

Community Toolkit

- Business Support for Youth Programs
- Creating an Education Program and Hiring Youth Outreach Staff
 - Creating Youth Recognition Awards/Scholarships
 - Developing a Youth Training/Leadership Program
 - Involving Young People in the Election Process
- **Mentoring Students and Visiting Schools**
 - Setting up Internship Programs
- Working with Youth to Address Specific Community Issues or Needs
 - Youth Philanthropy
- Youth on School, Municipal, and Advisory Boards / Councils

The Maine Department of Education's
Citizenship Education Task Force

and

CAMPAIGN FOR THE CIVIC MISSION OF SCHOOLS



2006

What does it mean to be a mentor? Is it being a teacher? Is it being a volunteer at an after school program or being a tutor? Mentoring can be all of these things and more, which is why young people need mentors. Mentors can help to build confidence, self-esteem, and awareness in young people, which will help them to build strong ties to their communities. Part of educating and encouraging young people to become civically engaged is getting them involved with mentors who will help them to find their place within the community and work to make sure their voices are heard. Not only is mentoring beneficial to the youth receiving the services, the mentors gain experience in leadership roles, improve organizational skills, and can also learn about teaching and learning.

Colby Cares about Kids

“Colby Cares About Kids” (CCAK) is a volunteer mentoring program with the goal of providing a consistent, reliable adult presence in the lives of children who live in the greater Waterville area. Colby mentors act as role models, friends, and academic guides. According to the CCAK mission statement, “The role of the mentor is to help a child learn to trust others, build self-esteem, and increase the chances for academic success.”

The CCAK mentoring program was created by adults and students in an effort to assist local youth. In the fall of 2000, the Greater Waterville Communities for Children Coalition met with Colby College’s dean of students to discuss possible opportunities for Colby to become more invested in the local community. During the spring 2001 semester, one Colby class presented a final research project in which the students proposed a mentoring program between Colby College students and “at-risk” youth in the Waterville area. Because of the work of these Colby students, a community mentoring program was created.

CCAK is coordinated by a Colby Campus Compact VISTA and the Greater Waterville Area Communities for Children VISTA. Nearly 200 Colby College students are involved with the program and work one on one with local youths twice a week for an hour at a time. Mentors work with their young partners to better their academic, social, and organizational skills and also to act as adult friends and/or role models for them.

While the most important aspect of the program is the interaction between the young people and their mentors, the site coordinators, who are responsible for contacting local schools to make pairings for the programs, also play an important role. The coordinators are responsible for choosing 10 mentors to form the CCAK Student Committee; the committee works on logistical aspects of the mentoring program and makes presentations to the community and Colby-based groups and organizations about what they are doing.

Ideas and Suggestions for Implementation

How do you get people to act as mentors?

The CCAK has been successful at selecting mentors by recruiting on the Colby College campus. The campus coordinator is responsible for spreading the word about the program and providing literature for interested students. In the first year of the program there were 300 students that showed up to learn more about the program. Of those 300, 155 were formally recruited to become mentors. In this particular program, the goal is to recruit 50 new members each year to keep the number of mentors at approximately 200. While some programs may not be this extensive the same concepts can be applied to any mentoring program.

How are mentors screened?

In the example of the CCAK, which is currently the most well-established mentoring program in the state, after students attend the first informative meeting they are required to fill out FBI, Department of Motor Vehicles, and Department of Human Services background check forms. Mentors must also go through rigorous interviews with members of the community, including case managers for Big Brothers Big Sisters. The interviews screen for experience, commitment, varied interests, and also to find out the internal/external assets and strengths of the candidates. The National Volunteer Select Non-profit Screening Organization aides in conducting safety checks on all mentors.

How do you match mentors with youth counterparts?

With help from school guidance counselors and teachers, mentors are selected to work with each young person based on the needs of the young person. Personality and availability of time are the key points needed to select matches for the programs.

Determine if the program should be adult-youth based or youth-youth based.

