



A Successful Transition to Life After High School



The confident smiles on the faces of these two Central High School graduating seniors, Christina and Ivan, tell it all. They are two of the twenty seniors who participated in The Gate/Central High School Mentoring program this year. They emphatically say they are “feeling very secure about where they are headed” and “on track with a strong sense of direction” thanks to the help they received from their Gate mentors this year.

Gaining that confidence though, has been a year long journey. Christina signed up for mentoring first because she was “feeling overwhelmed with how to successfully navigate the post high school process.” She knew some of the steps to take but realized having individual guidance would help make her senior year “less stressful and her future more secure”. Ivan followed his friend, Christina’s, lead when he began to “feel lost even though he had a basic understanding of what needed to be done.”

Now, after a school year of face-to-face meetings, email exchanges, early morning and late-night texts, help filling out forms, mentor-written letters of recommendation and proofing college essays, both students are set with a plan for the fall. Christina is headed to Western Oregon University to participate in its bi-lingual teaching program with at least 3 renewable scholarships. Ivan is set to go to Chemeketa Community College and acquire a two-year degree in criminal justice with the help of tuition assistance through the Oregon Promise Act.

They both agree (still smiling confidently) that participating in the mentoring program and having an extra adult in their lives their senior year was a big relief and has “set them up for a successful transition to life after CHS.”

Gate programs like mentoring consistently provide opportunities for youth to be known, encouraged to learn and grow, and encounter Christ’s unconditional love.

The Mentoring Duo

Meet Chris and Kathy Jensen, the mentoring duo that came alongside Christina this year and helped her become confident about her life beyond high school.

Kathy, a retired Spanish teacher and Chris, a retired agricultural consultant, still live a very full life managing a tree farm, kayak fishing, taking care of a grandson a couple of days a week and growing and preserving their own fruits and vegetables. Additionally, they still find time to volunteer in their church nursery and have been part of the Gate/CHS mentoring program for the past three years.



Kathy, who enjoys making connections with teenagers, says "mentoring is something I find interesting because I learn along with the student. It is a bit like being a cheerleader and a parent, encouraging them while they are making choices in their lives. It is exciting to see how wide open their futures are."

Chris added that mentoring is not that difficult or time consuming and that their mentees have been responsible to follow through with appointments and deadlines. He said, "It is exciting to see them when they get accepted to colleges and start finding scholarship money." Last year they got to attend their mentee's graduation and take pictures together. To quote Chris, "It was really a fulfilling experience!"

Students continue to ask to be mentored each year. If you are interested in becoming a mentor please email Joyce Wahl at joyce.wahl1@gmail.com.

THE PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

Two caring adults plus two students in need equals two students prepared and two adults rewarded. Sounds like a win-win! Certainly, the goal is to prepare the kids for their next steps but whenever I have a conversation with someone who invests their time into a young adult, they always tell me how they benefit as well. Building relationships with our youth is what The Gate is about. Mentoring is set up to be a one on one relationship, but all our programming is in place to provide opportunities for adults to build relationships with kids. Whether it's a quick high five on the way out of Tuesday Lunch, a light-hearted conversation over an intense game at Thursdays @ The Gate, or an in-depth conversation about life after Access Youth Group, our plan is that kids make friends with an adult who loves them. And, I think it's working. We just want to do more of it, so we're expanding. The new facility is now under way and we're looking forward to using it next year. We're also making plans to expand our staff, both volunteer and paid. To that end I want to thank all of you that partner with us to make this happen. Our Garden Party this past April was a great opportunity to let everyone know what's going on at The Gate and raised over \$20,000 to help expand our programs. We are also making plans to seek some additional grants and there's information in this newsletter about our annual golf tournament. This "helping kids" thing takes a lot of work and prayer. Sometimes it is even exhausting, but it's hard to even think about quitting when we continue to see God bless this effort!

THE GATE GOLF TOURNAMENT

FRIDAY, JULY 26TH

Tee Times Start at 9am

Salem Golf Club

2025 Golf Course Road S, Salem, 97302



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For more information email info@thegateyouth.org