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BRANDON'S

Bolder Impact Story



Over the summer months Brandon and his mentee went on bike rides around Minneapolis

Brandon Wurzinger had long been interested in doing some type of youth mentoring, but he hadn't found the right opportunity.

That is, until he attended a bike race in St. Paul a little over a year ago and came upon a Bolder Options information table. There, Outreach Director Lucy Bossert told him about the organization and invited him to apply to be a mentor.

"I try to be open to new opportunities as I go about life, and if something feels right, to just take advantage of it," he said.

And that's exactly what Brandon did. He's now actively engaged as a Bolder Options mentor, an experience he has found to be as rewarding for him as it has been for his young mentee.

Last January, Brandon was paired with a 14-year-old boy. They quickly hit it off with a shared passion for history.

The first activity they did together was a snowshoeing event with other Bolder Option pairs at a nature center in Shoreview. It was something neither of them had ever done before.

Since then, they've tried a bunch of other new activities together, including mountain biking, disc golf, and yoga. They even trained for — and completed — a 5k together.

“He’s always open to different types of activities, so we’ve been doing a lot of different things outside, new experiences for him,” Brandon said. “He’s really been enjoying that.”

The COVID-19 pandemic put a bit of a damper on things, but Brandon and his mentee continued to stay connected even when they couldn’t physically get together.

“It certainly made things a little bit more challenging,” the elder Brandon said. “We were kind of on a roll with doing activities and getting outside more than he was used to doing. It was a little disheartening to break that rhythm, but we were able to work through it.”

For a couple of months, they mostly engaged in a series of virtual activities coordinated by Bolder Options. That helped keep the relationship going, but Brandon was excited when they were able to start meeting up again for some outdoor activities later in the summer.

Brandon and his mentee get together once or twice a week for a total of two to four hours. They also call or text each other from time to time.

And Brandon says he’s seen the teen grow over the past year. In particular, he’s become much more confident.

“Just seeing that progress has been really rewarding for me,” Brandon said. “It makes me feel like I’m making a difference.”



Brandon and his mentee at the Bolder Options pumpkin carving event last fall

Click [here](#) to learn more about becoming a Bolder Options mentor.