

YOUTHGRACE CORNER:

mentoring is full circle



Left: Uncle Peter and Dennis, when he was still in elementary school as a Common Grace mentee

Right: Dennis, a YouthGrace mentor, with his mentee from Kuhio Elementary School



Years ago, Dennis Trotter was a Common Grace kid. His teachers and counselors specially chose him to spend time with an adult mentor once a week. He was quiet and didn't see the need to socialize. Today, he is a YouthGrace mentor and will be a senior at Kaimuki High School this upcoming school year.

Common Grace: What years were you mentored?

Dennis Trotter: From 2008-2012.

CG: What do you think about being mentored by Uncle Peter?

DT: My relationship and experience with Uncle Peter has helped me become a better student and helped me become more appreciative of social activities or just being social in general. Most kids usually like all the attention and only want people to listen to them and not really the other way around (at least in my school kids were like this). As a kid, I didn't really make many friends at school. If I wanted to talk to someone they would always brag or talk about themselves and didn't really want to listen when I wanted to share thoughts or say something. At that point, I kind of just felt like socializing was pointless and I didn't really feel like making any more friends. Then, I met uncle Peter. He gave me hope and made me feel a bit happier in my everyday life and was someone I looked forward to seeing. He wasn't only a great listener, but we had great back and forth conversations. He was fun to be around. He made me more socially confident, but also academically. We spent every week trying to improve my handwriting and he helped me out with homework. Uncle Peter was a great role model who could help me out when I needed it, back when I was a kid, and he is still someone I can rely on if I need help with anything. He was and is a great influence on my life that has shaped who I am today.

CG: How has being mentored by Uncle Peter impact you as a YouthGrace mentor?

DT: My personal experiences help me become the best mentor I can be. My experience as a [Common Grace] mentee helps me know the expectations a mentee wants out of his mentor. I can follow what my mentor did with me as an example of what to do with my mentee. As a person, being mentored as a kid helps me appreciate being social instead of pushing people away who try to befriend or talk with me.



Dennis, all grown up, receiving an award for an engineering class at Kaimuki High School

CHECK OUT YOUTHGRACE

1. on Instagram @youthgracehawaii
2. on our NEW website, youthgrace.org!

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Kindness 4 Kids

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Jay Jarman

Old man with a new toy
commongrace.org/

Who uses Instagram? I'm on there. I'm the "Instagrampa". You can follow me and I can follow you closely, sharing events in our daily lives almost instantaneously. But even Instagram is too slow for a generation that prefers to chat in a snap. It feels like we're living in a huge popcorn machine with kernels of information and innovation popping all around. However, there is nothing quick about graduating from high school. It requires steady effort over time. Class after class, day after day, year after year, students learn existence by persistence. It's good for them and they are good for our community. And these special graduates --- our YouthGrace graduates --- leave high school with an extra, special skill-set. They know how to listen to children. They will succeed as friends, colleagues, teammates, parents, all levels of leadership because they have learned to listen. Amazing teens are able to just slow the heck down and focus attention on one kid and "receive" that little person with full, appreciative attention.

Hey! Compassionate grads, YouthGrace heroes, we salute you!



We Love

GRADUATION!



When I was in high school, I was a terrific student. At least for the first two years. Freshman—straight A's. Sophomore, a sprinkle of A's and B's, but still good in my book. I had an obsession with doing well in school. I wanted to make my parents and teachers proud. I wanted my peers to envy my academic prowess. But as I moved on to my junior and senior year—I stopped caring so much. I lost my motivation. I cared about boys and MySpace (it's like Facebook, if you've never heard of it before) instead of books and math. It's hard keeping that drive for four years, let me tell you. And I know I let my teachers and parents down. They sat down with me, wondered where my head was and what was going on. How could a straight A student suddenly get a D? They worried and worried for me.

But in actuality, many of our Common Grace kids do not have anyone in their life with the time to worry about them. They are busy, they are not there, or they simply do not care. Imagine how much more you wouldn't care about school, being a good student or even a good person, if there was no one who cared to worry about you. Can you imagine drawing a picture for your mom as a child, but she doesn't care about what you drew, how long it took, or what it means to you to give it to her? It's difficult. And it's happening in every public elementary school that has ever existed. Whether it is a Common Grace mentor attending their mentee's graduation, or a YouthGrace mentor inviting their mentee to their high school graduation—we make sure these children know that someone has time for them and cares.

If someone cares for them, they'll start caring too. They'll care about their peers, their friends, their mom, dad, grandma. They'll care about other people's property. They'll care about their grades. They'll care about their own lives. Other people's lives. They'll want to make that one person that cares about them, proud. Mentors are important. Thank you for believing in us.

Love, Leighna

ways TO GIVE

1. Monthly online giving (www.commongrace.org/donate)
2. Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com + choose us!)
3. Charity Walk (in May—100% of proceeds go to us!)

4. During the month of September, we're participating in the Foodland Give Aloha campaign. Donors can choose to donate up to \$249 to any participating non-profit organization at any Foodland location. Give your clerk the number **78587** while you're checking out. **And don't forget to hand them your Maka'i card or 10-digit phone number!** Aloha 🙌

