



NATIONAL MENTORING CENTER

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The Mosaic of Faith-Based Mentoring

Whether the focus is religious or secular, faith communities offer much to mentoring

By Mark Fulop, Director, NMC

With the current interest in faith-based mentoring, common questions that arise are, What makes a mentoring program faith-based? and What, exactly, does the concept of faith contribute to youth mentoring?

In the process of providing training and technical assistance to mentoring programs across the country, we at the National Mentoring Center have encountered a wide range of programs and practices that fit under the concept of faith-based youth mentoring. In examining these programs and practices, we have identified a number of broad themes to help shape our understanding of faith-based mentoring. We share these themes here as an introduction to this special issue on faith-based mentoring. The NMC hopes that this discussion, and the articles that follow, will make a meaningful contribution to the conversation about how mentoring services can grow in faith settings, and how community- and school-based programs can work in partnership with faith organizations.

FAITH-BASED MENTORING IS NOT A SHORTCUT

I was recently sitting in my office talking with the project director of a faith-based mentoring initiative aimed at youth in the juvenile justice system. The conversation quickly turned to the familiar themes related to managing all kinds of youth mentoring programs: Mentor recruitment is challenging; working with youth who have many risk factors and few protective factors is very complex; evaluation is extremely difficult; and sustainability planning is a constant high priority. In short, faith-based

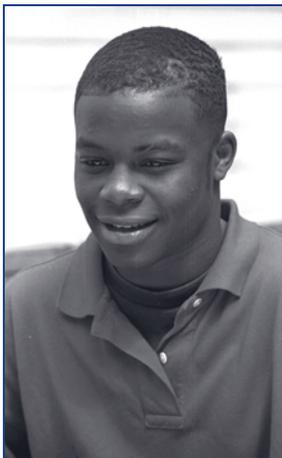
mentoring mirrors the same issues facing mentoring programs of all kinds. Managing youth mentoring programs is challenging, period. Faith settings are no exception. Faith-based mentoring offers no shortcuts to the hard work of designing mentoring programs that recruit, screen, match, nurture, and support mentor-youth relationships that are emotionally close and sustained for a long period of time. This is the central foundation of all mentoring programs. We know that it is only in this context of quality relationships that the magic of mentoring occurs, whether the setting is a church, school, workplace, or community agency.

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From the Ground Up

A church builds a model mentoring program

A decade ago, a group of religious leaders and church members in Columbia, Maryland, looked around their community and saw a need: Many young African American males were struggling to find their way in the world. Deeply concerned, these members of the St. John Baptist Church committed themselves to doing something about it. What emerged was a program that has grown into a model of effective mentoring. We invite you to read about the journey of this outstanding faith-based mentoring effort, beginning on page 7.



OJJDP

Office of Juvenile Justice
and Delinquency Prevention



Northwest Regional
Educational Laboratory

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“THERE IS
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CHARACTERISTICS OF FAITH-BASED MENTORING

While the common work of developing and implementing a sound mentoring program transcends all mentoring program distinctions, this is not to suggest that faith-based mentoring is an artificial construct. There is evidence that faith can contribute to the success of youth mentoring through the presence of distinguishing characteristics—characteristics that give faith-based youth mentoring programs their special strengths, such as:

■ A Volunteer-Rich Environment.

Faith-based mentoring programs are typically a direct activity of a church, synagogue, or mosque or are anchored to a related faith institution, such as a community outreach or social service center. This direct connection of the program embeds it in the context of members who often are predisposed toward volunteerism by their faith and values. Some faith-based mentoring programs are simply a partnership between a faith-based institution and an established community mentoring program. The members of the faith community volunteer to become mentors in the community program, thus mitigating some of the common challenges of volunteer recruitment.

■ A Setting for Mentoring Practice.

Some faith-based institutions become a setting for the mentoring program. In this model, the church, synagogue, or mosque becomes a safe place where the mentors and youth can meet. These faith-based programs resemble other site-based mentoring models, such as school-based or worksite-based programs.

