In Memoriam – Chris Stretch, LCSW

Chris Stretch grew up in Yorba Linda, California and at a very early age, he showed signs of significant athletic potential. Up until the age of 14, he was consistently one of the best players on his team playing baseball, basketball, football and soccer. His first test to overcome adversity was when he transitioned from junior high to high school, which combined two schools into one, significantly increasing the talent pool. By his senior season, he was excelling at baseball and football, when he was recruited to play football at UC Davis. A flexible athlete, he played football for a year before deciding to focus on baseball in college. Chris’s senior year, he was all-conference and all-region and then signed a minor-league contract. After a short stint in the minor leagues, Chris then had a 9-year corporate sales career.

Along the way, as he personally struggled to manage his response to challenging situations, he decided to change course and pursue a path that would allow him to help others as they coped with fear, frustration and anxiety. Chris was guided by the mantra, “How can I best respond right now?”

From there, he thrived in this new and determined direction. As a licensed clinical social worker, mindset & performance coach and a passionate public speaker, Chris was able to reach thousands of students and families with his message of grit, resilience and hope.

Chris was an active member of the Student Mental Health Provider Task Force and partnered with many local organizations including Beach Cities Health District, South Bay Families Connected, Positive Coaching Alliance, Amigos Unidos, as well as local PTAs and schools. He also provided sports psychology, team building and coach consulting services to local youth and high school sports programs.

A key tenant of Chris’s coaching was to focus on response-ability. He believed that all of us are born with significant, innate potential for excellence, yet few of us truly harness such potential and do so consistently. Through his work, Chris was able to bring out that potential in others and guide them to a purposeful path.

Chris will be missed and will be remembered for his kindness, compassion and dedication to helping people be their best selves.