



Mentoring Resource Center

FACT SHEET

In This Issue . . .

Our feature article this month examines ways to improve your school-based mentoring program over the summer months.

The Pub Hub (beginning on page 4) takes a look at many resources available from the MRC Lending Library that can be useful to your mentoring program. Featured resources in this issue include ones that can strengthen mentor-mentee relationships in fun and creative ways, and a great resource for building leadership skills in youth.



Summertime Program Tune-Up:

Take Advantage of “Down” Time for Needed Program Enhancements

Running a school-based mentoring program can be hectic during the school year: mentors and students are meeting every week, mentor recruitment and training is in full swing, communication with teachers and other school staff is at a premium, and the day-to-day activities at a school site can create any number of unexpected challenges for program coordinators and other staff members to address.

The summer break, however, can be a bit calmer. Students and school staff are on break, matches meet less frequently, and most grant-driven data collection and reporting is complete. Because fewer aspects of program management need daily attention over the summer months, this can be an ideal time to take a step back, assess your program, and make necessary changes in a number of areas. Many programs find that the summer break is perfect for reflecting

on successes and challenges, making the adjustments needed to ensure services are constantly improving, and preparing to hit the ground running at the beginning of the following year.

This issue of the Fact Sheet explores many aspects of your program that can be enhanced over the summer months. For each programming area we have provided self-assessment questions to guide your thinking about what might need improvement. Keep in mind that the Mentoring Resource Center is here to help you work through any program changes that you decide to make as a result of this analysis.



Policies and Procedures

Day-to-day operations are a logical starting point for an analysis of what might need improvement in your program over the summer. Chances are that the school year provided many examples of what is working well, and not so well, with your operating procedures. You may have received feedback from participants that you need to act on, or you may have engaged in some on-the-fly decision making throughout the year that can now be codified into permanent program policy. Take care of these formal changes in policy or procedure before the hustle and bustle of the new school year is underway.

Ask yourself . . .

- Did we get feedback from mentors/parents/youth that speaks to needed program changes?
- Did situations come up throughout the year that warrant the creation of new policies or procedures?
- Has our organization or the school or district made any policy changes that will have an impact on our mentoring program?
- Does our board or advisory council need to formally approve any changes headed into the next year?
- From a risk-management perspective, can we improve mentor screening or match monitoring procedures?



Evaluation

Your recently completed yearly program evaluation is another logical starting point for analyzing your program. The benchmarks for your GPRA reporting requirements (12-month matches, improved academic performance, decreased unexcused absences) obviously matter a great deal, and a failure to reach your goals might necessitate some program changes. But what else did you learn about your program? And what did you learn about the evaluation process itself? Keep in mind that changes to your evaluation need to be completed in time for the start of school if you are planning on doing any year-long or pre-post data collection and analysis. You can learn from your current evaluation, and prepare for next year's, by asking questions such as:

- Are our participants satisfied? Did youth, mentors, parents, or teachers give us any feedback that we should act on?
- How well did our data collection procedures work? Do we need to improve the permissions or partnerships we have that allow us to collect data?
- Are there new questions about our program's outcomes that we want to answer? Do we need to identify new validated instruments to collect additional meaningful data?
- Are we reporting our data effectively to stakeholders? Have we reported the past year's evaluation findings to partners, teachers, mentors, youth, and parents?
- Are we integrating positive findings from our evaluation into mentor recruitment, marketing, and sustainability efforts?



Mentor Recruitment

If your program is dedicated to making matches that last a full school year, the summer months are a critical time to get mentor recruitment strategies designed and implemented. Summer provides many opportunities to get out into the community and reach mentors at locations—such as parks, fairs, and outdoor concerts—that are less frequented during the colder months. Spend

some time over the summer reviewing your current recruitment messages and developing and testing new ones. Investing heavily in recruitment activities over the summer is a great way to restock your pool of mentors and allow you to start making matches as soon as the school year begins.

- At which community events could we have a formal presence over the summer?
- Are we happy with our current recruitment messages? Does our recruitment presentation need refining?
- Are we incorporating positive feedback from participants and successful program outcomes from last year into recruitment messages for the coming year?
- Have we analyzed the sources of our current mentors? Could those sources be used again or expanded on? Or do we need to identify new sources?
- Do we need to revamp our program Web site, brochure, or application packet?



Mentor and Mentee Support

The summer break is a great time to review and expand the forms of support you provide to mentors and mentees. This includes “big picture” things, such as enhancing mentor training or forming new partnerships with youth-serving agencies to increase mentees’ access to developmental opportunities in the community, as well as forms of support from which specific mentor-mentee pairs could benefit. If you are thinking about forming a mentor support group, bringing in specialized trainers, or simply increasing the number of fun activities matches can engage in, take action now so that these supports are in place when school starts back up. Questions to consider include:

- Did we get feedback from mentors and mentees about other forms of support they would be interested in?
- How was our mentor retention rate? Are a large number of mentors coming back next year? If not, why?

