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For Good

Ryan Clark had his dad, Max Starks had his chess teacher – whom can you mentor?

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 2011

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Steelers safety Ryan Clark says his father was his biggest [mentor](#), teaching him how to do the most important job of all – being a father. For offensive lineman Max Starks, his [mentor](#) was the man who taught him chess at the local youth center.

For more than 24,000 local kids last year, the [Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania](#) was the key to bringing the right adult into their lives to read to them, or play sports with them, or just to serve as a positive role model. More than two thousand others remain on waiting lists for mentoring programs here.

"And there are thousands more who can benefit from a mentor," says Kristan Allen, director of marketing and communications for

the Partnership in the Strip District, which is in the midst of National Mentoring Month. The organization assists about 140 youth-focused groups with starting and maintaining mentoring programs – from offering best practices to recruiting new volunteers (sometimes with videos involving the Steelers).

Those programs include Be a Sixth Grade Mentor, started last year in Pittsburgh Public Schools. Designed to help kids understand how many more options they'll have in life if they stay in school, it places 250 mentors one hour a week with children in many schools. It's been so successful it's being expanded this year to the seventh grade.

If you're interested in being a mentor, but have a limited amount of free time to volunteer, the Mentoring Partnership can still use your help, says Allen, and will happily match your availability, talents and interests to the appropriate local program.

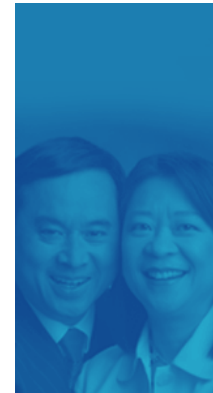
Writer: [Marty Levine](#)

Source: Kristan Allen, Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania

Image courtesy Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern Pennsylvania

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