

Town of Farmington

Mentor Program

- Who:** The Town of Farmington mentor program is for elementary and middle school mentees and high school mentors
- What:** Pairs of mentors and mentees meet at the same time and place and spend time developing and supporting the mentee through a positive relationship
- Where:** Beginning in 2013, the program has met at the Farmington Library on Monteith Drive
- When:** The program meets for an hour a week during the school year, most recently on Tuesday afternoons from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

To get involved, contact the program coordinator:

Mr. Robert Marsh

Town of Farmington Youth Coordinator

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The following are a collection of fact sheets on the practice of mentoring, mentor training, mentoring relationships, and youth development

Practice of Mentoring Fact Sheet

What does the town mentor program look like?

The town mentor program would be defined as a site-based, cross-age peer mentor program. It is site-based because all of the pairs meet together at one place and one time, as opposed to pairs deciding on their own where and when to meet. Cross-age means that the pairs are made up of two youth, one of whom is older and wiser. For this program, an elementary or middle school student is matched up with a high school student. The goals of the town program are developmental, meaning the focus is on nurturing the mentor-mentee relationship in order to build the youths' social, emotional, and occasionally academic development.

Is mentoring effective?

There is widespread belief by researchers, funders, policy makers, and others that mentoring is successful in supporting a youth's development into a healthy and contributing member of society. Additionally, mentoring can limit involvement in risky behaviors and activities by both the mentee and the peer mentor. Dr. Michael Karcher, a mentoring researcher at the University of Texas at San Antonio, is a strong believer that mentoring is effective, as long as the older peer actually is acting as a mentor. He warns of relationships where mentoring does not take place. In these fact sheets, you will be able to find information to ensure you know what a successful mentoring relationship looks like.

What can mentors and mentees do together?

The activities that mentors and mentees do together should be ones that support the development of their relationship. In the library setting of the town mentor program, activities generally include talking, playing board games, reading together, drawing, or going for a walk around the library in the warmer weather.

Mentor Training Fact Sheet

What does a training session look like?

For the town mentoring program, there usually is an hour long training session for new mentors. The general topics covered in training include: the role of the mentor, the program mission, structure, and policies, the basics of youth development, potential scenarios, and expectations of the mentors. This will be facilitated by the program coordinator in manner in which mentors are able to collaborate and actively participate. Training activities can include small group discussion, collaborative brainstorming, and sharing of experiences. It will be important to ask any questions about the program or about mentoring in general at this time, however, training is a continuous part of the mentoring experience and questions can be asked as they come up during your involvement in the program.

Do mentees need training?

An initial mentee training helps a mentee understand his or her role and responsibilities in the program, as well as how a mentor can benefit him or her. However, ongoing mentee training is equally important in helping to build a high quality mentoring relationship. Ongoing mentee training gives mentees the opportunities to ask questions and voice concerns, and helps them to build their communication skills. It also helps to build the community of the whole program. Many times the participants in the town mentor program meet together at the beginning of a mentoring session, and often times this can include an interactive review of guidelines for mentees.

Mentoring Relationship Fact Sheet

How do mentees and mentors get matched?

For the town mentoring program, matches usually are decided upon by the youth coordinator after the mentor training. A good match is critical in ensuring a positive relationship.

What is the role of a mentor?

In a peer mentoring relationship, there should be equality between the mentor and mentee. Mentors should listen more than they talk, and mentors and mentees should choose activities collaboratively. A mentor should act as a friend, a motivator, a role model, and a listener, rather than as a surrogate parent, savior or social worker. A mentor should not have expectations of “reforming” a mentee, or try to push the mentee to change.

What makes a mentoring relationship successful?

One of the most important qualities in a mentoring relationship is trust. This takes time to build and will come gradually as the pair get to know each other better. Another quality of a successful relationship that cannot be forgotten is that the pair has fun! Having fun is especially important early on in the relationship as it can help build trust and potentially lead to more serious activities in the future. Serious activities, like school work, should never be forced; activities should be mutually decided upon to show the mentee that they are in an equal relationship. It is important to always be positive with your mentee. This helps build their confidence and lets them know they can trust you. It also is important to respect your mentees boundaries, so it is a good idea to let your mentee control what you talk about. More serious issues may come up in conversation as your relationship progresses and your mentee gains trust in you, but you should not force these topics.

Youth Development Fact Sheet

What is youth development?

Youth development is an approach to nurturing youth to become successful adults and contributing members of society through positive relationships and growing their assets. This should be done in accordance with the seven developmental needs of youth: physical activity, competence and achievement, self-definition, creative expression, positive social interactions with peers and adults, structure and clear limits, and meaningful participation.

How can mentoring support youth development?

While considering your particular mentee's strengths and needs, and the developmental needs of youth, the five C's of youth developmental can act as guidelines for structuring your time together. These C's are competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring and compassion. To help your mentee build his or her competence, you can talk about what he or she is good at, then work together to make an attainable goal to help him or her get even better. Being positive and encouraging with your mentee is the best way to build confidence. You can be supportive in helping your mentee recognize dreams for the future and turning them into goals. It is crucial for youth to have connections with their community, so you can build your own relationship with your mentee as well as help him or her find ways to be involved in the community and meet other people. Cultivating a mentee's character can come from discussions about personal values and role models. You can even talk about book or movie characters who show courage and integrity to help your mentee build his or her own set of values and character. To support your mentee in being caring in compassionate, the two of you can look into community needs and social issues, particularly those that relate to your mentee's interests, and look for ways to get involved.

Resources

Cannata, Amy, Michael Garringer, Christian Rummell, Elsy Arevalo, and Linda Jucovy.

Training New Mentors. Washington D.C.: Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, 2008.

Christensen, Tina. "Peer Mentoring: Recruiting, Training, and Ensuring Longevity."

Education Northwest. LEARNS, 27 Aug. 2008. Web.

Dr. Michael Karcher Interview Video. Michigan Community Service Commission, 15 Dec. 2010. Web.

Garringer, Michael, and Linda Jucovy. *Building Relationships: A Guide for New Mentors*. Washington D.C.: Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence, 2008.

Karcher, Michael J., Carla Herrera, and Keoki Hansen. "“I Dunno, What Do You Wanna Do?”: Testing a Framework to Guide Mentor Training and Activity Selection." *New Directions for Youth Development* 2010.126 (2010): 51-69. 20 July 2010. Web.

Karcher, Michael J., Gabriel P. Kuperminc, Sharon G. Portwood, Cynthia L. Sipe, and Andrea S. Taylor. "Mentoring Programs: A Framework to Inform Program Development, Research, and Evaluation." *Journal of Community Psychology* 34.6 (2006): 709-25. 5 Oct. 2006. Web.

United States. Department of Education. Safe and Drug Free Schools. *Enriching the Mentoring Experience through Ongoing Mentee Training*. Education Northwest, July-Aug. 2009. Web.

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