- Did our program evaluation point to any areas of difficulty for matches that we might need to address?
- Do we need to increase our ability to refer youth to other forms of support, such as tutoring, counseling, or other youth development opportunities?
- Do we need to supplement our existing mentor training with new topics?
- Do we need to expand the types of activities our matches engage in? Would new board games, computer programs, or recreational opportunities be helpful?
- Are there specific matches that could use some extra help and guidance heading into next year?



Staff Development

Just as your mentors and mentees need all kinds of training and skill development, so does your own staff. Spend some time over the summer enhancing your staff’s skills and abilities so that your program can provide even better services next year. There are a number of mentoring- or youth development-themed conferences and workshops offered over the summer months (these are often announced on the ED Mentoring Forum listserv for grantees; email us at edmentoring@emt.org to sign up if you haven’t already). Formal classes in nonprofit and volunteer management, marketing, or computer skills might also give your program staff some needed skills. Even informally researching topics you are interested in can be fruitful—the MRC can help you identify research and resources for your “summer reading list.” Use the summer break to examine staff roles and responsibilities, making sure that everyone is comfortable in, and has the skills for, their role.

- Are there gaps in our staff skills? If so, how can we fill these?
- What summer training events or conferences should we attend?
- Are there aspects of our program that we should research more?

Continued on page 6

The Pub Hub

A Look at Publications and Tools You Can Use!

In this edition of the Pub Hub we examine several new resources you can borrow from the MRC Lending Library and highlight one special new resource you can use to strengthen mentor-mentee relationships in fun and creative ways.

These and hundreds of other resources are available through the MRC Lending Library at http://www.edmentoring.org/lending_library.html. Please contact library coordinators Michael Garringer (garringm@nwrel.org) or Kay Logan (logank@nwrel.org) if you have any questions about searching or using the collection.

Reflection is a key aspect of any mentoring relationship. Often young people grow most when they stop to consider the changes that the mentoring relationship has made in their behavior or personality, or when they realize that they place tremendous value in the time spent with their mentor. Reflection is the process through which mentees become aware of the power and meaning of mentoring in their lives. Mentors also benefit from reflection, which helps them discover new ways to help their mentee and internalizes a sense of satisfaction for the good work they are doing.

But formal opportunities for reflection in mentoring programs can be rare, and matches may not know how to go about processing the mentoring experience in a way that adds additional meaning and value. A new resource from the Friends for Youth Mentoring Institute hopes to address this challenge by providing youth and mentors with a fun set of activities and reflection tools that can create a lasting record of the thoughts, emotions, and enjoyable moments that comprise every successful mentoring relationship.



The Friends for Youth Mentoring Journal can be a wonderful supplement to any mentoring relationship. This beautifully-designed spiral-bound journal can be used by both youth and mentors. The journals are organized into six sections: an introduction, four quarterly sections that guide matches through a calendar or school year, and closure.

Each section offers a number of activity ideas designed to get mentors and mentees conversing and having fun

together. There are also personal activities designed to let participants reflect on their mentoring relationship and what they are getting out of the experience.

Program staff can also find these journals useful. Mentors and mentees fill out weekly entry pages about their meetings, as well as a quarterly summary of their impressions of how the relationship is going. These reflection pieces can help program staff monitor match activities and troubleshoot matches that are having difficulties.

But the best part about these journals is that they are simply fun and engaging. There are placeholders for mementos and photographs, art-based activities that allow participants to express their feelings and goals in creative ways, and reflective worksheets that get youth thinking about the relationship and their lives from different perspectives. The graphic design and artwork in these journals is outstanding and sure to inspire youth (and mentors) to express themselves in artistic, meaningful ways.

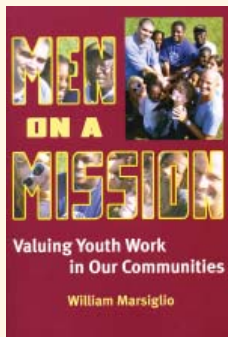
Prices for the journals start at \$28 for a set of two journals, with price breaks for programs that buy larger quantities. We have also added a few copies to our Lending Library if you would like to preview the journals:

<http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17720&DB=res>

You can learn more about the development of the journals, and the research behind the concept, in the spring issue of the **Friends for Youth Connections newsletter**: http://www.friendsforyouth.org/files/MICConnectionsNewsletters/Connections_Spring2008.pdf

Further information about the journals can be found on their Web site at: <http://www.friendsforyouth.org/MentorJournal.html>

New Resources in the MRC Library



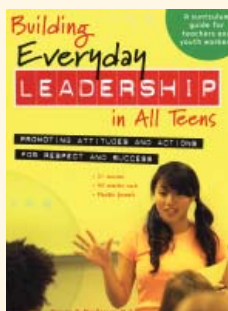
Men on a Mission: Valuing Youth Work in Our Communities, by William Marsiglio. 2008, Johns Hopkins University Press.

