

Meet the Mentors: Steve and Amy Shelton

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A.W. Cox Elementary and Guilford High School

When Steve Shelton joined Guilford Youth Mentoring (GYM) in 2011 he enjoyed it so much that it had a snowball effect. A friend had recommended him and, by the following year, he had not only recruited his wife, Amy, but several of their friends, as well. For the Sheltons, as is true for many involved in the program, it is a win-win situation since they feel that they receive as much benefit from the relationship as does the child they mentor.

The Sheltons met as undergrads at Boston University, from which they both earned masters degrees in public health. Steve is an administrator for a nursing home, Branford Hills Healthcare Center, at which he has worked for 23 years. Amy works part-time at Yale, at which she's a research associate for a study on seniors.

Amy and Steve are busy parents with three children of their own ranging in age from middle school to college. That doesn't deter them from earmarking one hour a week to meet with each of their mentees at school. Steve believes that the mentor/mentee relationship is special since there's no pressure to be a boss, counselor, or caregiver. In fact, sometimes it's just a matter of showing up and being a friend who will talk, listen, and care. Amy

agrees and says that her mentee enjoys their time together so much that she wants her to come more days!

Steve's mentee is a freshman boy at Guilford High School who happens to share his passion for music. One of Steve's hobbies is playing guitar in a local amateur band called the Muddy Rudders. (The band's drummer is also a mentor-nice job, Steve!) You might catch Steve on open mic night at the Country Tavern or at a private party some day. He's been doing some strumming with his mentee since they discovered that they have a similar interest and it only increases the bond the two already had.

Steve found GYM to be so rewarding that he recently volunteered to be an academic coach at Adams Middle School for a 7th grader who needs help in math. He enjoys doing something good for a student as well as the challenge of brushing up on his math skills.

Amy's mentee is a 2nd-grade girl at A.W. Cox Elementary School. They often go outside to the playground when weather permits, play board games, or just use their imagination in creative play. If things get hectic in Amy's life and she has to postpone a mentor meeting, she will get a call from the school that her mentee really misses her and wants to know when she's coming. For Amy, it's a nice feeling to know that she's making a real difference in someone's life.

Amy also gives back to the community by participating in the Meals On Wheels program in town and is co-president of TAPS (Theater Arts Parent Support) at Guilford High School. When time permits, she enjoys creating pottery at the Guilford Arts Center.

Both Steve and Amy wholeheartedly believe that the little bit of effort that it takes to be a student's mentor can never equal the valuable one-on-one time it gives a child.