

Excerpts of member Spencer's speech to 215 guests at the Club's 15th Annual Celebrity Breakfast.

November 14, 2016:

For 12 years, I've been a member at Wakeman Boys and Girls Club in Southport. I began playing basketball and going to day camps. I could remember being hesitant at first, but the warm welcome and enthusiasm of the staff helped me to not only get involved but have a great time.

I enjoyed the programs and my new friends so much that I started going to open gym whenever I could. It was there in elementary school I met friends that I'm close with today. After seeing the impact that the club had on myself, I knew I wanted to give back. I started volunteering when I became a part of the Torch Club during 7th and 8th grade. This devotion to service extended onto high school, where I've been a member of the Keystone Club for the past 4 years.

In the club, there are various options for volunteering. I had heard great things about the mentoring program, so I signed up. Mr. Tim paired me with a mentee right away. The first thing I noticed was the smile of my mentee when he realized he had a new mentor. It was then I saw how important it was to the kids to have somebody to look up to.

I saw the impact I could have as a mentor when I met Tyshawn. He is one of the most enthusiastic people I know, and socializing was never an issue for him. However, He had some difficulty organizing his schoolwork and focusing. Every time I come to see Tyshawn we go and read outside his classroom. I help him stay on task, agreeing that if he reads a page I'll read the next.

Sometimes he would be overwhelmed by his homework. I would help him to calm down and take it piece by piece. Sure enough, we would get the work done in time to play football outside. Tyshawn helped me as well. He taught me to laugh and have a good time, as he was always making jokes, dancing and singing.

When I first started the mentoring program, I thought of it simply as my service requirement. However, after having been a mentor for Tyshawn, I realized it was so much more. I'm proud to be his mentor and to have helped him to become a great student and even better person.