- **A Commitment to Community Service and Civic Engagement.** A third characteristic that is often inherent in faith-based mentoring programs is a commitment to community service and civic engagement. This commitment to service and social transformation, as well as to personal spiritual growth is an explicit component of many faith institutions. Often the community and social services of these faith communities is nonsectarian; in many faith-based mentoring programs, community service is a significant point of interaction between the mentor and youth.

■ Mediation for Youth Development.

In some neighborhoods and communities, the faith institutions are the central organizing agencies of the community. In these cases, the church, synagogue, or mosque serves as the catalyst or mediator for positive youth development. The National Ten Point Leadership Foundation in Boston is an example of faith-based agencies moving beyond a community service agenda and advocating for long-term social change. (For more information on the foundation, see <http://www.ntlf.org/index.html>.) Youth mentoring programs in this context offer the potential of more than just mentoring, contributing to the larger social bonding between the youth and the larger community.

■ A Framework for Values and Life Skills.

Finally, faith-based mentoring offers a framework for teaching and modeling values and life skills to youth. In this area, the faith-based mentoring programs often make intentional choices as to the religiosity of the teaching and modeling. While some faith-based mentoring programs incorporate religious tenets and teachings into their mentor-youth relationships, other mentoring programs are largely nonsectarian, relying on the larger principles related to values and life skills.

RECOGNIZING THE SPECTRUM OF FAITH-BASED MENTORING

Given the variety of program characteristics that may be present in a faith setting, it is difficult to arrive at one simple definition of faith-based mentoring. Mentoring in faith-based settings ranges across many programmatic dimensions based on the intentional choices of the specific faith institution that sponsors the mentoring program. This spectrum of mentoring programs ranges from secular to faith-secular, faith-centered, or “faith-saturated.” (For more information on the topic of faith-based diversity see Working Group on Human Needs and Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, <http://working-group.org>.) While faith-based mentoring is a mosaic that eludes a simple definition, the rich fabric found in the diversity of faith-based mentoring opens to us multiple possibilities for the much-needed expansion of quality youth mentoring programs throughout all the communities of our nation. ♦

Making a Difference in the Spirit of Kinship

Kinship of Greater Minneapolis Director Daniel Johnson talks about the success of his organization— and the realities of faith-based mentoring

By Michael Garringer

Despite its current cachet on the national scene, faith-based mentoring is far from a new concept. An organization called Kinship has been providing youth mentoring in faith settings for half a century.

Since the 1950s, Kinship has grown and spread. Many of its affiliates have been developed as secular mentoring programs, but some have remained faith-based. One of those affiliates, Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, offers an instructive look at the development and operation of a successful faith-based mentoring program.

Launched as a separate nonprofit organization in 1988, the Minneapolis Kinship program has created more than 1,000 long-term matches. Although it is a Christian organization, mentors are not required to be Christian or to share their faith with their mentee. While the majority of mentors in the program are church members, the nature of the mentoring relationships is fairly religion-neutral. At the end of last fiscal year, Kinship had 269 active mentoring relationships, with 97 of those created within the last year.

The organization has also seen some outstanding outcomes for youth in recent years. Unlike many programs, the Minneapolis Kinship embraces program evaluation, viewing it as the best way of determining if their mentoring relationships are making a difference for the youth. Evaluation is seen as the engine that drives improvements in the program's operations and procedures.

Kinship uses a combination of internally developed evaluation instruments and evaluation components taken from the Search Institute publication *What's Working: Tools for Evaluating Your Mentoring Program*. At the beginning of a mentoring relationship, and at the yearly anniversary thereafter, an evaluation form is sent to every child, parent, and mentor in the program. The results of these surveys are grouped into four areas: the youth's sense of responsibility, respectfulness toward others, social skills, and sense of optimism.

The results have been quite positive across the board. Data from the last year indicate that close to half the parents and a majority of youth participating in the program perceived positive impacts in each of the four focus areas (see chart below). The mentors themselves reported seeing less improvement in each of the four areas.

