

Charles Gardner **Star Teacher**

All my life, I've felt as if nothing was ever certain. But, it's been these uncertainties, such as an absent father or even my future, that have led me to seek things that would never leave. Mr. Gardner, my Star Teacher, was that person.

Looking back, at the most critical points in my high school career, he was there supporting me. Near the end of my tenth grade year, Mr. Gardner, my former science teacher and close mentor in robotics, talked to me in the hall about the bad grades I had received that year. In those few moments, I realized I wasn't only failing my grades, myself, or my family, but him too.

After that day, I discovered a new fear that would change everything: failure. But to me, failure is not really a fear; it's more like a safety net to save me from disappointing others for not doing my best. I picked myself up and pursued a brighter future, not because someone criticized me for terrible grades, but rather because the concern came from an individual who, by investing time creating a connection with me, I knew firmly desired my success. Through this, I learned that it's these relationships that teachers like Mr. Gardner cultivate with their students that have the most impact on our lives.

I recently spoke at the Charlotte City Council Meeting with regard to creating a greater electric vehicle presence on the roads, and Mr. Gardner was there supporting me. Because of the countless moments of laughter, the many instances of encouragement, and his unyielding presence in my life, I stand here now.

Today, I want to end with thanking Mr. Gardner for being my teacher in the classroom, my mentor in robotics, and my dearest friend everywhere else. Thank you.

Selvin Lendos
Gaston Early College High School
Star Student 2018



Gaston County Schools