

Morgan MCMC Story

Morgan started his current mentoring relationship in the 7th grade during the Inspire program that GVM just started in 2014. Morgan stated that, “My mentor became part of my life the moment we met.” As they built trust they began to do more than just school work. They spent many nights talking about finding a passionate career paths, colleges, the struggles of life and growing up. Coming up with strategies about how to deal with conflict at home, with friends and teachers. They moved into a Community Based match once he started high school. Morgan and his mentor began joining activities that would bring some light to what he likes and more importantly what he doesn’t. Such as camping trips with the school learning how to live primitively and learning self-reliance. He started to help with an after school tutoring program for elementary students. Also, he joined the Work Crew Program with GVM learning how to build a resume, being a good employee, and getting work experience in five different businesses in the valley to see what different jobs require. During their time together through the Work Crew program the Community Foundation of the Gunnison Valley wrote this article in the Gunnison Times:

At a Foundation board meeting last week, our president, Doug Tredway, made reference to the term “fierce advocate” from the book “Hillbilly Elegy.” It’s a book about a family and culture in crisis, about generational poverty and the ethos that surrounds those who live in that ongoing cycle of poverty.

The elements of generational poverty aren’t restricted to Appalachia, which is the setting of the book. We have generational poverty right here in the Gunnison Valley.

I'd like to share a story with you from Gunnison Valley Mentors – an organization that does amazing work with our young people, especially those who live in challenging circumstances, including generational poverty. Just like the folks in “Hillbilly Elegy.”

In 2017, CFGV supported a new summer program Mentors designed to help youngsters develop employment skills, build a resume and earn a stipend.

This is a true story about one youngster and his fierce advocate. The Youth Townie Work Crew (YTWC) program was created to provide a set of tools for kids who might not otherwise have opportunities or connections to develop job skills.

One kiddo, in particular, stood out. Morgan was a 15-year-old who lives in a single parent home. His mother works three to four jobs and still faces constant financial struggles, leaving Morgan and Grandma to take care of younger brother.

Morgan had two reasons to join the work crew program. He wanted to build a foundation of independence for himself and he wanted to enter the workforce early to decrease stress on the family.

Although Morgan has experienced struggles in school performance, he proved to be an exemplary employee. He showed up early and always communicated possible time conflicts. Throughout

the summer's journey. Morgan and his mentor searched for a spark that would motivate and inspire him.

By the end of the summer, Morgan had discovered a way to turn a passion of photography into a future career. He began looking for organizations and college programs that were tailored to his interests and fits the best way he learns. Not only did he find something that he wants to go to college for, but got a job at a new coffee shop because he has a dream to open up his own. Throughout this journey Morgan has discovered a passion that gives him meaning and a way to independence.

From struggling in school performance to a desire to go to college, that's a mighty big turn-around... (Pam Montgomery April 5, 2018).

We as Mentors are not here to tell someone to live. We are here to open new pathways for our youth to travel down. Time is a funny thing we can make choices that make us think we are making progress with our lives, but until someone points out that we have been walking in a consisted circle. We can't see what needs to be changed.