



Meet the Mentor

Darin Meder • Guilford High School
By Danielle Howard

Darin Meder is a busy man with a sales career, three young children and a mischievous dog who likes to eat toys. He is also the mentor of a senior at Guilford High School, who he's been meeting with since he was a sophomore in 2008.

Darin graduated from GHS himself in 1987, and his entire family still lives in Guilford. Even his best friend still lives just minutes away. He works from home as he and his wife Darra raise their children Tatum, 9, Natalie, 7, and Blake 2 ½.

The Meder's schedule is pretty packed: they volunteer at Guilford Lakes events, the girls have their own activities, Darra is taking night classes to get her Reading Certificate, and Darin plays soccer three nights a week. "My soccer league is over-30, but I'm actually looking forward to switching to over-40 so I won't have all these young guys running circles around me anymore," Darin continued, laughing.

His other commitment, the Madison Jaycees and their numerous philanthropic projects, is what led him to try mentoring. Fellow Jaycee Bettina Braisted, who is also a mentor, asked him a couple of times if he would like to become a mentor. Darin recalled, "By the third time she asked, I figured, what bad could come out of this? Now, I think I probably get more out of it than he does."

"The benefits of mentoring for the mentor are pretty easy to recognize," Darin noted. "I get a nice break to hang out with someone who is truly a friend. When you're in the room together, there are no distractions, no phones. Sometimes we just walk laps outside around the school while we talk."

Students come to the mentoring program from many different sources: teachers, parents, and counselors often suggest a student for the program. Darin's mentee told him that one of his friends had a mentor and he loved it, so he thought he'd like to try it.

When I asked him about his mentee, Darin replied, "He's just a regular kid, but what's amazing to me is the amount of respect he has for his dad. They do a lot of really great things together - family trips, rock concerts - things that I think he'll remember all his life."