



Jackie Joyner-Kersey
FOUNDATION

Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation
Volunteer Spotlight; Jonathan Babcock
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At 23, Jonathan Babcock has already crossed some impressive — and terrifying — items off of his bucket list. Graduating college, running in the Chicago Marathon, and diving with sharks are a few of his most notable accomplishments, yet he considers his experiences volunteering as some of his most formative.

“Similar to Jackie’s Winning in Life curriculum, I believe that constantly challenging yourself to do things outside of your comfort zone is the best way to grow,” Babcock said. “The kids here are really incredible with unlimited potential that some of them don’t even know they have. Winning in Life teaches these kids to not only dream big, but to work hard and set their minds to it.”

Jonathan volunteered in college with a Big Brothers program at Urban Youth ministries in Kansas City, and he met weekly with two boys to provide mentorship and guidance on building aspirations, confidence, and healthy relationships. He knew he wanted to get involved in a similar role when he moved back to the St. Louis area. He researched local programs and ultimately decided on the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center.

“The Center is an essential place for these kids in so many ways,” he said. “It’s a family for those that might not have the best home life or don’t have a family at all. It’s an opportunity for students to excel academically, stay on track with school and life, and to work with the incredible help available.”

Jonathan drives to the Kersee Center every Friday after he gets off work to help with kids in the JJK After School Program, and he also helps referee JJK weekend sports. While volunteering often isn’t the first thing on people his age’s list of how to spend their free time, Jonathan sees the opportunity as a blessing. He encourages young people to get involved in their communities however they can.

“It really is the highlight of my week, every week,” he said. “I encourage other young people to get involved because of the impact they can make. I like to put it into perspective by pointing out that all you have to do is give up a few episodes of Netflix or some time spent on social media every week. I promise you five to 10 years from now you won’t remember those things, but you will remember the lives you’re able to impact.”

To learn more about volunteering or donating to the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Foundation, click [here](#).