



## Meet the Mentor

Victoria DaCato • Baldwin Middle School

By Wendy Renz

It's no wonder Victoria DaCato's fifth grade mentee can't wait for the weekly meetings with her energetic, friendly and stylish mentor. At thirty-two years old, Victoria is one of a growing group of young professionals who are giving back to the community by volunteering their time at one of Guilford's schools as a student mentor.

To Victoria, the forty-five minute break from her hectic work week as the Branch Manager for Guilford Savings Bank's Madison location, is something she looks forward to and says is definitely worth the extra effort to get there. A mentor at Baldwin Middle School since last November, she usually meets her mentee for lunch and often sits in the bustling cafeteria chatting with the young girl and her friends. When the weather permits, Victoria will join them outside at recess where they can all get some fresh air and burn up some energy.

Victoria has fond memories of Baldwin since her family moved to Guilford when she was in the fifth grade. At Guilford High School she was a cheerleader, an activity that she continued in college at Southern Connecticut State University. She also took to the floor in dance competitions, a hobby that she pursued for ten years in her youth.

Not one to sit still now that she's joined the work force, she visits the gym regularly and keeps fit by walking her dog and participating in sports related charity events. She enjoys helping out with the Special Olympics and has participated in Madison's Penguin Plunge for eight years in a row! Victoria is also a board member for Madison's ABC house where she enjoys participating in the boys' family weekends, holiday concerts and festivities.

Volunteering is not new to Victoria and she encourages people of all ages to get involved. As a teenager in high school, she worked with students in the special needs program and then took education classes in college intending to become a special education teacher. Her plans changed after realizing she also had a head for business during a management training position she took with Filene's to pay the bills. She went on to buy her first house at just twenty-one, later selling it to buy her current home.

Victoria loves children and hopes to raise a family of her own one day soon. First she has to finish planning her wedding set for October. For now, she's happy to make a difference in one child's life and hopes their relationship will continue through graduation. "If you're having a bad day," says Victoria "that will all change when you walk through the school's door and see a smile light up your mentee's face."

To find out how you can become a mentor or help support our program, please call Guilford Youth Mentoring (203) 453-2741 ext 269, email us at [solomonb@guilford.k12.ct.us](mailto:solomonb@guilford.k12.ct.us) or visit our website at [www.guilfordmentoring.org](http://www.guilfordmentoring.org).