



Robert & Justin: A Shared Story



As you can see from his face Robert has a passion for welding and really gets into his work! Since his freshman year, Robert knew he wanted to pursue a career in welding, but he did not know whether to go to a trade school or a community college or just look for a welding job upon graduation. Then one day last fall, two Central High School counselors came to his senior Economics class and offered all students the opportunity to have a community mentor to help them navigate their journey beyond CHS.

Slightly reticent, Robert thought he would take a chance with the offer because he “did not want to struggle at the end of his senior year” and he was “not aware of a step by step plan” to accomplish this overwhelming paperwork and research laden task on his own.

Today, his advice to other seniors is to participate in the CHS-Gate Mentoring Partnership for seniors. He is set to go to Linn Benton Community College in the fall with his college application and FAFSA complete and financial assistance from Oregon Promise and the local Ivy B.Thomas Scholarship already in place...thanks to the help and encouragement from his mentor, Justin Kramer. They also attended an LBCC open house and the official and televised signing day. Robert recalled that day was “just like Christmas for he and Justin”.

Additionally with Justin’s instruction and advice, Robert learned to drive using a stick shift, got his driver’s license and bought his first truck. All are needed to be able to commute to the LBCC Albany campus each day where he will learn new skills to help him achieve his professional goal – to be the best welder he can be. For Robert, the mentoring experience was a highlight of his senior year and the beginning of a long lasting friendship.

Read more about Robert’s mentor, Justin, on the back page.

Volunteer Spotlight: Justin Kramer

Justin Kramer has served as Robert's remarkable mentor this year. Robert self-selected Justin, the Central High School head custodian and assistant baseball coach, to be his mentor because he "has always held Justin in high esteem and thought "having him as a mentor would allow him to really get to know him well."



The two of them clicked and soon Robert was using his welding skills to help Justin with projects around the school and he actually designed and built a ground leveler for the CHS baseball field.

Justin spent many hours helping Robert achieve success in his transition beyond CHS. Humbly, Justin says he "was lucky and grateful to be part of Robert's journey and to play an important role in his senior year." The truth is, Justin unofficially mentors CHS students all day long. As his mentee, Robert puts it, "Justin is a great listener and problem solver who can change students' perspectives about themselves from negative to positive with one conversation."

Justin sums it all up this way, "I have the best job. In any given moment I have the opportunity to make a positive difference in a student's life. Success stories like Robert's affirm I am in the right place and doing the right thing."

Because of your support, students like Robert and mentors like Justin are both being blessed through the mentoring program. Thank you for helping create a safe space for the youth of our community to be known, encouraged and encounter the love of Christ.

THE PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

"The beginning of a long lasting friendship"—that's what we always hope for at The Gate! What begins as a need for help with college applications, FAFSA forms, scholarship entries and acceptance letters turns into a lasting relationship. As we look into expanding our mentoring collaboration with CHS, we research statistics on other programs, estimate the numbers of kids who could use help and try to figure out how to put together the resources we need. But, the bottom line is, we want to add one more trusted adult to the group of people a student can call friends. It's about a relationship where we can listen, solve problems, have fun and move a life forward. Sometimes that's called mentoring, sometimes it's playing a game of octoball, sometimes it's sharing how to make an awesome stir-fry and sometimes it's just a conversation over lunch, but it's always about knowing kids, encouraging them and sharing the love of Christ with them. I want to thank you for investing in The Gate.

One of the ways you have recently invested in The Gate was at our annual Garden Party where over \$18,000 was given in support of The Gate's programs and services, and over \$19,000 was given and pledged (so far) toward the Community Youth Center capital campaign. We are so grateful for your support!

THE GATE GOLF TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 10TH

Shotgun Start at 9am

Salem Golf Club

2025 Golf Course Road S, Salem, 97302



Sponsored By

dalke construction co., inc.

For more information email Kyle: kyled@thegateyouth.org