

Press Clippings - 8/24/2023

- The Daily Herald - Pingree Grove man started nonprofit to help teens succeed in the workforce

By: Kim Becker

8/ 24/2023



Willie Tunstall, founder of Tailoring Youth to Succeed, leads a communication and problem-solving workshop. Tunstall started TYS to mentor kids in workplace readiness. (*Courtesy of Willie Tunstall*)

Willie Tunstall believes the children are our future. And it's not just a cliché. He has made it his life's mission to make sure that teens -- especially low-income youth -- learn job skills and how to be a part of their community at large.

"I believe it is my God-given talent to work with kids," Tunstall said.

The Pingree Grove resident said he realized his love for working with youth in his 20s when he had a job at a summer camp.

He then spent 14 years working with PLCCA in Maywood, which serves low-income residents in Cook County by promoting community development with education and job training. While there, Tunstall led after-school work readiness programs and program curriculum.

Tunstall's next stint was as a lab manager.

"I loved learning how to manage people," he said.



Elgin Community College had a two-part resume building workshop. Members of Tailoring Youth to Succeed had a chance to have their resumes reviewed by ECC Human Resource personnel. From left are Lynn F. and Jennifer N. - Courtesy of Willie Tunstall

But Tunstall felt a pull to do something different.

"In 2018, I got a life coach to find out what I really enjoyed. And it turned out I really wanted to work with youth," he said. "I am faith-based, so I prayed a lot about what the next step in my journey should be."

So Tunstall took all of his various work experiences and, in 2019, started the 501c3 organization Tailoring Youth to Succeed.

"I love waking up every day and loving what I am doing," he said. "I have a real connection to youth."

He works to mentor youth with job readiness programs, partnering with schools and businesses to offer teens opportunities to build their life skills and reach their full potential. Most important, Tunstall wants young people to feel supported.

"There are a lot of paths these kids can take after high school. It doesn't have to just be college. I mentor them and help them navigate that space."



Jennifer N. is working at BZ Redhots restaurant as part of the Brookfield Zoo workforce readiness program. Brookfield Zoo is one of Tailoring to Succeed's many community partners. - Courtesy of Willie

Tunstall

He does that with his workforce readiness program.

"Kids today don't communicate very well," Tunstall said. "They don't know how to express themselves. I asked them, 'What does your perfect summer look like,' and many say jobs. They want to make their own money."

So Tunstall starts in the spring with workshops for the kids that teach communication, interpersonal skills, and problem solving. The goal is to instill employable skills for future job security.

Tailoring Youth to Succeed has community partners, one of which is Brookfield Zoo, which hires a number of kids for the summers. Tunstall preps the kids for the job fair and interviews and continues to coach them throughout the summer if they need help.

"We teach them how to read their paycheck and how to ask for a day off. Kids today like to text everything, but you can't just text your boss the day before you need a day off. You have to email them with notice."



Tailoring Youth to Succeed member Adonis C. works in the kitchen loading dishes at Cafe del Sol at Brookfield Zoo. - Courtesy of Willie Tunstall

Tunstall aims to reach out to other community partners, like restaurants, so kids can learn different aspects of the business and have more mentors.

"We are all rolling in the same place," he said. "Teens need a lot more programs, not just one. Experiences are important to our organization."

And that includes volunteering at a local church. Tailoring Youth to Succeed has been helping at First Congregational Church of Dundee's Hilltop Community Suppers on the second Friday of the month for the last three years.

"Volunteering is important," Tunstall said. "Teens are selfish. Here they see that others don't have what they have."

He also thinks it is important that they kids give back to their own community.

"This is not just a one and done. We develop relationships."

That means the kids have a chance to chat with the older members of the congregation. It enhances their interpersonal skills and gives them an opportunity to interact with someone they normally wouldn't talk to.

Tunstall said they also volunteer at community food banks.

"I always tell the kids to understand they are representing something other than just themselves," Tunstall said, including their parents, school and their community.

Tunstall works mainly with youth in Carpentersville and Elgin, but he is in the process of building a partnership with Community Unit District 300 in Algonquin and hopes to add Elgin Area School **District U-46** in the future.