	Children	Parents	Mentors
Increased responsibility	61%	45%	26%
Increased respect	61%	45%	23%
Improved social skills	70%	65%	23%
Increased optimism	74%	72%	61%

Parents were also asked a series of questions to rate the overall effectiveness of the Kinship program. Among their responses: 96 percent felt that they and their family had benefited from having their child participate in the program, while 83 percent felt that Kinship staff had properly supported both their family and the match.

Mentors were also asked to rate their experience in the program. An overwhelming majority of mentors felt that Kinship had provided them with enough training and support. More than 70 percent of mentors claimed that the experience had a positive effect on their life, while over 80 percent said they would recommend volunteering in the program to a friend. That last number is a crucial one for a program like Kinship, which relies on word of mouth and informal recruitment from current volunteers for much of its influx of mentors.

Kinship's evaluation data show that the program is meeting the expectations of its three client groups. Participants feel that the program is properly preparing and supporting them. Both parents and mentors indicate that they are happy, not only with the outcomes for the youth, but with their interaction with the program's staff and the overall experience of being in the program. Perhaps most important, the evaluation shows that even the mentees themselves are sensing the value of having a mentor in their life.

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"WE SERVE KIDS FROM A WHOLE RANGE OF RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS AND DO NOT USE FUNDING FOR A RELIGIOUS INDOCTRINATION."

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Below, Daniel Johnson, Executive Director of Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, shares with *NMC Bulletin* readers some insights based on his vast experience in the world of faith-based mentoring. (For additional information visit the Kinship Web site at www.kinship.org.)

NMC: I think folks would be interested in learning a bit about the history and structure of the Kinship program.

Daniel Johnson: Kinship's ministry began in 1954 when students in a Home Missions course at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, were assigned to explore the needs within their community. They discovered there were young men who were in trouble with the law and who were also of single-parent homes. They decided to befriend these young men, and gradually developed what was called the Kinsmen program. Over time, girls were also included. Soon the program also began to utilize couples and families as Kinship friends/mentors. The program also branched off to work interdenominationally, working with boys and girls as young as five years of age.

The concept of Kinship stems from the Old Testament, where large, extended families or tribes were expected to look out for one another. This sometimes involved redeeming or buying people out of slavery. This concept of Kinship was expanded within the Christian church, as Christ expanded the concept of family to include all people, whatever their status or faith background. Followers of Christ were mandated to care about all others in need, particularly fatherless and motherless children.

The Kinship model was adopted by the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1967. This helped to develop Kinship affiliates across the country, primarily in the Upper Midwest. Not long after the merger of the Lutheran churches in 1989, support for the national Kinship organization was discontinued. Since this time, the national program has been supported as a separate, nonprofit organization by a volunteer board of directors. Small annual dues are provided by the 60 national affiliates to support a part-time administrator. Thanks to the small national start-up costs and minimal national dues, many of our affiliates are able to operate successfully in small towns.

Two strong state alliances in Minnesota and Wisconsin have focused on the development and implementation of program standards and communications. We were able to implement a peer review process, thanks in large part to funding from the McKnight Foundation. The McKnight Foundation also provided funding to strengthen the use of technology among our Kinship programs. More recently, the Otto Bremer Foundation has helped us to enhance our organizational effectiveness through their financial support. Specifically, this funding has allowed us to provide a wide range of trainings for our affiliates on important issues such as board development, fund raising, and risk management.

NMC: What types of mentoring relationships does Kinship facilitate? Are things like Bible study and other "faith-intensive" activities typical of most relationships, or are the mentoring relationships and activities similar to what one would see in a typical community- or school-based model?

DJ: Our program is more closely aligned with a typical community-based model. However, we recognize the tremendous motivation that faith has to inspire people to give of themselves personally and financially. It is up to the mentor, the child, and his or her parent or guardian on the role faith plays out in the relationship. We try to be very sensitive to all participants in our program on how they express themselves. I remember one parent who specifically wanted to have a Christian volunteer for her children, commenting on how the mentor's faith would impact little things like the kind of music they listened to while in the car. We believe that the actions of Kinship mentors will speak louder than their words. Using theological terms, this is called "incarnational ministry."

