

Ayush's Story

Stars Per Mentoring

Kia ora Everyone,

My name is Ayush Sharma. I'm a fifth year Bachelor of Health Science & Law student at the University of Auckland. I was born and raised out in West Auckland, attending Rutherford College and experienced the Stars Peer Mentoring programme in 2012 & 2015.

So, I first heard about the Stars Peer Mentoring programme when I was in Year 9, when I have Peer Mentors of my own. They really helped me, kind of transition into high school life really well and kind of, broke down all of those myths about high school, just really helped me ease into things and focus on the things that mattered and not worry about the small things.

From memory, I was the only one of my kind of main friend group who did peer mentoring. I had a few kind of, a few other mates from other kinds of friend circles that kind of did it but, in terms of my close friends, I was the only one who did it. So, in that sense, I had to step out of my friend group and what we kind of normally do on a day to day basis, and step out of my comfort zone a bit and become a Peer Mentor but it was definitely worth it.

My advice to students doing the community projects is just to get stuck into it and make the most of it. So it's a chance for the class to come together in a challenging and kind of unfamiliar environment and really bond and it served really well for kind of future relationships and rapport within the classroom. It might

be an experience that you've never done before or that you might feel it is a little bit challenging, but I would just say you lean into that discomfort and that feeling of, of challenge and just make the most of it take that leap of faith because you never know what could happen.

So, my favourite part of being a Peer Mentor was probably seeing the growth in the students that I was mentoring from like February-March to November-December. I remember walking in at the start of the year and, you know, obviously it was the first day of high school. They was super nervous and I remember being the exact same way. And then just through, you know, being there for them and being, you know, that mentor by the end of the year, you know, we were like a little family. So, it was really wholesome.

I'm still in touch with a lot of those students now and I've helped them kind of, through university and, you know, the senior part of high school. So, we really developed close, close bonds and friendships from that.

Stars Peer Mentoring helped me immensely in what I've been doing now, because it was one of the first formative experiences that I had to give back and to serve others, that experience and the skills I gained from that has helped me so much, in terms of, what I do now. I have continued to fuel the passion that I have to get back and to serve

We want every child to know: What they have inside is greater than any obstacle.