



In Their Own Words . . . From Our Mentors



Please visit our [YouTube page](#) to see our mentor recruitment video, as well as individual videos of our wonderful mentors.

Our mentors assist the coaches during practices by helping to teach skating and hockey skills and providing positive feedback and encouragement. They build working relationships with the Cheetahs, they get to know and understand children with disabilities, and they forge bonds with them based on a common interest in hockey. Mentors gain their own self-confidence as leaders, and their ability to understand difference and feel compassion grows.

Katie

What does being a mentor for the Cheetahs mean to me?

Well, it means so much to me. Being able to help others learn to play hockey has been an amazing experience.

I have had some challenges along the way, of course. For example, when I was passing the puck with one of the Cheetahs I had some challenges trying to get her to pass the puck back to me; and then when she finally did the feeling of excitement, joy, and pleasure in being able to teach her what to do and having her make a connection with me was awesome!

Another time I faced challenges, was when I was working with Alex. The first time didn't go so great and he ended up leaving the ice about twenty minutes before practice ended. But you know what they say... third time's the charm! Well, lucky for me second time was the charm! This time he stayed calm, only tried to get off the ice once, and we even had some fun along the way!

The third and final time I faced a challenge was when I was with Connor. Connor is very quiet, so when I asked him a question he knew what I was talking about, and was able to respond but unless I bent down and was right next to him I couldn't hear a word he said. At first, I didn't realize that he was able to respond and then

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he would get upset. Fortunately for both of us, I realized that he was talking to me and I just had to listen closely...it was all smooth sailing from there!

In conclusion, being a mentor for Cheetahs Hockey is a thrill, a challenge, but most of all rewarding to know that I'm making a difference in someone's day. Being able to help a Cheetah learn something that I

love has been so epic. My favorite place to be is on the ice and now I have the chance to help other people learn the great sport of hockey. I've learned that you don't have to be a great skater or have good stick handling to play the game, but you do need determination and support from those around you. I'm hopeful that my support will help a Cheetah love hockey even more than I do!



Andrew

My name is Andrew. I am 12 years old and I am in 6th grade at Tilden Middle school in Rockville, Maryland.

I have been in the Cheetahs organization mentoring for about 6 months now. In addition to all of the great things that the Cheetahs do for children with special challenges, the Cheetahs have also been a very big help to me. Probably the most important thing about the Cheetahs is that you make a lot of friendships. I have made many friends in both my school and in my neighborhood.

Another thing is that I have learned to take on a lot of responsibilities mentoring someone about your age. Finally I think that the most important thing is having fun and loving the game of hockey because it is a great fun sport!



Matt



I was very nervous my first day with the Montgomery Cheetahs. I didn't know anyone in the locker room so I dressed as quickly as I could and went out to the rink. As soon as the rink door opened, I went out onto the ice. All of a sudden, it seemed like there were two hundred kids zooming all around me. I tried to avoid getting run over and was happy when one of the coaches blew his whistle to gather everyone in the middle of the ice.

I was partnered to work with someone who had been with the Cheetahs for over a year. I didn't know what to expect, but as we started to do the drills together, we both started to have

a lot of fun. We were sad when the session ended and looked forward to working together again the next week.

I'm thirteen years old and have been playing hockey for seven years. Last year, my team made it to the USA Hockey National Championships. This first day with the Cheetahs was one of the best hockey days I've ever had. I've been a mentor ever since and the players I've worked with have taught me a lot about encouragement, patience, and perseverance both on and off the ice.

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Being a Cheetah Mentor is Awesome!

Student Service Learning hours, or SSL hours, are required by Montgomery County Public Schools. Volunteering was new to me but my Mom had heard about the Montgomery Cheetahs, which is a special needs hockey team. We sent them an e-mail to find out about their mentoring program.

As it turns out, I volunteer every Saturday morning at the Cabin John Ice Rink. I work with the players to help them with their skating and hockey skills. I know that the purpose of mentoring is to give of yourself to help others, and that is how this began for me, but it has turned into something much more than that.

Although waking up at the crack of dawn on a Saturday morning is not top on my list of things to do, the fact that I am going to work with the Cheetahs makes it easier to do. Mentoring the Cheetahs has given something to me too. I have learned how important it is for everyone to be able to work to achieve something for themselves. When I am working with one of the Cheetahs, and they keep working until they improve their skills, and they feel like they have done something huge, that is what it is all about.

People with limitations or challenges want to achieve goals just like the rest of us and helping them has given me a feeling of accomplishment, and being able to work to help them not give up is awesome.



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