

Mentoring can have a boomerang effect

By Anne Laufé
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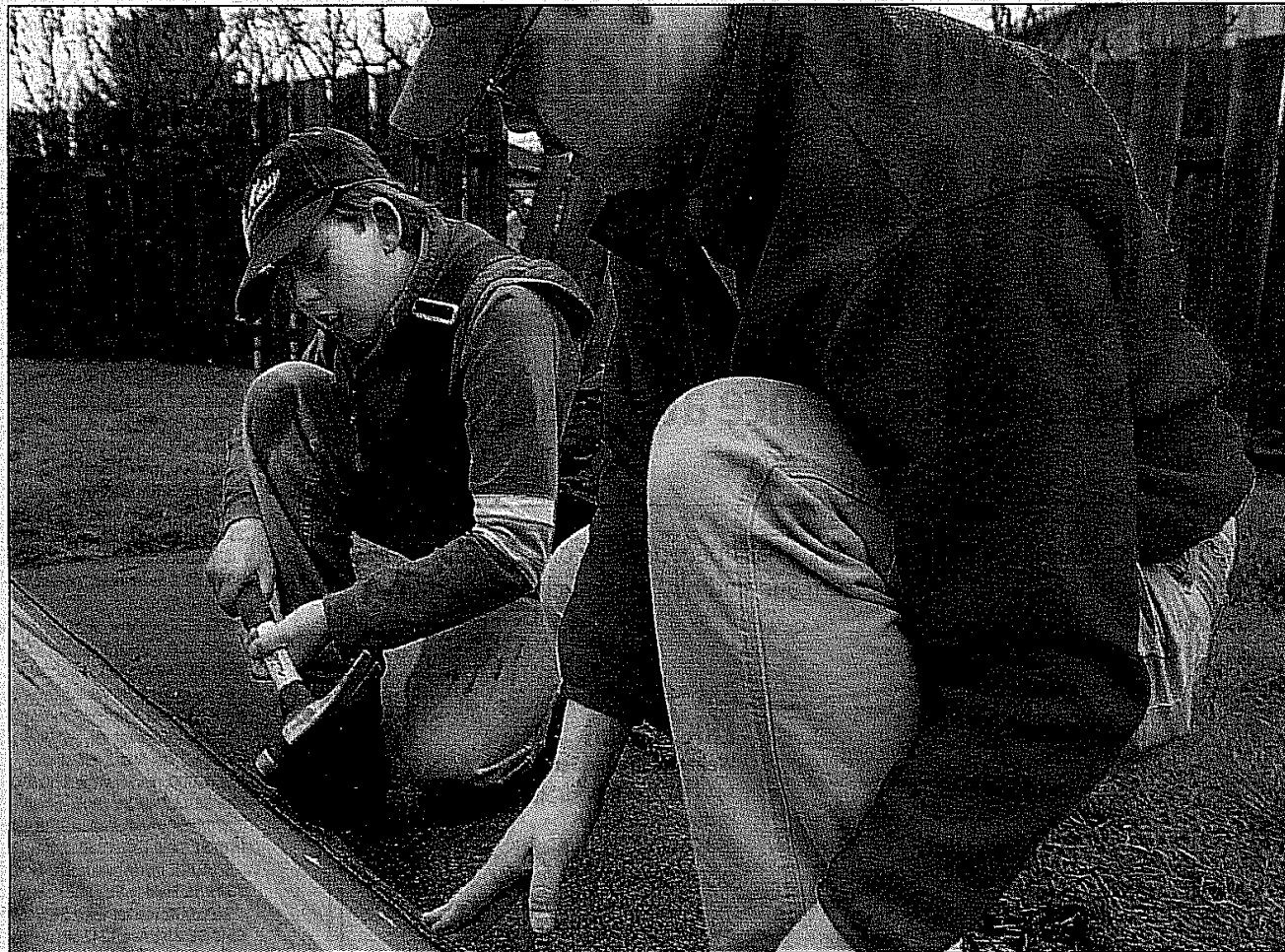
Daniel Pierson is a bright, articulate sixth-grader at Sellwood Middle School. His favorite subjects are math and science, and he loves swimming, riding his bike and doing tae kwon do.

Even so, when Daniel's mom found out about a local mentoring program, Committed Partners for Youth, she quickly signed him up. Bonnie Calnek, who is divorced from Daniel's dad, thought Daniel would benefit from having another positive male role model in his life.

Since June, Daniel and his mentor, Masaki Hisamoto, 25, have gotten together at least every other week to play chess, go hiking, watch movies and hang out.

"We like to go to Mount Tabor and hike around," Daniel says. "Masaki is a really big tree hugger, a really big outdoor person."

Sometimes Daniel would rather go to the nickel arcade or play Nintendo, and Hisamoto obliges, knowing that just



Daniel Pierson, 11, a Sellwood Middle School sixth-grader, and his mentor, Masaki Hisamoto, 25, work on the roof of a play structure for a Make-A-Wish child in Gresham. The two, who met through the Committed Partners for Youth program, get together at least every other week. "Masaki is just like one big kid," Daniel says.

BENJAMIN BRINK/THE OREGONIAN

that youths who have had a mentor for at least 12 months often feel better about themselves, do better in school and get along better with their families. A relationship with a men-

A firefighter who works in Southeast, Hisamoto says that he learns as much from Daniel as Daniel does from him.

"In our culture, we don't spend a lot of time analyzing

From Daniel's perspective, Hisamoto is "not a person who says 'Do your homework; bad Daniel.' He's just a friend, not like your mom and dad. Masaki is just like one big kid."

on candy and junk food before seeing the movie "Chicken Little."

"That's just how it should be," Hackney smiles and nods approvingly. ■