

JUN. 2022

"I WANT HER IN MY LIFE FOREVER"

YEARS LATER, BOLDER OPTIONS MENTOR AND MENTEE STAY CONNECTED

Bolder Impact Story



Sarah & Ashley at Mentor and Alumni Appreciation Night, 2019

When Ashley was first paired with her Bolder Options mentor, Sarah, they were both a bit nervous. Ashley was a quiet 14-year-old who was skeptical about mentoring. Sarah was an introvert who wanted to make a difference but doubted whether a teenager would like spending time with her.

Their bond grew as they spent more time together. They'd go to the gym and ran a 5k. They also attended Bolder Options events with staff and other pairs.

Little did they know that four years later they'd remain close friends—even as Ashley begins college. They still text regularly and meet up to go for walks and talk about life. "She's one of the people that I know I can count on no matter what," Ashley said. "I want her in my life forever."

Ashley once confided in Sarah that she didn't like high school, and Sarah admitted that she hadn't liked it either. It validated her feelings and built trust between them.

"She was so open-minded," Ashley said. "I felt like I could open up to her."

When they graduated from the program, neither was ready to say goodbye. They have continued to stay connected. Sarah attended Ashley's high school graduation, and they even went on a weeklong Bolder Options alumni trip to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

"I've seen your confidence grow, and you're trying new things," Sarah told Ashley. "You'd never been camping, but you signed up for seven days in the wilderness with no breaks. I'm just so proud of how brave you are."

Sarah's confidence has grown, too. She even took on a new Bolder Options mentee, a step that Ashley fully endorsed.

"I didn't know at the start how much I needed her, but over time I've realized how much Sarah has impacted my life in a positive way," Ashley said. "If she can do that for someone else, then yes, please do it."

The depth of their lasting relationship is just one example of the impact that Bolder Options mentoring has on lives, not only for the mentee but the mentor, too.



Sarah & Ashley at Ashley's High School graduation ceremony, 2021