

Are you Michigan's next superhero?

Dear #name#,

I'm writing to you today because you have what it takes to be a superhero.

I'll explain shortly.

First, meet Tyler.

He could only watch as his drugged-up dad beat up his mom for several years before finally abandoning them. Kids are pretty impressionable at just 7 years old and the wounds from seeing such abuse bled into other areas of Tyler's life.

He'd already started taking special classes in the sixth grade to help him focus on his school work. But he got suspended after getting into a fight outside school one day, and had to finish the last 2 months of school from home.

How do you help a child understand that violence is not the answer, when they've grown up thinking it is?

Of course, it didn't help that Tyler only saw his dad once every couple of years. Tyler couldn't help thinking, if his dad really loved him, why wasn't he part of his life?

Tyler was struggling with a lot of pent-up emotions – rejection, isolation, hurt, anger – all thanks to the negative influence of a bad role model.

He was taking it all out on the world around him, and destroying his chances of making it to college - even making it through school – in the process.

All because of a childhood he couldn't choose NOT to have.

Now that's injustice.

Shouldn't EVERY child have the chance to be a successful member of the community, regardless of their troubled past?

Well, you have the power to give them back their future.

If you were to ask Tyler now who his superhero is, there'd be no hesitation in his reply...

Tyler's mentor, Freddie, changed everything for Tyler, turned his life around.

His calm and easy-going nature rubbed off on Tyler, who's now more relaxed and much more in control of his temper.

Such a rocky early childhood forced Tyler to grow up quick, but Freddie showed him it's important to relax and have fun, something the pair never have a problem with since they both love the same things. (They've gone bowling, played volleyball and ice hockey, and most recently tried paint-ball together.)

Tyler sees that Freddie has his own place, a college degree, a good job, even a puppy... Tyler wants all these things too. He now knows that Freddie achieved all these things through focus, determination

and a positive attitude.

Tyler is now setting his own goals and talking about the future more than ever. He's much more focused at school and has his sights firmly set on college.

All thanks to his mentor Freddie, who gave Tyler back his future.

Now that's the work of a superhero, don't you think? Tyler certainly does. And all he needed was someone to spend time with, have fun with.

It was nothing to Freddie, no inconvenience. In fact, it was a great chance for him to goof off and be a kid again himself, if only for a short while!

And let's face it, who doesn't love having someone look up to you?

See, it doesn't take much to be a superhero in a child's eyes. But the effect on that child's future really is out of this world.

Maybe you already donate to a worthy charity or two, which is great. But wouldn't it be even better if you could see exactly where your money's going, what problems it's solving?

For many charities, having people donate money is usually enough. Sadly, throwing money at a child isn't going to magically change his past and open up his future.

But here's a chance for you to give something that means more than money - your time - where you can see the results of your 'donation' first hand, as it happens.

This is your chance to make a difference in your own community, stand up to the unfair equation of 'a child's past = a child's future', do something selfless, hugely life-changing, incredibly rewarding... and fun!

And that's why I spend a lot of my time at The Provident Corporation, working on our Youth Mentoring Program, encouraging people to get actively involved. It just means so much more than money.

I'm writing this letter to you because I think you'd make a good superhero to a child like Tyler. And the (n) kids right here in our own community who really need a mentor in their lives would agree.

So what do you think?

Could you spare a little time to be a superhero and give one of our community's children back his future?

Yours hopefully,

(TPC Youth Mentoring Program head signature)
Head of The Provident Corporation's Youth Mentoring Program

PS – If you reckon you could be Michigan's next superhero and can spare a little time to feel young again, just fill in the enclosed brief form. And as you post that form back to me in the envelope provided, feel proud. Giving a child back his future will probably be the most rewarding experience of your life.