NMC: Do you run into prospective mentors who shy away from the faith-based approach?

DJ: I believe we've attracted far more people as a result of our mission than those who have been deterred by it. We've had volunteers of a variety of faith backgrounds who are comfortable with our mission, organizational values, and structure. I think that trying to be all things to all people actually can be more of a disadvantage than an advantage.

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State Partnerships Reach Out to Faith Programs

Across the nation, faith-based efforts are finding an array of support services

As the development of local faith-based mentoring programs has grown in popularity, so have the training, technical assistance, and other support services offered to these programs by state mentoring partnerships and other large-scale mentoring initiatives. These state partnerships are increasingly customizing their support services to meet the unique challenges of faith-based programs, and many are actively promoting the expansion of mentoring in faith settings.

Here's a quick rundown of some of the most prominent efforts to support faith-based mentoring through State and Regional Partnerships:

Alabama. At the urging of state Attorney General Bill Pryor, Mentor Alabama has been actively promoting faith-based mentoring throughout the state. In January 2001, the state convened more than 300 leaders from the state's faith community for a Faith Summit on Mentoring, which focused on mobilizing congregations to volunteer and encouraging faith communities to partner with existing programs or create new ones. The Mentor Alabama Web site contains several suggestions on how churches and other faith organizations can get involved in mentoring and provides a useful set of guidelines for faith volunteers and programs that will be working in public schools. You can learn more about Alabama's efforts at <http://www.ago.state.al.us/mentor/faith.htm>.

Delaware. The Delaware Mentoring Council (DMC) currently works with some half-dozen faith-based mentoring efforts. A Faith Committee has been established to promote and recruit mentors in the faith community. An Interfaith Mentoring Coalition Task Force—which consists of various members from the mentoring, faith-based mentoring, faith, and mentoring communities—recently launched a faith-based recruitment campaign in conjunction with National Volunteer Week. Through the council's partnership with the Corporation for National and Community Service, an AmeriCorps VISTA member works with the faith community to promote mentoring. The council also provides a number of manuals on how to create a faith-based mentoring program, as well as general packets on the 10 best practices for mentoring programs—practices that are applicable to any mentoring program.

Florida. Governor Jeb Bush's Mentoring Initiative recently made a strong commitment to faith-based involvement in Florida by allocating money to help boost the numbers of volunteer mentors from faith settings. Frontline Outreach, an Orlando-based nonprofit Christian ministry, has been awarded a grant to help churches recruit congregation members to serve as volunteers in existing mentoring programs. Although the project is still in its initial stages, Frontline Outreach hopes to eventually get 500 mentors from five pilot cities across the state. To help achieve this goal, it has created an advisory committee composed of leaders from churches, mosques, synagogues, and other houses of worship, who will serve as advocates for the program in their congregations and religious communities. The hope is that these representative leaders will be able to inspire increased volunteerism and participation in existing school- and community-based programs. Through a partnership with America's Promise, each church that fulfills its mentoring commitments will be formally designated a Congregation of Promise. Frontline Outreach also provides preservice training for interested volunteers and congregations on the basics of volunteering in schools and other secular settings.

Maine. In an effort to encourage volunteers from faith organizations to participate in mentoring relationships, the state has developed Maine Interfaith Mentoring, a collaborative effort among the Maine Mentoring Partnership, the Maine Council of Churches, and Communities for Children. Starting with Governor Angus King's endorsement in 2000, the group has been dedicated to strengthening faith-based efforts in the state through coordinated volunteer recruitment, development of replicable program models, and the provision of preservice training of volunteers from congregations across a wide spectrum of faiths. The "Heart to Hand Project" encourages communities of faith to partner with schools and existing community organizations, guided by a Heart to Hand manual describing all the basics for launching such a partnership. Maine Interfaith Mentoring hopes to increase the number of the state's children who are in mentoring relationships by increasing public awareness about mentoring through a state-wide media campaign and by fostering collaboration among schools and religious leaders.