Depending on the goal of the program, it may be more effective to have mainly young mentors, mainly adult mentors, or a combination of the two. If the goal of the program is to involve or educate youth in adult organizations, it may be more suitable to pair them with adults who are working in a particular field. When dealing with academics and social issues, it may be more beneficial to pair them with younger peer mentors so they form a stronger bond through shared understanding.

How are mentors trained?

The Colby College Cares about Kids program has developed an effective training curriculum. The College worked with the Big Brothers Big Sisters Organization in Kennebec County and has also been aided by the Maine Mentoring Partnership. According to the CCAK handbook, some of the aspects to be covered in training are

1. What a mentor is.
2. What a mentor is not.
3. Review of primary tasks of mentors:
 - To enhance self-esteem;
 - To help children to trust and form positive, nurturing relationships;
 - To improve academic performance and aspirations;

- To provide physical, educational and cultural activities;
 - To provide a safe environment;
 - To provide a forum for instilling a sense of civic duty through community service.
4. What to expect from mentees.
 5. Highlights of developmental stages.
 6. Behaviors of both boys and girls at various ages and stages.
 7. Characteristics of the children mentored.
 8. Local demographics about communities' youth.
 9. Examples of possible risk factors and behaviors in lives of some children and youth.
 10. Mandated reporting laws.
 11. Indicators of abuse and neglect.
 12. Structure of the programs' leadership and oversight and the reporting flow chart.
 13. Communication.
 14. Mentor and mentee testimonies.
 15. Bullying overview.
 16. Improving school performance.
 17. Staying connected to the mentee over breaks and through the summer:
 - Driving certification;
 - Collect completed background check forms and any outstanding paperwork for processing and matching.

Case Study Resources

Martha Cushing
Maine Mentoring Partnership
P.O. Box 406
Augusta, Maine 04332-0406
207-287-4494
MarthaCushing@maine.gov
<http://www.mainementoring.org>

Mark Tappan
Colby College Cares about Kids
4140 Mayflower Hill Drive
Waterville, Maine 04901-8841
207-872-3098
ccak@colby.edu
<http://www.colby.edu/ccak/committees.html>

Additional Resources

Boothbay Region Land Trust: Junior Stewardship Program

The Boothbay Region Land Trust sponsors the Junior Stewardship Program for the young citizens of the Boothbay region. The BRLT sponsors a fifth-grade environmental program at the Boothbay Region Elementary School incorporating science, math, and social studies. It includes classroom presentations on land trusts, archaeology, and the history of Damariscove Island. The students take field trips to BRLT properties and to Damariscove Island owned by The Nature Conservancy.

<http://www.bbrlt.org/Education.htm>

Jump\$tart Coalition

The Jump\$tart Coalition believes that all young adults need to have the financial literacy necessary to make informed financial decisions. Its purpose is to evaluate the financial literacy of young adults; develop, disseminate, and encourage the use of standards for grades K-12; and promote the teaching of personal finance. <http://www.jumpstart.org/index.cfm>

ME College Circle

Maine College Circle provides college workshops throughout the state for elementary, middle, and high school students. The "College Help" program is designed to provide day-long advice and information about college opportunities, college planning, and college admissions for groups of students in grades K-12, teachers, and parents. <http://www.mainecollegecircle.org/>

MELMAC Education Foundation

During the year, representatives from the Foundation participate in a variety of presentations aimed at high school students and their families. The subject matter focuses on post-secondary education planning: *Setting Goals, Achieving Dreams* is a 50-minute motivational presentation to high school students; and *LIFE - Four Basic Guiding Principles for the Journey* is a 12-15 minute motivation talk.

<http://www.melmacfoundation.org/about/outreach.aspx>

Maine Mentoring Partnership

Maine Mentoring Partnership's web site has a statewide directory, searchable by county, for all mentoring groups including Big Brothers Big Sisters, community based mentoring, school based mentoring, and many others. http://www.mainementoring.org/statewide_guide.htm Search the "Links" sections for resources on national mentoring. <http://www.mainementoring.org/links.htm>

Maine Teen Centers

Search this database for locations of teen centers across the state.

http://www.state.me.us/cfc/HomePage/Contacts-directories/Maine_teen_center_directory.htm