

Needham Youth Services

October RAY of Hope Recipient

Ben Okonow



Left to right: Jon Mattleman, Director Needham Youth Services, Ben Okonow October RAY Recipient, and Kevin Ryan, Owner of Restaurant Pomodoro.

Ben Okonow is a sophomore at Needham High School. Ben was nominated by his English teacher, Bonnie Weiss. What started out as a community service project for his Bar Mitzvah three years ago has become a deeper commitment for Ben who has coached a Special Olympics Basketball team, the Belmont Blue Devils. Under Ben's leadership they have won two State Championships; he hopes to continue to coach the team throughout his High School years. In addition to volunteer coaching, this year Ben has been involved in the Relay for Life, a volunteer-driven cancer fundraising event of the American Cancer Society and the Habitat for Humanity Club at Needham High School. Ben was chosen as a student leader to attend a field trip to the state house to meet Representative Lida Harkins to learn about leadership and he was one of 6 Needham High students chosen to interview candidates for the new English Department Head. Ben loves to play and watch sports; he is on the Boy's Varsity Tennis. When he has the time, Ben likes to hang out with friends.

The RAY of Hope Program (Recognize A Youth), created by Needham Youth Services in partnership with the Needham Business Association, was designed to identify young people who have performed outstanding service to the Needham community and/or who by their actions are excellent role models for their peers. For more information please visit www.needhamma.gov/youth/ray.

NEEDHAM YOUTH SERVICES

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