Friends Youth Mentoring Program
2017 Volunteer Celebration

When asked to share about the mentoring experience, George Smith will be the first to tell you about the truth in the phrase, “mentor one child, enrich two lives”. George has often been our go-to guy to represent the Friends Youth Mentoring Program because of his sincerity and altruism. He has shared his experience with others in hopes to incite them to consider mentoring youth in need. His tales of mentoring moments are humble and often centered on how his mentee has positively influenced him. But tonight we want to shine a spotlight on George for he truly is the one who consistently delivers the positive impact. He is a true ambassador of our program and of the power of mentoring.

George mentored his mentee, James for five years, a considerable amount of time as the Friends Youth Mentoring Program requires only a year commitment of weekly meetings. The renewal of their agreement for those years led to the tally of over 870 mentoring hours, and that is only those that have been officially documented. I am confident that the total amount is well over that number because George is someone who consistently goes above and beyond.

Ever since the two were initially matched when James was ten years old, George has been a constant role model for a child in need of one. As many of you know, our program serves children who are faced with various risk factors. James was not an exception as he and his family have endured challenging and traumatic times. James is one of many children being raised by a solo mother. The resilience and strength this family carries is most impressive and infusing further strength into James’ world was an opportunity George took seriously. James was originally referred when he was in the fourth grade as it was felt that he could benefit from 1:1 attention and the presence of a strong adult male role model. James and George were matched due to similar interests in the outdoors and athletics. George has been highly involved in community athletics and has extended his volunteerism to assist with James’ athletic endeavors. During their 1:1 time, they have enjoyed playing and watching sports, volunteered in the community, shared many conversations over sandwiches and burgers, and worked on various outdoor and indoor projects.
Now in the midst of adolescence, James knows he has someone to count on when he needs help navigating his own responsibilities. George expresses James has matured over the years and is hardworking and focused in his academic, athletic and employment pursuits. George shares that he feels James has a bright future and is well-equipped to pursue anything he wants. While he will humbly say otherwise, George has certainly contributed to James’ healthy development and success as a young man through his thoughtfulness, support and dependability. James himself has vocalized this, even as a youngster, writing an essay describing George as his hero and winning a statewide contest. It is clear to me as they are here tonight that James and his family are appreciative of George’s involvement in their lives.

On behalf of the Youth Mentoring program and the entire agency, I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to George Smith for his volunteerism. We are delighted to recognize him as this year’s recipient of the Youth Mentoring Volunteer Award.