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Maryland. The Maryland Mentoring Partnership provides consultation, volunteer management, training workshops, and networking opportunities to churches participating in the Church Mentoring Initiative. The initiative includes a wide range of church-based programs serving youth throughout Baltimore and the surrounding communities. The Maryland Mentoring Partnership also has partnered with another faith-based program called Baltimore Rising. This partnership aims to reduce juvenile violence in the city through the work of volunteer mentors and their churches.

Massachusetts. The Mass Mentoring Partnership currently supports 20 faith programs through its Faith-based Mentoring Network. The Network provides training, technical assistance, and other supports for churches, synagogues, mosques, and other religious institutions as they develop and enhance their mentoring efforts. One particular focus of the partnership is increased participation from non-Christian faith communities. Many faith-based programs in the state are stepping in and delivering services where state and county funding has been reduced or eliminated. To ensure that these programs are designed around effective best practices, the partnership offers discounts and waivers for many of its services to faith-based programs.

New York. Faith-based organizations that are thinking about starting up a program can turn to the Mentoring Partnership of New York for several kinds of assistance. The partnership offers guidance

in choosing program designs that meet the needs of particular congregations. They also provide a series of trainings for faith-based coordinators to help ensure that faith-based programs in the city are running safe and effective programs. The partnership also hosts “mentoring fellowship dinners,” which regularly bring lay and religious leaders of many faiths together to network, share ideas, and discuss the challenges associated with creating and operating a faith-based mentoring program.

Philadelphia. The Church Mentoring Network, a service of the Greater Philadelphia Mentoring Partnership, is one of the nation’s oldest and most successful faith-based efforts, and has served as the model for many other faith-based program networks across the country. The network assists faith-based programs by providing program development advice and ongoing training for volunteers and staff, as well as coordinating and sharing resources across programs. This coordination and assistance allow churches to design programs that meet their particular needs without having to “reinvent the wheel.” The Church Mentoring Network has allowed faith-based mentoring programs in the city to be truly greater than the sum of their parts. The network has added two valuable how-to guidebooks to the mentoring literature base: *Church Mentoring Network: A Program Manual for Linking and Supporting Mentoring Ministries* and *Church-based Mentoring: A Program Manual for Mentoring Ministries*. (These excellent guidebooks are profiled in the resources section that begins on page 18 of this issue.) ♦

The Work of a Saint

St. John Baptist Church Mentoring Program tells a familiar story

By Michael Garringer

COLUMBIA, Maryland—In May 1992, several religious leaders and congregation members from St. John Baptist Church held a meeting. The topic for the evening was the community itself or, more accurately, the challenging conditions faced by many of its residents, particularly its young African American males. The Board of Christian Education had organized the meeting to discuss how the church might address some of the problems of the community through congregational outreach and volunteer service.

A decision was made that evening: Ten active church members who had a high interest in helping youth formed the St. John Baptist Church Core Mentoring Group. Just like that, a program was born.

It is the type of decision made in churches across America hundreds of times every year. A group of citizens had been motivated by their faith and by the conditions around them to help strengthen their community and the lives of its children. But once that initial decision had been made, a lot of hard work lay ahead.

Behind the simplicity of the idea was the infinitely complicated question, "How do we do this?" The decisions the St. John program staff have made in design, implementation, and direction over the last decade are both unique to their program and typical of what many programs go through, faith-based or not. The process they went through in setting up the program can be informative for other faith organizations—for those who may be sitting in the meeting rooms of churches, temples, mosques, or synagogues discussing similar investments in their community's youth.

The journey of the St. John program will be familiar to many in the mentoring field, as they have both struggled through rough patches and enjoyed tremendous successes. The story of this faith-based program ultimately offers many lessons that can be valuable to faith and non-faith programs alike.



