, while still respecting his need to release energy throughout the day. By the end of that school year, J was achieving high marks in all of his classes, was staying out of trouble, and had good behavior reports. He had also joined the school wrestling team and competed at the state level. J had worked hard to improve himself, and with a little help, became a successful student athlete who is focused on a bright future.