

“BE PLEASANTLY SURPRISED”



Jim and Jose

“I’ve always had an interest in mentoring, so when I saw an ad in a newspaper, I called,” explains Jim Hannum, a Senior Partner (SP). “Being a Senior Partner has strengthened my ties to the local community. It’s increased my awareness of the issues and opportunities presented to families that I had previously

not considered, or been aware of. Additionally, it has given me the opportunity to share some of my favorite activities and passions and see them through the eyes of a 13 year old. The sharing goes both ways, and I have enjoyed doing many things I never would have dreamed of doing.”

Jose, 13 and in 8th grade, (Junior Partner) first heard about Partners from his school counselor when he was 10. “I was having some issues at school and they thought a male mentor would be good for me. It sounded okay so I did it. We do lots like eating, movies, sports, circus, museums, and hiking. We build models together, too. Maybe I’ll be an engineer or

test games and toys. I like music, too, and play the cello and guitar, and I sing.

“Before I got angry easily and didn’t talk much. That’s all changed. I listen more and do my homework. Oh, and I really liked it when we delivered Food Baskets for Partners. It’s fun to give people food, and it makes you feel good. It makes you happier [having a mentor],” stresses Jose. “You go from one type of person to another type, and that’s good. Jim’s taught me how to get my homework done, and ways to do things. I don’t get into fights anymore either.”

“There is definitely a sense of satisfaction that comes with seeing your JP make positive changes in his life and knowing you had a hand in making it happen,” exclaims Jim. “Jose is bursting with personality and has a certain wisdom beyond his years. Being a mentor makes you think about your actions and how you’re behaving. It really gets you to draw on your childhood experiences and how they might have been avoided. Sharing that helps Jose navigate some challenges. He’s going to succeed.

“The best things in life come from the connections we make, and usually happen when we least expect it,” says Jim. “I’d recommend getting involved as a mentor and be ready to be pleasantly surprised.”

“ENCOURAGES ME TO DREAM BIG”

For nearly two years, Jackie Schwasinger and Olivia have been an active Partnership. “I was referred by my counselor in 7th grade,” explains Olivia. “At first I felt forced to do it [get a mentor] and now I realize I’ve found somebody who is actually there that you can talk to. She gives me a life perspective from someone who is older – who’s experienced so much and knows what to do or how to talk you through it.”

“I heard on the radio about mentoring and called right away,” says Jackie. “It’s something that would have helped me when I was a teenager. When I first met Olivia she was shy, and I’m pretty sure this Partnership thing was not exactly what she wanted.”

“Yeah,” says Olivia, “I thought Jackie should get out of my house. “I had a very bad temper and barely looked at her. We went bowling for our first outing together with her husband, Brad. I’m a softball player and threw the ball like a softball. Once my finger even got stuck in the ball. I still wasn’t happy, but it did loosen me up a bit.”

“It’s a great match,” stresses Jackie, “because we have such similar tastes and enjoy the same activities. I go to many of her softball games – she’s on varsity as a freshman –

and we both love shopping and eating. Actually, it’s our favourite thing to do!

“Jackie has helped me change,” says Olivia. “My temper is more under control, and although it’s not always easy to make the right choices or decisions about friends, I’m getting better at it. She encourages me to dream big. And, before I do something stupid, she’s gotten me to call her and talk about it. Getting a mentor wasn’t my idea, but now I know it was a really good thing.”

“I can’t thank Partners enough for all their dedicated work,” Jackie notes. “Without a program like Partners, some kids wouldn’t have the opportunity to know we are here for them. Making decisions as a young person can be hard and frustrating. That’s where mentors come in to lend an ear, an extra hug or just a shoulder to lean on. Having Olivia in my life is a blessing. She’s a beautiful, smart and athletic teenager that has a bright future ahead. She will always hold a special place in my heart”



Olivia and Jackie