

# Senchery opening eyes at Brazoswood

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A senior at Brazoswood High School, Bernard Senchery has always enjoyed people. He also is one who enjoys helping others and that is why he took on the challenge this year in helping mentor Xaviea Haynes for the past month at T.W. Ogg Elementary School in Clute.

**CLUTE** — As many celebrate Black History Month, there is quite a gem right here in our own back yard in Brazoswood High School senior Bernard Senchery.

A starting linebacker for the past two seasons for the Buccaneers, Senchery goes way beyond the tackles and sacks that he accumulates during his play.

“I have always looked up to coach (Zeke) Wintjien a lot because he knew that we could play football in high school, but after that never again,” Senchery said. “He taught me that football is a life lesson in itself with hard work, dedication, adversity and like it has nothing to do with just hitting people at all. He taught me things that I wouldn’t have gotten just by playing on the field from learning plays or whatever.

“He taught me the true meaning of brotherhood and how it can help you in the long run. He inspired me to become a better person, but at the same time influence others to become better people.”

It is that kind of mindset that Senchery has followed for quite a few years. And it all starts with one word.

“Respect goes a long way in my family, like a very long way,” he said. “My parents came from Africa, and in Ghana respect is everything. You respect your elders no matter what and you show respect to people all around.”

Though Senchery grew up like any other youth in the area, he really didn’t come to understand the true meaning of respect until he reached high school.

“It was because of my brother, Maxwell (Senchery), and sister, Akua (Senchery), who both went to Brazoswood and through growing up, I would see their friends and I would be able to talk to them,” Senchery said. “I loved it with the respect that they had and I would show it back also. So now everybody that I meet I have to show respect to them, regardless if they are being mean to me or if they are a bigot or anything else. I just show respect regardless.”

Bernard Senchery is even so talented in football that he will get an opportunity to play at the next level.

“Southwestern University has offered me and I do want to play football,” he said. “But I also want to do something in the medical field because I like helping people.”

Whether it is helping out his teammates or mentoring young children, Bernard Senchery tries to give as much of his time as he possibly can.

“We have a young man in our school that was in need of help, who needed extra support,” T.W. Ogg Elementary counselor Karen Gresham said. “We have PALS that come over and mentor some of our students and also have some adults who mentor. But this particular individual, because he likes football and basketball and baseball, he would be a benefit to somebody that is walking in the shoes that he wants to walk in some day.”

Because of a hectic academic school schedule along with playing football, Bernard Senchery missed out on the signing deadline for PALS at Brazoswood High School. So it played in with something he wanted to take advantage of.

“I go there once a week and meet with Xaviea Haynes, and basically I am a father figure to him,” Senchery said. “I play games with him, talk to him about his day, ask him what’s been going on to see if any place he needs any help. What basically I am trying to do for him is leave a shadow that he can follow.”

He started working with Haynes in early January and so far the transformation has been a complete loop.

“We’ve seen a difference in this child, now he is happy. He smiles for the first time since he started going to school there,” Gresham said. “He’s thankful. He has a lot of gratitude and he feels what Bernard is doing for him.”

It is a Haynes smile that even gets Bernard Senchery going when he talks about him.

“First time I met him, he was so quiet and he didn’t respond to anyone,” he said. “But now every time I go, he is so happy to see me. We just talk and his favorite game is Connect Four. So now every time I see him, he has a bigger smile every time.”

Like so many African-Americans, Bernard Senchery is celebrating this month, but wishes it could be recognized just a tad longer through the year.

“Although black history is given only a month,” he said. “I believe black history should be something to be reminded of all year.”

Associate athletics director and head football coach Dean DeAtley is grateful to have Bernard and his brother Maxwell Senchery go through his program.

“His older brother set the ground work for Bernard — this is how you do things, this is how it works, this is the amount of time one has to put in here as opposed to time put in schoolwork and academics,” DeAtley said. “So him getting that positive support from his parents has made him extremely successful.”

In the top 25 percent of his graduating class, Bernard Senchery is looking forward to his future. And along the way he wants to continue to spread the word respect.

“I feel like everyone should have it. Respecting everybody can just get you to so many different places, because people in return will help you,” he said. “If you show them respect they will know that you are a good person and that you care.”

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