

## Meet the Mentor: David Summerlin



**Dani Howard**

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For about a year, David Summerlin has been meeting with his 2nd-grade mentee at Guilford Lakes School every week. During their sessions, he spends about half of the time reading aloud because his mentee really enjoys that. The rest of the time they play games together and talk. Summerlin is a volunteer mentor with the Guilford Youth Mentoring Program (GYM).

Summerlin is originally from Hagerstown, Maryland, but has lived in Guilford since 1977. He worked as a tennis pro in high school and again after college, where he earned a B.S. in biology from Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia. Then he went into the insurance business and has spent 35 years as an agent specializing in health insurance. Last year, he moved his office to Guilford.

As a Guilford Rotary member for the last eight years, Summerlin had spoken with many fellow Rotarians who were mentors, and his wife is the librarian at Cox School, so he was always aware of the mentoring program.

"I've wanted to become a mentor for five years, but I couldn't do it because I worked out of town," he said. "When I relocated my office to Guilford, I could finally mentor."

Summerlin is still an avid tennis player. He also golfs and loves saltwater fishing. Though he enjoys his athletic outlets and busy career, his favorite place to be is in his "off-the-grid" cabin in Vermont. With a combination of solar power, propane, generator, and wood stove, it's a place to read, relax, and get away from it all. He and his wife, Kathleen, try to get there at least once a month.

The couple has two grown children and two rescue dogs. Their daughter just finished a year volunteering with AmeriCorps and their son is attending Washington University in St. Louis. Beside being active in Rotary, David was also a dedicated sports coach for basketball and soccer while his kids were growing up.

Surprisingly, Summerlin found that mentoring is really helping him, not just his mentee.

"Now that my own kids are adults, I miss my fathering years. Mentoring is satisfying my desire to spend some time around kids. As far as the mentoring itself goes, you can only be optimistic that you're modeling a good example," he said. "My guy has made it clear that he looks forward to my visits, and that's enough for me."

To become a mentor or help support the program, call Guilford Youth Mentoring at 203-453-2741, ext. 269, email [solomonb@guilfordschools.org](mailto:solomonb@guilfordschools.org), or visit [www.guilfordmentoring.org](http://www.guilfordmentoring.org).