

Covington Independent Public Schools Board of Education

Monthly Recognition Nomination Form

- Certified Employee of the Month
- Classified Employee of the Month
- Volunteer of the Month

Date: 2-27-24

Nominee's name: Tony Barker

Volunteer's work location: Mentor at HHS

Submitted by: Angela Turnick and Tony Magner

Position: Co-Principals

Please use the space below for the nomination. Please include a brief description of what the nominee has done above and/or beyond expectations and why you believe the nominee is a candidate for public recognition by the Board of Education. *(All or part of your written nomination will be used in the recognition process.)* You will be notified when your nominee is being recognized. **Thank you for your nomination.**

In January of 2022, Tony Barker answered the call to become a mentor through the Covington Partners Mentoring Program at Holmes High School. Tony was paired up with a student named Benny. He lived in a Ugandan refugee camp for 16 years. When Benny started attending Holmes High School, his guidance counselor referred him to the mentoring program. Once matched, Tony slowly but surely became a very important person in Benny's life. Not only has Tony sought to build trust with Benny and understand more about his culture, family, language, and traditions, but he has consciously worked to build an extremely trusting relationship with Benny's father and mother as well.

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Mentor Tony has worked with Benny to improve his English skills and has encouraged him to receive extra support at school. Tony helped him find a part-time restaurant job and even drives him to and from work every Saturday. Tony enjoys experiencing so many “firsts” with Benny like seeing a horse for the first time, trying Brussel sprouts, and having their first “close call” with Benny driving. Tony explains how much their mentoring relationship has deepened in that they both have a love for each other.

Benny describes his mentor Tony as “humble, honest, he always speaks the truth, and is very helpful. He is a good man.” Benny expresses much gratitude to Tony for taking him to bike ride, family trips to the market, and even taking him to learn how to drive!

Tony Barker says that he has learned so much through his mentoring experience, specifically with immigrants and how much guidance they need learning to survive in America. Benny feels confident that with his mentor’s assistance, he will have a good job, own his own home, and be successful in America.

Julie Wharton, HHS Mentoring Coordinator, describes Tony as “going above and beyond in his support of his mentee. He does whatever it takes to ensure the academic success and wellbeing of his mentee. Tony’s dedication to mentoring is beyond reproach.” Wharton goes on to say that she, “can’t think of anyone more deserving of this recognition than Tony Barker. He is simply the best of the

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best and we are proud to have him a part of our Bulldog family. Congratulations, Tony!”