He is always looking for community partners to help his organization, as well as monetary donations. Right now, Tailoring Youth to Succeed is in the middle of its giving campaign, hoping to raise \$5,000 for their programs.

"Next we will want to double that," Tunstall said. "We are looking for dream donors who can commit to \$50 a month for one year to help move our community youth forward."



Members of Tailoring Youth to Succeed take part in one fun summer activity. They chose to join Friends of the Fox to learn about nature. From left, Patricia N., Jennifer N., Anthony L. and Christian M. enjoy canoeing on the Fox River. - Courtesy of Willie Tunstall

He is also looking for a grant writer for 2024 to connect with more donors.

Currently, there are 45 teens Tunstall mentors. They meet at local community centers to take part in his programs, where he tries to create the mindset that they can do anything they put their mind to.

"Youth is our future," Tunstall said. "If we all get involved, kids can go out into the real world and be a success."

- Chicago Tribune -

Local scores for the Southland, Aurora, Elgin, Naperville and Lake County

By: Josh Krockey

Aug 22, 2023

MONDAY'S RESULTS

HIGH SCHOOLS

BOYS SOCCER

Burlington Central 2, Johnsburg 2

Burlington Central (0-0-1): Daniel Nava goal, Maximus Salas goal.

Dundee-Crown 4, Rockford East 1

Dundee-Crown (1-0): Gabriel Herrera 2 goals. Raul Hernandez goal, assist.

East Aurora 7, Proviso East 2

East Aurora (1-0): Martin Gaytan 2 goals, Asbel Vazquez 2 goals. Jayden Patino 2 assists.

Grant 3, Hampshire 1

Grant (1-0): Diego Bueno goal, Diego Vasquez goal, Seb Gonzalez goal.

Indian Creek 2, Byron 1

Indian Creek (1-0): Jason Brewer GW goal with 16.8 seconds remaining in regulation. Antonio Bonilla goal, assist.

Libertyville 2, **Streamwood** 1

Streamwood (0-1): Bryan Huerta goal.

Lyons 3, Sandburg 1

Mendota 9, Sandwich 0

Morton 1, Naperville Central 0

Neuqua Valley 1, Plainfield North 0

Neuqua (1-0): Daniel Vivero Jr. goal.

Oak Forest 2, Washington 1

Oswego 2, Wheaton North 1

Providence 7, Joliet Catholic 0

Providence (1-0): Dean Lavvas 2 goals, Simon Janakiev 2 goals. Snapped 23-game losing streak.

Rochelle 8, Genoa-Kingston 6

Genoa-Kingston (0-1): Jay Wolcott 4 goals, assist. Santi Tomlinson 2 goals, assist.

Rochelle Zell 7, Westlake Christian 2

Round Lake 4, Cristo Rey St. Martin 0

St. Laurence 9, Universal 0

St. Laurence (1-0): Johnny Esparza 4 goals, 2 assists. Lalo Perez 2 goals.

Stagg 7, Intrinsic 0

Stagg (1-0): Piotr Zawislanski 3 goals. Jack Malinowski 2 goals.

To read the full article click [here](#)

- The Beacon News -

Rick Armstrong's top 10 football teams and 25 players to watch in Aurora-Elgin area for the 2023 season

By: Rick Armstrong

Aug 24, 2023



Batavia quarterback Ryan Boe (21) throws a pass against Lake Zurich during a Class 7A state semifinal game in Lake Zurich on Saturday, Nov. 19, 2022. (Mark Kodiak Ukena / The Beacon-News)

Top 10 Teams

1. Batavia (10-4): Senior quarterback Ryan Boe (North Dakota State) returns for third season as starter. Bulldogs seek another extended playoff run after taking second last

year in Class 7A. Junior transfer Isaiah Brown joins talented receiver group after leading Yorkville with 42 receptions for 461 yards in 2022.

2. St. Charles North (10-2): North Stars will build around Jake Furtney (Army), a 6-foot-5, 230-pound senior tight end and middle linebacker. With junior quarterback Ethan Plumb back to lead offense in third season on varsity, defending champs figure to again be factor in DuKane Conference race.

