

## **Bill Riviere – Adams Middle School**

### **The Guilford Courier**

#### **Meet the Mentor September 12, 2013**

**Written by Wendy Renz**

If you're a soccer player, or a fan cheering on the sideline, you know Bill Riviere as a dedicated fan and game referee. If you're a small business owner, you may have crossed paths with Bill through his involvement with SCORE, and if you're a student at Adams Middle School, you've probably seen Bill in the halls or outside shooting some hoops with his 7<sup>th</sup> grade mentee. Bill enjoys all these activities in his retirement and puts his heart and soul into each one.

During his collegiate years at the University of Maine, from which he graduated with a master's degree in mechanical engineering, Bill's main sports were football and track. Introduced to the game of soccer by his three daughters, Bill volunteered as a parent coach and then as a Guilford Soccer Club Board member who was instrumental in the formation of Guilford's first girl's premier travel teams.

In 1989, he and his wife Leslie, joined Guilford's all-girls Soccerfest tournament committee. Sixteen years later, they were awarded Soccerfest's 12<sup>th</sup> Player Award given annually to an individual who has devoted immeasurable hours of volunteer service to the game of soccer and to Soccerfest. Bill still keeps involved in the sport by refereeing close to 100 games per year on the high school and youth levels.

Before retiring in 2008, Bill had a successful management career in the engineering and manufacturing aspects of several businesses, including Olin Corporation's Winchester Firearms Division in New Haven, Olin Ski Co. in Middlefield, and the Risdon Corporation in Naugatuck. Under Bill's guidance and talent for managing people and overseeing technical issues, the companies prospered and Bill had become a business turnaround specialist. He used his skills

to form partnerships for the purchase and operation of two Connecticut manufacturing companies before ending his career.

Upon retirement, Bill joined the South eastern Connecticut chapter of SCORE, a Small Business Association-sponsored non-profit association dedicated to encouraging the formation, growth, and success of small businesses through counseling and mentor programs. In the past four years, he has assisted nearly 100 clients and spends 10 to 20 hours per week helping start-up businesses get underway.

It was Leslie and mentor Joe Goldberg who encouraged Bill to join the Guilford School Youth Mentoring Program three years ago. They knew he enjoyed being involved with kids and had a big heart. Since Bill has a passion for sports, he was paired with an energetic 4<sup>th</sup> grader at the Melissa Jones School.

On one of their initial meetings, Bill was getting a tour of the school and his mentee led him into his classroom, where he proudly showed off his new mentor. Their friendship has blossomed to the point where Bill looks forward to the one-on-one basketball games played outside during their mentoring time at Adams Middle School and occasionally attends his athletic mentee's Little League games. They often talk about sports and last night's game on television, even though they may be cheering for the opposing team.

One of my favorite mentoring moments came when his mentee asked if Bill could come during his study hall every day of the week. Bill's hope is that more men will consider entering the mentoring program since the list of boys awaiting a caring mentor is especially long. "It's amazing," says Bill, "how giving just one hour of your time per week can have such a positive effect on a child's life and your own."