

Southern Valley Senior Work Release

by Bryton Stalder

When students go into their senior year, they learn that they get many more freedoms. One of those freedoms is senior work release. Senior work release is a program that allows senior students who meet requirements set by the school to work in real-life jobs during the school day. These students leave the school at 12:53 p.m. and are dismissed from the school for the rest of the day. Students then go to work at real jobs, which allows them the opportunity to make money, gain experience, and improve their résumés. Many seniors are excited to escape the school's campus, but that isn't the case for two students.

Isaac Hamilton and Tori Bose, two senior students at Southern Valley Schools, participate in the work release program, but not as everyone else does. Tori and Isaac stay at the school when their classmates leave, and they help coach the junior high athletes during their sports time during 7th and 8th hour. Both seniors are involved in high school athletics, including volleyball, cross country, basketball, and track. By having their work release at the school, they are allowed to stay for their own practices while also gaining knowledge and experience teaching other people.



"I think that Tori being an assistant coach for sports has helped my understanding and skill set for sports."
Kyler Peterson
- 8th grade

Being a coach can bring a different perspective to a player's mindset. Bose has really enjoyed being able to help the younger athletes and watch them grow. She noted that, "being able to encourage them, being someone they can look up to, and helping make their experience fun and positive has definitely been the best part."

Isaac has been able to coach some sports he doesn't participate in himself. He has helped the junior high football and wrestling team while being a cross-country runner and a basketball player. Although this has posed more difficulties than teaching basketball, Isaac said, "It's fun to learn new things about a sport that I previously knew little about. Because they're just junior high and only learning the basics, I didn't usually have trouble coaching them, despite not participating in those sports myself."

Not only do these students help the athletes, but they also help the coaches. Dexter Becker, the junior high wrestling coach, enjoyed having Isaac in the room. "He's super mature and trustworthy. I don't have an assistant during practices, so if I needed to be out of the room for anything, he had learned our warm-up and routine so quickly he could run the kids through a section of practice with me out of the room briefly." Not only did Isaac help Mr. Becker, but he also got to know him a little better through the experience. "I got to see his personality open up a little bit. He is usually very quiet, and I don't hear much from him. He started talking regularly to me, and we got to know each other a little better!"

Tori was also a big help to her head coach, Halle Jacobsen. Since she was helping with sports that she was currently participating in, she was able to translate her knowledge directly to the younger athletes. Jacobsen said,



"During volleyball she was awesome to have to add drills into practice that she already does at the high school level, so the junior high girls could get experience doing these drills and understand them before they get to high school. During basketball, it was awesome to have her because she was able to teach the girls the type of drills, offenses, and defenses that the high school team runs, so the junior high girls could learn them now to be prepared for high school." Without the work release program, Tori wouldn't be able to spread this knowledge and prepare the younger athletes for the high school levels.

The work release program has been able to build many relationships and help kids gain confidence in the sports they love. Without the program, there wouldn't be any opportunities for young athletes to learn from the high schoolers directly. It also gives the high school athletes an opportunity to learn from the older coaches and deepen their understanding of the development of an athlete.

"Isaac is a role model for the entire team. I like having Isaac as a coach because he really knows what he's talking about and is easy to communicate with. Whether I have a question about the drill or I need help with something separate, he is always there to help."

