

1,160 STEPS (YES, REALLY!)

Student, mentor are stepping it up for stair-climbing race

By Mary Rogelstad
Special to the Clipper

Glendon Barcliff has tried many new things since he was paired with his mentor nearly 1½ years ago.

Now the 15-year-old Indian River High student and Coast Guard Gunner's Mate 1st Class David Figueroa are preparing to try something completely different. They have signed up to climb 1,160 steps in The Up Center's Step Up stair-climbing race at Dominion Tower in Norfolk.

The April 25 race will benefit the agency that runs the Team Up Mentoring program, which includes the two Chesapeake residents.

"I've really enjoyed the Team Up program more than I thought I would, and I see how it has changed Glendon for the better," said Figueroa, who lives in Greenbrier. "I am hoping the Step Up event will help bring The Up Center's programs more recog-



COURTESY PHOTO

Glendon Barcliff, left, a student at Indian River High, and David Figueroa, a Coast Guard Gunner's Mate 1st Class, both of Chesapeake, will race to benefit The Up Center.

nition, so they can help more people."

The Up Center serves more than 10,000 people in Hampton Roads each year through 25 different programs, their topics ranging from adoption to foreclosure prevention.

Each participant will have the option of climbing the building's 25 stories in a noncompetitive or competitive category.

Competitors may choose to climb up the stairs once, twice, or – for elite athletes

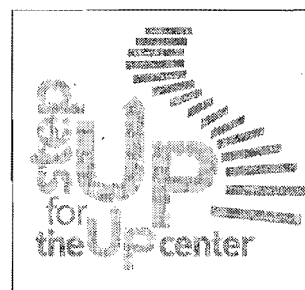
and military personnel – four times.

Registrants may participate as individuals or in team categories, which include the military, emergency responders, corporations, general teams and youth groups.

"We've had a great response from various groups that are eager to compete against each other," said Andria McClellan, Step Up chairman. "Personnel from different branches of the military, different cities and different organizations all want to win the race in their category."

In addition to the competition, the day also will include other festivities. McClellan says there will be performances from the Virginia International Tattoo, local Step teams, and the rock band Butter.

Before event day, Step Up organizers also are planning fitness activities. Several weeks before the stair



The Up Center, formerly known as Child & Family Services of Eastern Virginia, is at 222. W. 19th St., Norfolk.

climb, The Up Center and the Blocker Norfolk Family YMCA will launch a free boot camp for registrants who would like to train.

Elite stair climbers, including the founder of the Stair Climbing Association of Canada, will travel to the area to lead the first training March 28.

Figueroa was happy to hear about the camp. When he participated in a trial stair climb at the building, he was surprised how intense stair

climbing can be.

"It's a lot of work," Figueroa said. "It's not as easy as you think."

Figueroa and Glendon settled on 50 stories. Now they have a lot of preparation to do, but Figueroa says they both enjoy sports, which helped them hit it off when they met.

"Glendon had a father who he rarely saw and really had no influence in his life," Figueroa said. "Today, when I think about the kid I met back in 2008 and who he is today, I can honestly say it is a complete turn around."

"All I have to say is I just hope that he has learned as much from me as I have from him."

To register for the Step Up event or for more information, please visit www.theupcenter.org.

Mary Rogelstad is the director of communications for The Up Center.