This new resource offers a thoroughly researched look at men who work with youth in a variety of professional and volunteer capacities. The author, a professor of sociology at the University of Florida, examines the reasons men choose to work with young people, the characteristics of their experiences, and the social and cultural factors that encourage and restrict their involvement. Through interviews, research, and ethnographic observation, he also delves into how men form relationships with youth, what they gain from the experience, and the impact they have on the young people they serve.

Much of the content of the book deals specifically with mentors and mentoring, although it also examines the whole spectrum of male involvement with young people. Groups like Boys and Girls Clubs, 4H, and Boy Scouts are also discussed, as are other roles, such as teachers, coaches, and counselors.

This is a valuable book for any program serving young people. It's a pretty scholarly resource, but one that could really teach the field a lot about the experiences of male volunteers and youth workers and what we all can do to encourage them and maximize their impact on individuals and communities.

Lending Library Link: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17719&DB=res>



Building Everyday Leadership in All Teens: Promoting Attitudes and Actions for Respect and Success, by Miriam MacGregor. 2006, Free Spirit Publishing.

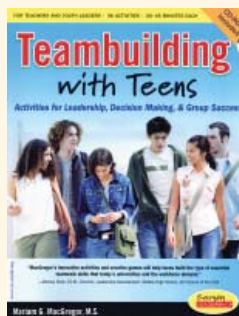
This resource offers 21 ready-to-use group activities for teaching teens a wide variety of leadership skills. Each training session is designed to last 45 minutes and comes complete with instructions and reproducible handouts. Teen participants also utilize a separate companion guidebook, which features additional exercises and reflection opportunities to use in conjunction with each training session. Topics covered include an introduction to leadership, clarifying values, effective communication, ethical decision making, managing conflict, and teambuilding. This could be a valuable resource for programs

that have a group component. Several of these activities could also be adapted for use by a mentoring pair.

Lending Library Links:

Main Curriculum: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17687&DB=res>

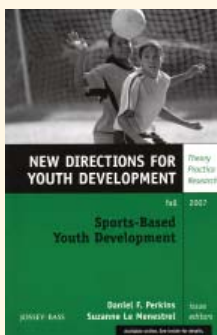
Teen Guidebook: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17686&DB=res>



Teambuilding with Teens: Activities for Leadership, Decision Making, & Group Success, by Miriam MacGregor. 2007, Free Spirit Publishing.

This collection of training activities, also by the author of *Building Everyday Leadership in All Teens*, features group exercises intended to build skills in young people. These 20-45 minute activities focus on topics such as self-awareness, social issues, problem solving, and personal reflection. A CD-ROM providing electronic versions of handouts is also included. This resource can provide interactive and fun teaching moments for the young people in your program.

Lending Library Link: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17718&DB=res>



Sports-Based Youth Development (New Directions for Youth Development, Fall 2007 Issue). 2007, Jossey-Bass.

Each issue of *New Directions for Youth Development* focuses on a different topic, and the fall 2007 issue features seven research articles on effective sports programming for promoting youth development. The lead article examines the intersection of sports, out-of-school time, and youth well-being, describing a youth-development approach to sports. Subsequent articles examine characteristics of successful sports-based programs, real-life examples of effective sports programs, and advice on incorporating sports into afterschool services. This resource can be beneficial to any program thinking about making sports activities a regular component of their mentoring program.

Lending Library Link: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17724&DB=res>

Program Tune-Up *continued from page 3*

- Can we bring in a trainer to build specific skills we need to enhance?
- Are we happy with the current alignment of staff roles and responsibilities?
- Do we need to replace any staff members (or increase our staffing) by the beginning of the school year?



Managing and Growing Partnerships

The busy start of the school year is not an ideal time to build new partnerships, whether it's with a potential funding source or a community partner that can offer additional services to youth. Getting new partnerships in place for the beginning of the school year is a critical summer break activity. This time can also be used to strengthen and nurture existing partnerships, making sure to address any difficulties or challenges these partnerships endured last year. It's a good idea to hold an end-of-year meeting with all partners to celebrate your accomplishments and gather feedback that can improve partner relations and cooperation. Revisit all your formal agreements (MOUs) with partners and make any needed changes. When thinking about partnerships, ask:

- Are there new businesses or organizations we can approach about contributing funds or volunteers for next year?
- Should we develop partnerships with other schools that can help matches stay together after students move up in grade level?
- Do we need to find new partners that can help with mentor training, evaluation, or expanding opportunities for youth in the program?
- How do our current partners feel about the last year? What was successful and what do we need to work on?
- Do we need to revise any formal agreements to work better with our partners?