DESIGNING THE PROGRAM

The task of the Core Mentoring Group was to create the scope, structure, and operational procedures for the program. Following the steps below resulted in a program that was thoughtfully designed, appropriate for both the community and the church, and able to provide quality mentoring services.

1. Community needs assessment. The needs of the community and its youth were readily apparent to the church. The effects of poor socioeconomic conditions on several parts of the community were the reason that the church had called that initial meeting. But in order to make the program truly effective, specific community needs had to be identified.

Some of the problems were obvious. Data indicated that Columbia had a growing number of head-of-households existing at or below the poverty level. And as with many communities across America, changes in family structure over the past 30 years had left many youth lacking sufficient contact with positive adult role models.

Also, analysis of data from the Howard County Public Schools indicated that African American students, especially boys, were not performing as well as other students. Standardized test scores, academic performance, and dropout rates for this group were all areas that needed addressing.

A school district study that indicated middle school students could benefit from more individualized and adult support helped cement African American youths ages 10-17 as the target population for the program.

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2. *Securing the endorsement of the church.*

Although the Core Mentoring Group was working on behalf of the church, they were still essentially an exploratory committee. They still had to convince the church leadership, and to some extent the congregation itself, that youth mentoring was an appropriate response to both the low academic performance and the absence of adult role models in the lives of the target population. They also had to convince the leadership that the program would be worth the time and resources.

While the needs assessment clearly pointed to a role for the church in the lives of these kids, it was the advocacy and endorsement of mentoring by the Core Group that really brought the program into being. Without the financial and spiritual support of the church leadership, the program would not have gone anywhere.

For faith-based programs such as this, it is vital that this core group of individuals act as “champions” for the program when it is in its start-up phase. The fact that the St. John Core Group was comprised of men and women from a wide variety of backgrounds and professions meant that they were able to garner broad-based support for the program and across the community. Simply put, their group was representative of the community, could understand and articulate the community’s and youth’s needs, and were able to get both the church leadership and congregation to agree that the program should move forward.

Once the church leadership had endorsed the program, one of the Core Group members was elevated to Program Coordinator, while the others assumed responsibility over various aspects of the program. Some support and clerical time was donated by church staff, a modest amount of money was allocated for program activities and volunteer recognition, and attention was turned toward the design of the program’s services.

3. *Operations planning.* In designing the actual structure and services of the program, St. John had to answer some fairly typical questions: What type of mentoring model is right for our church? What types of activities will mentors, youth, and families be involved in? And once individuals have become program participants, what services do we offer them?

The St. John program chose to implement a rather traditional one-on-one mentoring model. Although the program would eventually take on a formal partnership with local schools, it was decided that most meetings would be conducted outside school, the church, or other “site-based” locales. This made scheduling of one-on-one mentoring activities easier and allowed for a wider range of activities for youths and mentors.

In addition to these one-on-one meetings, there would be occasional group activities in an effort to broaden the interaction of program participants and to foster a sense of “community.” It was also decided that the program would offer other services to youth and their families, mostly around academic enrichment and parental involvement, that would not involve the mentors.

The actual components for the St. John program have expanded somewhat over time, but many of the core services have been in place throughout the project. With its wide variety of services, this holistic program is able to address a full range of participant needs in the areas of school, career, and family:

Academic enrichment: After-school tutoring sessions are provided for youth in the program. Tutors are a mix of church volunteers, school system employees, and teenage peers who actually conduct most of the tutoring activities under the supervision of the adults.

Values education: Bimonthly mentee workshops are presented on a wide range of topics such as personal responsibility, the value of cooperation, the meaning of faith, self-determination, and self-esteem.

Career awareness: Mentees are provided workshops on career-focused topics such as how to fill out an application, tips on preparing for interviews, and acceptable work behavior. Mentors and others involved in the program also introduce mentees to employment opportunities and assist in exploring career options.

