



Moms Talk (/columns/moms-talk-20)

By [Shari Maurer \(/users/shari-maurer\)](#) | [Email the author \(#\)](#) | 1:00pm

Opinion

Volunteer Coaches Make a Big Difference in Young Lives

Throughout Clarkstown, volunteers respond to calls to help youth leagues regardless of whether they have kids in the programs.

My daughter, Lissie, played t-ball with the Clarkstown Recreation league in kindergarten. She wasn't a big athlete and her best friend quit, leaving her on the team with mostly boys. And it was cold on those spring mornings at 9 a.m. What kept her going? She had four amazing coaches who gave her high fives every time she rounded the bases and cheered her and supported her.

These men took what could have been a horrible season and made it terrific.

Both of my boys have played all sorts of sports--from recreation to travel levels. We learned early on that the combination of my husband's work schedule and the fact that the boys get along far better with their dad when he's not coaching them, meant it was better for my husband to cheer them from the sidelines. We have been so lucky to have fabulous coaches and appreciate every minute that these men and women give so that my kids can have a great sports experience.

As I spoke to the moms on our Patch Moms Council and other moms in town about this, I heard some wonderful stories and wanted to share them.

Andrea Carbone's son, Mike, played for Rabbi Craig Scheff twice on his JCC basketball team. When Mike started on the team, he was new to basketball and according to Andrea, "Rabbi Scheff teaches many plays to the kids and includes all of them no matter what their skill level. He will also make sure every child is in a position to make a basket, so they too feel they have contributed to the team score. Here is the other thing about Rabbi Scheff — he doesn't ever raise his voice. Can you imagine teaching eight 11- and 12-year-old boys and never raising your voice? When he speaks to you — you listen. I'm not sure what it is about Rabbi Scheff, but it is incredible the way the kids respond to him."

In the Town of Clarkstown's basketball league there was a shortage of coaches this year. Paul Jamison, who did not have a son in the league, heard about this and stepped in to coach the sixth and seventh grade boys. Jennifer Studwell, whose son Jake played on his team, said "Mr. Jamison has an incredible talent for communicating with children as well as a vast understanding of the subtleties of the game along with excellent sportsmanship, teamwork and respect. These boys came alive under his guidance, teaching and leadership. Always offering gentle corrections and ego boosting high fives for plays well done, Mr. Jamison truly gave my son and the others an incredible love of playing basketball that I had not previously seen."

Michele Heim told me that when her son Danny played for the New City Rams, "Danny had two awesome coaches his first year playing football. Their names are Steve Collamore and Frank Palumbo. They left such a good impression on him. He never practiced so hard in his life, but they made him a more disciplined and stronger person as a result. He was one of the youngest players on the team by two years. They never went easy on him, never made him feel he was the smallest or the youngest. They just kept pushing him to be the best person/player he could be. They had all the players reaching to better themselves. In the years that followed they still kept tabs on him and I will never forget them for encouraging him to be the best he could be on and off the field."

“I have heard many parents in many sports say that the coach makes or breaks the experience you have with the sport. Very true,” said Sheila Corcoran, whose three children have had many wonderful coaches that “rise above any controversy. They play everyone on the team. They communicate with the girls and parents well. They are organized and conscientious of parents’ and players’ time. They love the sport and inspire the girls to achieve. They connect with the child and pay attention to their strengths. They have also given them opportunities to go to college games, which are inspirational and team-building.” Sheila’s children have had many strong coaches, but she especially mentioned Scott Jaynes, Joe Dooley, Margaret Alaimo, Joe Dillon, Jackie Nigro, Ray Francis and Liz Kennedy as having gone above and beyond to give her children amazing seasons.

As a testament to how important coaches are in my family—five of my son Josh’s coaches were at his Bar Mitzvah. When my husband spoke to Josh at the temple, he also spoke to the crowd and thanked Josh’s coaches, giving tribute “To your coaches, who have taught you to be a better player, how to play the game honestly, how to play as a team and to love the game.”

I couldn’t have put it better.

Editor's note: [Shari Maurer \(http://www.sharimaurer.com/\)](http://www.sharimaurer.com/) of *New City* is author of the novel **Change of Heart**. She grew up in New City and is now raising her family in New City. She is the discussion leader for New City Patch's new Moms Council.

Do you have coaches that have made a positive impact on your children? We would love to hear your stories. [Tell us in the comments. \(#comments\)](#)

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