



WINTER 2024

# GPS Mentor Program



## THE MONTH OF THE MENTOR

Launched in 2002, National Mentoring Month was established as a way to “unify and expand the mentoring movement, celebrate the power of relationships, and raise awareness around the importance of youth mentoring in the United States.” The GPS student mentor program launched many initiatives during the month of January to celebrate mentorship, recognize our mentors, and encourage the community to participate in our program. Some of the National Mentoring Month activities included:

- Meet the Mentor Breakfast
- Virtual informational sessions for prospective mentors
- Inaugural hanging of our new mentor program banner
- Thank Your Mentor Day- January 25th - celebrated with hand made cards from mentee to mentors
- Mentor program highlighted in The Day newspaper  
<https://www.theday.com/local-news/20240127/groton-kids-have-more-mentors-in-their-corner/>

As a result of our National Mentoring Month efforts, we now have close to 60 mentors active in our program and another 10 finishing the mentor screening process! If you, or someone you know is considering being a “champion” for one of our students, they can submit an interest form at:

**[www.grotonschools.org/mentor](http://www.grotonschools.org/mentor)**

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

**National Mentor Month**

**Gratitude Partnerships**

**Community Partners**

**Mentor Spotlight**



# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



GROTON UTILITIES

We are thrilled to have partnered with Groton Utilities and Catherine Kolnaski PTO this quarter! Through their generous donations, we were able to provide our mentors with an amazing breakfast and an opportunity to visit and collaborate with other “champions.” We are also grateful for a partnership with Copycats Printing. Through their generous donation of a 16' x 3' banner, we will be able to advertise our program and recruit more mentors.



## Gratitude Partners



Paul's Pasta and CuddleLeigh Blankets have chosen to be a Gratitude Partners this quarter! Paul's Pasta has graciously donated a \$25 gift certificate to be redeemed at one of their local restaurants. Paul's Pasta has been a staple in Groton since 1988 and is recently under new ownership.

CuddleLeigh Blankets, an etsy store that sells locally, handmade baby blankets has donated a \$25 gift card to Sift Bakery.

The winners of this quarter's Mentor Gratitude Partner rewards are:

**Sher Lofgren - Paul's Pasta**  
**Shannon Foley - Sift Bakery**

Please support the local businesses that choose to support our program!

## UPCOMING MENTOR EVENTS

### New Mentor Trainings

First Wednesday of The Month  
5:30 -6:30 on Zoom

### Mentor/Mentee Recognition

**Dinner**  
April 25th

# Mentor Spotlight

## John Silsby



### **How long have you been a mentor?**

I began mentoring about 25 years ago. At the time I began mentoring, I lived in North Tonawanda, NY and the Rotary Club of the Tonawandas initiated a mentoring program at Payne Jr. High School. When I moved to Groton in 2000, I signed up for the mentoring program with Groton Public Schools. I was a mentor until Covid paused the program. My wife and I rejoined the mentoring program this past spring.

### **Why did you want to become a mentor?**

I became a mentor for a several reasons. My career was in community recreation so I've worked with kids all of my life. In addition, my Dad was a schoolteacher and many of his lessons I have been able to use as a Mentor. Furthermore, I've had many Mentors who made a difference in my life, so I know the long-term value of mentoring. Finally, I value role modeling and try to be a good role model for my mentees. I help them value their successes so they may have many more.

### **What is your most memorable moment as a mentor?**

My most memorable moment is when my mentee smiles and thanks me for spending time with him. I've mentored students at all three levels of education in Groton. One of my mentees I mentored from elementary school to high school. Seeing them progress academically and socially was a very rewarding experience for me.

### **What is your favorite thing to do with your mentees?**

Generally, I use card and board games to initiate interaction between us. During our conversation, I try to build their self-confidence and also teach them to think through situations short term and long term. We discuss the value of education and the importance of enjoying today and planning for tomorrow.

Being a mentor makes my day! I enjoy interacting with children of different personality types. I was a shy kid so I try to help shy boys gain confidence and self esteem. For boys with lots of energy, I try to help them focus on worthwhile outcomes. If I can help each mentee just a little, my day is a better one!! My ultimate goal is helping every mentee be all that he can be!