



## PAIR PROFILE

### JAY C. AND NELSON A.

**Partner Site:** Urban Assembly Academy for Careers in Sports

**Name of Mentee:** Nelson A.

**Name of Mentor:** Jay C.

**Length of Match:** 2<sup>nd</sup> year of a 2-year match

**Year Match Began:** 2008

**# of Emails Exchanged:** 50

**# of In-Person Meetings:** 7



**About Nelson (mentee):** Nelson recently started his senior year at the Urban Assembly Academy for Careers in Sports (UACIS) in the South Bronx. Nelson has a close relationship with his family, especially his grandmother, whom he considers a “second mother.” As the eldest of seven siblings, Nelson feels responsible for setting a good example for his brothers and sisters. He will be the first in his immediate family to go to college. Although Nelson has not yet chosen a school or major, he sees college as an important step on the path towards achieving his dream of becoming a chef and owning his own restaurant.

**About Jay (mentor):** The son of Colombian and Puerto Rican parents, Jay was born and raised in the Bronx and now serves as a Vice President at Barclays Capital. Jay graduated from the University of Miami before returning to NYC to work at Lehman Brothers and pursue an MBA. He was the first in his family to have the traditional college experience, after watching his mother finish her Bachelors and Masters degrees while working full time. Jay credits his success to his mentor of 17 years: the basketball coach at Mount St. Michael’s Academy, where he served as the team’s manager in high school. Jay’s mentor continued to support him throughout college, using a connection to help him find a summer job on Wall Street that led to his current position. Jay acknowledges that “I wouldn’t be where I am today without the mentors I have had who have motivated me to succeed.”

**Getting Involved:** Jay’s busy schedule made it difficult for him commit to a formal volunteer program, although “I always knew mentoring was something I have wanted to do.” He first learned about iMentor through its partnership with his firm, which offered on-site training sessions, making volunteerism an accessible part of the work day. Jay was drawn by iMentor’s “innovative program format,” calling the combination of in-person meetings and email exchanges a “great way to get involved without becoming overwhelmed, leading me to push it forward and encourage others to volunteer.”

**Initial Impressions:** Nelson and Jay met for the first time at the UACIS Kick-Off Event in November 2008. Nelson remembers how difficult it was to open up to a stranger: “I used to be a little bit shy, and it was awkward at first, because I didn’t know him. It was hard to have long conversations.” Nelson was skeptical when he saw his mentor wearing a suit and tie, wondering what he could possibly have in common with a Wall Street executive. Jay describes the first emails he and Nelson exchanged as “short” and “lacking in detail.” He explains that “we needed time to feel each other out.”



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**Breaking Through:** iMentor Program Coordinator Jessica Mowles was instrumental in helping Jay and Nelson become more comfortable interacting with one another. Because iMentor was Jay's first formal experience as a mentor, he relied on Jessica for advice on how to build a strong relationship with Nelson. Jay was inspired by seeing Jessica interact with Nelson, because his mentee liked and respected her. According to Jay, "That meant a lot, because she was the face of program. [Mentees] bought into her, so they bought into the program."

With Jessica's support, Nelson grew comfortable interacting with Jay, and the two began writing lengthier emails and having more substantial in-person conversations. Nelson says that "iMentor's writing prompts helped us when we didn't have anything to talk about." Through exchanging emails, the two realized that they had a lot in common, including close relationships with their mothers. Now Nelson enjoys talking to Jay about school and his family. Nelson also relies on Jay for advice about "how to take responsibilities as the oldest sibling." Nelson says that Jay "helps me think about making choices in my personal life and how to set a good example." He characterizes their relationship as a "big brother/little brother thing."

**Setting Goals:** As Nelson enters his senior year, Jay hopes to help his mentee make an educated decision about his post-graduation plans. Jay wants Nelson to take responsibility for defining his goals, and he is committed to supporting his mentee as he achieves them. Nelson has decided to enter a two-year college program in NYC. Nelson initially wanted to attend school in the Bronx, but Jay is encouraging him to look at colleges in Manhattan, which would broaden his perspective. Jay explains that "I want to lay out all of the options within his vision. Now that I know where he wants to direct his attention, even if he lands within his smaller circle of options, I feel comfortable knowing there are other options out there."

Nelson looks forward to working with Jay on his college applications this year. The two have been discussing Nelson's essay, which focuses on an event that has changed his life. Jay has promised to proofread the essay, as well as leveraging his network to set up interviews for Nelson at his colleges of choice. Jay has also offered to write Nelson a letter of recommendation.

**Giving Back:** Jay became a mentor, because he feels "that helping people is my duty and that I'm responsible for giving back." "When someone believes in you," he says, "it gives you that extra push that you may not have had before. I'm hoping the support that I have been able to give Nelson through iMentor will help him go somewhere he may not have gone without us." Jay's experience with iMentor has inspired him to give back in other ways. Last year, he participated in iMentor's online donor drive, helping the organization build its financial health. He also works with Student Sponsors Partners, which provides financial assistance and mentoring relationships for low-income high school students at Catholic schools in NYC.

Nelson looks forward to serving as a mentor himself one day. He likes to listen to his friends and give them advice, explaining that "it feels good to help, to give somebody someone to speak to, to help them feel comfortable speaking to others. I have seen how important it is in my life."