

# Little League, Basketball, Mentoring: Danaher Pitches In

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Photo by Pam Johnson/ The Guilford Courier

Doug Danaher says raising a family in a community that has so much to offer its residents makes getting involved easy. The co-owner of Guilford's Stone Agency Insurance volunteers with Guilford Little League, Guilford Basketball League, and Guilford Youth Mentoring.

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From managing equipment for 800 kids to supporting a single student, Doug Danaher volunteers to enrich young lives in Guilford.

Doug and his wife Sudie moved here in 1998, attracted by Guilford's beauty and charm. But it's Guilford's community spirit that's made them feel lucky to be raising their two children here.

"We liked Guilford based upon its physical features, at first," says Doug. "But when our kids started getting involved in school, that's when we realized this is a really special place. And as they progress, we're blown away by what a great community this is."

Doug first went to bat to help out when following his son Charlie (now 13) onto the tee-ball field in 2004, by signing on to Guilford Little League Baseball and Softball as a tee-ball coach. Doug's been involved ever since, with some coaching and always as a team manager

each spring. Doug's daughter Janie (now 11) plays softball and Sudie pitches in with floral plantings at the monuments and field behind Adams Middle School.

"We really get involved as a family," says Doug.

Doug just completed three years as Guilford Little League equipment manager, supplying upwards of 50 teams or about 800 kids.

"It pretty much requires putting every kid in uniform and supplying every team with bats and balls," says Doug of the volunteer role. "It's a year-round job! I asked for it, and it's worked out fine."

Doug, a native of Orange, has experience managing a large group in a sport setting. Through 2007, he served for 14 years on Orange Hills Country Club board, including five years as president.

"That involved managing an organization with 250 people. It got me into the sports administration end of things and I made great friends there, too."

With that kind of experience, managing Little League equipment may seem par for the course, but it's still a big job. This year, the league has split the duties among two volunteers, one for Little League and one for softball. Doug will continue helping by managing its softball equipment and uniforms.

Doug's also equipment manager for Guilford Basketball League, for which he's also board member (three years as secretary). The Danahers' daughter plays in the league and Doug also coaches to help out.

Whether he's volunteering at a ball field, basketball court, or board room, Doug says the best part of getting involved is the people you meet.

"The people I've met are some of the nicest people in this town," says Doug, who owns Guilford's Stone Agency Insurance with Rob Oman.

Doug and Rob signed on at Stone Agency together in 1997, recruited from New Haven by Rob's sister Nancy Oman, who purchased the company from Leverett Stone in 1996. Doug and Rob became owners in 2006.

"The Stone Agency has been in Guilford since 1859. There was always a Stone here until Lev retired in 1997-and I still talk to Lev," says Doug.

It was Rob's wife, Jyl Lozier-Oman, a Guilford Public Schools social worker, who suggested both Rob and Doug join Guilford Youth Mentoring (GYM) five years ago.

"We both signed up and we both do it to this day," says Doug, who's also a GYM board member. "I've encouraged a lot of baseball people to try it, as well. When your kids are out of Little League, there's less parental involvement, so I know people are kind of looking for something to do. This is a good transition."

The 2nd grader Doug began mentoring is now in 7th grade. He and Doug continue to meet, for one hour a week, during each school year. The experience is something Doug feels has enriched both their lives.

"At first, he was really into the outdoors. We'd go sledding, hiking, catching frogs, fishing. Now he's matured and we just talk. It's such a unique relationship-you're not a parent; you're not a friend...I guess you're like an advocate. The simplest thing we [mentors] always say is we're just there for them."

For Doug, the reward of living in Guilford is what motivates him to be among the many people who volunteer their time to make this community great.

"It makes it easy to get involved, because you want to keep it going that way."