3. Yorkville (10-2): Quarterback Michael Dopart shared time last season but took most of the snaps. He's joined by fullback/linebacker Ben Alvarez and two-way lineman Logan Brasfield as the senior leaders for Foxes, who will be playing their home games this year on field turf installed during the summer.

4. **South Elgin (11-0): Storm** lost quarterback Jacob Sullivan, who transferred to Marmion after family's move out of the district. Seven starters, including two-way starter Lucas Noworol at wide receiver and linebacker, return from team that won program's fourth straight Upstate Eight Conference title.

5. Jacobs (8-2): Grant Stec (Wisconsin), a 6-6, 247-pound tight end/defensive end, leads a trio of four-year starters who return from back-to-back teams that won eight games. Three starters return on offensive line for Eagles, including Anthony Fetting, Rocco Sauer and Matthew Shannon.



Jacobs' Grant Stec (7) goes on the run during the second quarter of a Class 7A state quarterfinal game in Mount Prospect on Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021. (Brian O'Mahoney / The Beacon-News)

6. Oswego East (5-5): Veteran offensive line led by senior tackles Tim Savchuk and Zac Clarke should lead Wolves to eighth straight playoff appearance. Program is hungry to make it past the second round, though.

7. Oswego (3-6): Senior Gustavo Guzman, a 6-7, 290-pound tackle, is one of four returning starters on the offensive line as Panthers look to bounce back from missing playoffs for the first time in coach Brian Cooney's 11-year tenure.

8. Geneva (6-4): Junior wide receiver Talyn Taylor has eye-catching offers from top college programs, but a boatload of 15 returning starters also could push the Vikings up

the area rankings in very short order. Don't be surprised by an elongated playoff run.

9. Kaneland (7-4): Troyer Carlson, in his fourth year as the starter at quarterback, has reliable, big-time targets in receivers Aric Johnson and Dominick DeBlasio to lead offense for first-year coach Mike Thorgesen, who has been in the program for more than a decade, the last five seasons as defensive coordinator.

10. Burlington Central (4-5): Rockets return a bunch with 18 starters, looking to make program's first playoff appearance since 2014. Improving junior quarterback Jackson Alcorn returns for second season leading the offense.



Aurora Christian's Owen Hampton, left, breaks up a pass intended for Chicago Christian's Ethan Vande Werken (24) during a game in Aurora on Friday, Sept. 23, 2022. (Jon Cunningham / The Beacon-News)

The 25 Players to Watch

Ben Alvarez, Yorkville, senior, fullback/linebacker; Angelo Bradley, St. Charles North, senior, defensive tackle; Ryan Boe, Batavia, senior, quarterback; Logan Brasfield, Yorkville, senior, offensive lineman; Jordan Buckley, Batavia, senior, defensive end; Troyer Carlson, Kaneland, senior, quarterback; Zac Clarke, Oswego East, senior, offensive lineman; Carson Cooney, Oswego, junior, linebacker; Tommy Diamond, Geneva, senior, linebacker; Ben Fiegel, Batavia, senior, linebacker; Jake Furtney, St. Charles North, senior, tight end/linebacker; Gustavo Guzman, Oswego, senior, offensive lineman; Owen Hampton, Aurora Christian, senior, wide receiver; Aric Johnson, Kaneland, senior, wide receiver; Julian Johnson, Waubonsie Valley, senior, tight end/defensive end; Waleed Johnson, Plano, senior, running back; Jack Leshner, Marmion, senior, linebacker; Bodey McCaslin, St. Charles East, senior, offensive lineman/defensive lineman; Jalen Miller, Larkin, senior, running back; Tim Savchuk, Oswego East, senior, offensive lineman; Terrence Smith, West Aurora, junior, wide receiver; Grant Stec, Jacobs, senior, tight end/defensive lineman; Talyn Taylor, Geneva, junior, wide receiver; Arnold Walker, East Aurora, senior, defensive end; Charlie Whelpley, Batavia, senior, tight end.