Fundraising and Sustainability Planning

It might be easier for your staff to engage in sustainability activities over the summer when day-to-day operations have slowed down. As with mentor recruitment, the break is an ideal time to get out in the community, make presentations, capitalize on last year's success, and build new networks of supporters. This can be a good time to revamp your board or advisory group and gather key players to make a comprehensive plan for diversifying funding. You can also prepare for future funding opportunities by doing specific tasks such as writing boilerplate text for grants or analyzing your evaluation data for evidence of success.

- Do we know of any upcoming funding opportunities (grants, etc.) that we need to prepare for?
- How can we diversify our funding? What sources do we need to research further?
- How prepared are we for future opportunities? Do we need to write boilerplate language or gather data so we can respond effectively to new funding streams?
- What is missing from our comprehensive funding strategy? Who is managing our plans? Who should be part of our planning team?
- Is our board of directors (or advisory committee) fully informed about our fundraising goals and involved in our planning?
- Can we leverage more support from our existing partners? Do we need to find new ones?
- Do we have the time and resources to do a summer fundraising event?



Recharge Everyone's Batteries and Have Some Fun!

Running a school-based mentoring program is hard work, so be sure to build in some fun over the summer. Events like a pool party or summer picnic can be a great way to unwind while also keeping matches in contact and getting your program some

Ways the MRC Team Can Help You With Summer Program Improvements

Let us know about any topics for which you need help finding research or related resources. Our staff has expertise in finding information you can use.

Select some items from the Lending Library or our many online publications to create a “summer reading list.” Ask us for recommendations based on the aspects of your program that you’d like to improve.

Request formal technical assistance, which can consist of a site visit, “Training by Request,” or intensive online support. These are your opportunities as grantees to get one-on-one support.

Call or e-mail with any questions you have. The MRC can provide valuable advice and information to help you improve your program. Just let us know what you are working on—we’re here to help!

Connect with the MRC:

- The MRC Lending Library:
http://www.edmentoring.org/lending_library.html
- Request Technical Assistance/Site Visits:
http://www.edmentoring.org/grantee/ta_services.html
- Schedule a Training by Request:
http://www.edmentoring.org/grantee/by_request.html
- ED Mentoring Forum Grantee Listserv:
<http://www.edmentoring.org/grantee/listserv.html>

exposure in the community. Even if program activities are at a minimum, take some time to reflect on the year and congratulate staff and volunteers on all the wonderful work your program has done. Also thank parents, teachers, administrators, partners, youth, and mentors for their hard work. Encourage them all to reflect on what went well and what can be improved when the school year starts.

Have some fun and relax a bit, even while making these program “tune-ups.” Before you know it, classes will be back in session, mentors will be engaging youth, and your to-do list will be a mile long. Hopefully, if you’ve improved the program over the summer, this coming year will be even better for your program and the youth you serve.

Recommended MRC Resources for Making Summer Tune-Ups

Building a Sustainable Mentoring Program: A Framework for Resource Development Planning.

This planning guide can help your team build a comprehensive plan over the summer months.
<http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/sustainability.pdf>

Effective Mentor Recruitment: Getting Organized, Getting Results.

This guide offers many planning worksheets that can help you find new sources of mentors.
<http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/recruitment.pdf>

Fact Sheet 14: Putting Youth Development Principles To Work in Mentoring Programs.

An excellent guide to increasing the youth development opportunities your mentees can engage in next year. <http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/factsheet14.pdf>

Fact Sheet 20: Keeping Matches in Touch Over the Summer Months.

This resource examined some simple, effective methods for keeping matches connected when in-person meetings are difficult.
<http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/factsheet20.pdf>

Continued on back

Guide to Mentoring for Parents and Guardians.

If parent involvement was an issue for your program last year, this customizable template can help you create a resource that can answer parents' questions, clarify their role, and encourage communication with your staff.

Guide: http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/about_handbook.pdf

Template: http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/parent_handbook.doc

Mapping Your Connections: Laying a Foundation for Initial Mentor Recruitment.

Although this chapter from our Web Seminar publication on targeted recruitment was written with new programs in mind, the mapping tools can also help established programs maximize their personal connections to the community.

http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/recruitment_book.pdf

Marketing Toolkit for Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools Mentoring Programs.

This online tool offers many templates and samples of effective marketing materials. A valuable resource if you are looking to improve your outreach for next year.
<http://www.edmentoring.org/toolkit/>

Ongoing Training for Mentors: 12 Interactive Sessions for U.S. Department of Education Mentoring Programs.

This resource provides ready-to-use training sessions on common issues in mentoring relationships that might help address your identified training needs.
http://www.edmentoring.org/pubs/ongoing_training.pdf

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