

Meet the Mentor: Matt Ursone

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Matt Ursone

You will probably cross paths with Matt Ursone at some point in your week. He works 20-plus hours at Big Y, is a full-time student earning a degree in sports management at Southern Connecticut State University, puts in hours at the Community Center when they need him, and sets aside at least an hour a week to mentor a 3rd-grade student at Guilford Lakes Elementary School. If you ask him what the best part of his week is he will tell you-without hesitation-that it is mentoring.

Matt is a Guilford native and a class of 2003 Guilford High School graduate. He still lives in the area and always looked for ways to stay connected to the community and work with children. It's easy to see why-he has more energy than most kids.

Matt feels strongly that it is important to "give back to the community that raised me." After high school, Matt approached the Guilford Parks & Recreation Department for some volunteering opportunities. That eventually led to employment

and the realization that he should pursue a degree that combined his passions. When he isn't at work or school, Matt loves to play pick-up basketball, go to the movies, and watch his beloved Knicks.

He learned about mentoring after reading an article in the *Courier* about a friend who was involved with Guilford Youth Mentoring.

"It just clicked," Matt said. "It was something I knew I definitely wanted to do."

Not one to sit around, he immediately contacted the organization and was matched originally with a student at the high school with whom he met for about a year. Since he enjoyed working with younger students through Parks & Rec camps, he also volunteered to meet with an elementary student who was waiting for a mentor.

He loves the weekly meetings with his 3rd-grade buddy. Matt feels like he has gained a friend and looks forward to their time together. He describes his young friend as witty and fun. Whether outdoors running around or indoors playing games they manage to pass the time with a lot of laughs.

"It feels good to do something positive and help someone else," he said.

Matt appreciates that only an hour each week makes such a positive impact on his mentee.

"I urge more men to get involved with this program," Matt said. "You will not regret being a mentor."