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Queens person of the week: "Big Brother" makes a big impact in "little brother's" life

By Leisha Majtan



A Jackson Heights man is making a big impact in his "Little Brother's" life with his volunteer work with Big Brothers, Big Sisters of New York City. NY1's Leisha Majtan introduces us.

Spencer Ford credits Mark Zustovich with changing his life.

"I really didn't have that sort of strong father in my life that I believe every boy deserves and Mark basically filled in that empty space."

Zustovich is Ford's "Big Brother."

The Jackson Heights resident has been a volunteer with "Big Brothers, Big Sisters of New York City" for the last 4 years, and he's spent that time mentoring 15-year-old Ford.

"Our personalities gel perfectly. We agree on mostly everything. Almost everything. Music? Eh... sometimes!" said Zustovich.

The duo spend two Saturdays together every month. They go to museums, play Frisbee at the park, and a favorite memory for both?

Watching the Mets play at Citi Field.

"The Mets games were the best! We were always screaming, yes screaming for the Mets to win!" said Ford.

"Honestly, it reminds me of me going to the ballgames with my dad growing up. And I think, for some young people in New York City, a lot of them don't have that same option."

Zustovich is there for Ford's big moments in life, too. He helps him with his school work and is a shoulder to lean on if Ford just needs to talk.

"Over time I'm noticing the changes. And the things that I often wonder if I wasn't around to guide him through that, what path would he have taken otherwise?" said Zustovich. For Zustovich, spending time with Ford makes him feel like a kid again.

"I forgot what it was like to throw a frisbee or catch a baseball or have fun!"

Ford says he realizes just how lucky he is to have a mentor in his life.

"There are a lot of teenagers who end up on the wrong path. And sometimes, the main reason for that is because they didn't have a father-figure in their life. And I am one of those lucky teens to have Mark Zustovich in my life," said Ford.

And so for making a "big" impact in his "little brother's" life, Mark Zustovich is our Queens Person of the Week.