

Mentors 'STRIVE' to help graduating seniors

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Rotary program helps students prepare for life



(Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

FREMONT - As a student preparing for graduation in the spring, Zach Farrier spends time each week with a community mentor in an attempt to map out a successful future.

The program, Students Taking Renewed Interest in the Value of Education, or STRIVE, pairs mentors from the Fremont Rotary Club and members of the community with students on the verge of graduating Ross High School.

"We talk about grades and school, but we also talk about life," mentor Andrew Stainbrook said.

Like many, Stainbrook chose college after he graduated from Gibsonburg High School around a decade ago, but he realized he wanted something different.

"I went to school for four years, but then at 23 I took an MMPI (personality) test and it said I would be good as a manager or owning my own business," he said.

Stainbrook opened Dotnet Technologies, an information technologies consulting firm, in 2010 and has not looked back.

"There is no right or wrong way to achieve," Stainbrook said. "It's not always so cut and dry."

Soon Dotnet Technologies will be moving to Elmore, Stainbrook said.

Stainbrook said he wants to impart on Farrier that success is different for everyone, and finding your passion is the key to a successful life.

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The mentorship has also allowed Farrier to build a rapport with Stainbrook and talk to him about personal issues he otherwise would keep to himself.

"He said to be yourself, and for me I have been the happiest I've been in the past few months because of him," Farrier said. "Andrew gives me a different perspective on things. I can tell him everything. He's pointing me in the right direction."

Hundreds of Ross students have been mentored over the 20 years of STRIVE, with 20 more ready to join the program's alumni this year, according to Fremont City Schools Interventionist Susan Frye.

"I think this program has been very beneficial to students, because it helps kids succeed," Frye said. "This program will give those students that extra push they need to have a plan. It's more than mentoring."

Many mentors will stay in touch with mentees throughout their lives after forming a unique bond.

For Stainbrook and Farrier, the two have bonded since beginning their partnership in September and meeting each week at Ross High School.

Stainbrook said he also has benefited from his meetings with Farrier.

"It's great, because I get the perspective of what it is like to be 18 in 2018," Stainbrook said. "I get a lot out of this, too."

As Farrier prepares for graduation in June, the Ross senior said he plans to take a year off from schooling to pursue work before deciding on college.

"I really like working with my hands and am interested in construction," Farrier said. "There is still a chance for college, but I wanted to take a year off."

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Andrew Stainbrook, left, and Ross High School senior Zach Farrier share a friendship along with their mentoring relationship. (Photo: Craig Shoup/The News-Messenger)

Both Farrier and Stainbrook said they would love to continue their mentorship after Farrier graduates.

"I see a lot in him, and you can see he cares for people, and he respects his teachers," Stainbrook said. "That is genuine and something you can't teach. I think good things will come Zach's way."

"We have a lot in common, and talk about everything, even X-box," Farrier said. "I definitely want to continue this relationship."

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