Parental involvement: This is one big area where the St. John program has excelled where other programs struggle. The program recognized that the work they would do in providing the support of an adult role model would be somewhat negated unless they provided some assistance to the most prominent adults in the youth’s lives: their parents and guardians. To that end, the program provides monthly sessions and support groups for the parents of participating youth. The group sessions are conducted by a social worker and allow the parents to learn



about their child's progress in the program, interact with other families, and tap into support systems outside the St. John program.

Cultural awareness: The program sponsors regular activities designed around increasing the cultural awareness and understanding of participating youth.

Social and recreational activities: These are group activities such as camping, concerts, and picnics that promote social interaction.

Community service: Each academic year, mentees in the program, with the help of their mentors, choose a community service project. This helps build teamwork skills and feelings of social responsibility.

Recognition events: These services to program participants include an annual Opening Ceremony and an end-of-year celebration for all participants. The program also recognizes three exemplary individuals as Mentee, Mentor, and Parent/Guardian of the Year.

The church also made a formal decision to not require youth to attend church services, although mentors are encouraged to bring their mentees with them. The level of "faith involvement" is an issue with which many faith-based programs struggle. St. John concluded that they could meet the goals of the program without making religious study part of the program services.

"The mentoring relationships are 'faith-focused' only to the extent that the mentors come from a faith community and regard their involvement as an expression of their faith," says current Program Director Doug Pace. "The program promotes character building but does not promote any denomination, including our own. Mentees are taught self-respect, respect for family and all people, integrity, positive attitudes and behaviors, and are given opportunities to serve others."

4. Recruitment and training of mentors and mentees. The St. John Core Mentoring Group devised a set of clear guidelines, roles, and responsibilities for use in volunteer recruitment and screening. They also set a criterion that would come to define their targeted volunteer recruitment efforts: All mentors must be African American males. The church decided that this target population of mentors was necessary if they were going to effectively reach out to African American boys.

While the initial matches for the project all involved men who were congregation members at St. John

Baptist Church, the program decided in later years to allow nonmembers to participate. All mentors are required to commit at least one hour per week with the youth for a minimum of one academic year. They must also complete a criminal background check and provide references.

To assist mentors in their role, the St. John program offers extensive pre-match training on youth development, communication skills, and techniques for facilitating effective mentoring relationships. They have developed a Man-to-Man Mentoring Program Handbook, which covers roles, responsibilities, and recommended mentoring strategies for both academic improvement and any religious study that the match chooses to undertake.

Youth participants were initially drawn from the church's Adopt-a-Family Program, but now they are recruited to the program from both the congregation as a whole and through a partnership with a local middle and high school. All youth participants are provided with information about the purpose, services, and rules of the program, as well as orientation as to the value of having a mentor and what the presence of a role model in their lives can mean for them. Youth are told how the program can help them achieve the goals they set for themselves with the assistance of their mentor. Because the program concluded that parental involvement was a key to the youths' success in the program, it became a requirement for youth participation.

5. Forming partnerships and awareness in the community. The St. John program recognized early on that success would depend on the buy-in of the community as a whole. The time and energy of volunteers and the financial and in-kind donations provided by the church were not enough for the long haul; a wider base of support was necessary to ensure the sustainability of the program and achievement of its desired outcomes.

To this end, the Core Group developed presentations to be given to both private and public community groups about the needs of youth in the community and what the St. John Baptist Mentoring Program wanted to do to help. These presentations offered excellent networking opportunities and another chance for the members of the Core Mentoring Group to "champion" the program and garner both financial and philosophical support.

In addition to this broad-based community awareness campaign, the group also established several

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strategic partnerships. The most significant partnership, formed after the program had been operating for a few years, came with the Howard County Public Schools, specifically Wilde Lake Middle and High Schools. Having a teacher from the school system as a member of the Core Group was extremely valuable in setting up the partnership. Not only did working with the schools help the program provide better academic support for the youth, but it also meant increased capacity to serve more youth through the coordination of physical and financial resources. The program's decision against faith-centered relationships was a key in making the school partnerships work.

The program also forged partnerships with the Maryland Mentoring Partnership's Church Mentoring Initiative, the University of Baltimore School of Public Health, and the Howard University School of Divinity, as well as several local businesses and foundations. These partnerships have proven to be a vital part of keeping the program going over the years.

THE ST. JOHN PROGRAM OVER TIME

The process and decisions described to this point provided the framework for the program to begin operations and start making matches. So how did the program do over the years? How successful was the St. John program in assisting the community's youth?

Like many youth service, nonprofit, and community outreach projects, the outcomes and results of the St. John program have been somewhat mixed. Positive outcomes can be hard to measure, and even the best designed, successful programs will occasionally struggle with issues of sustainability, leadership, and project momentum.

The program started slowly in 1992, making a dozen or so matches during the first few years of operation. Over the next few years, a full-time program coordinator was brought on board and the program's services started to expand. The parental involvement and tutoring pieces were enhanced, and the program started to evaluate its efforts. The program took in some significant financial donations and gained momentum.

In 1996 the program officially became part of the St. John Baptist Church's Evangelism and Outreach Ministry, which meant that mentors could be recruited from beyond the church walls. "We wanted to embrace even more youth... we needed to look

beyond our congregation to significantly add to the number of mentees," says Pace.

Some of the early youth participants in the program started graduating from high school and successfully aging out of the program. Although the numbers were modest, the good work that the program was doing was finally starting to show substantial results.

It was in the fifth year of operation that things really took off. The program received a three-year grant as part of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP). The \$190,000 award primarily facilitated the official partnership with the Howard County Public Schools and the middle and high schools. The program was also able to hire more staff and move the operations out of the church and into a business office, allowing better access to the program for youth and increased participation in the program's after-school activities.

Not surprisingly, with the influx of money came an increase in the scope of the program and the number of youth served. By 1998 the program was facilitating 41 one-on-one matches and had more than 100 volunteers. Five mentees achieved honor roll status that year, and the peer tutoring component was added.

The year 2000 represented a high-water mark for the JUMP grant as the number of active matches reached 55. The faith-based program that started with a meeting of concerned congregation members a decade ago had grown to scale. With the hard work of its volunteers and the right combination of community, religious, and governmental support it had evolved from a concept grounded in the faith-driven desire to do good in the world to a viable volunteer program that serves many children and helps connect schools, parents, youth, and the community as a whole.

Even more important, given the high importance of duration on the effectiveness of a mentoring relationship, the average length of retention for the program's mentors was 4.5 years. The program was making the types of long-term matches that it had hoped for from the beginning.

Things changed, however, in the 2000–2001 academic year. That's when the JUMP grant's three-year funding cycle ended. Without JUMP, which is designed to seed new mentoring efforts, the program scaled back its services. The program

is currently supporting 12 mentees with 25 regular volunteers and a part-time administrative assistant.

“The program is functioning well, albeit with fewer youth (mentees) and group activities,” says Pace. “We have completed the transition from a larger program supported by a sizeable federal grant and in-kind services to a small program supported primarily by in-kind services and a \$10,000 grant from the Howard County Department of Citizen Services.”

Program Director Pace remains positive, despite the uncertainty in funding. “The program’s biggest success has been the ability to offer youth the same basic program through lucrative and lean funding periods,” he says.

THE LESSONS LEARNED

In 2000, the St. John Baptist Mentoring Program’s first graduate was accepted to college. The same year, another mentee was inducted into the National Honor Society. What can both faith-based and other mentoring programs learn from the experience of the St. John program?

The Replication Report prepared by Information Technology International under the grant from Howard County found that there were six key elements of the St. John program that would be important in the development of other similar programs:

- ***The importance of the committed, diverse “Core Group” of program leaders and advocates.*** This diverse Core Mentoring Group was obviously instrumental in the start-up and development phases of the program. They were the ones responsible for planning the program and garnering the support for the church leadership. Their diversity also allowed the program to access a wide range of community support and opened doors to program partnerships that would have remained closed if not for the work of these individuals.

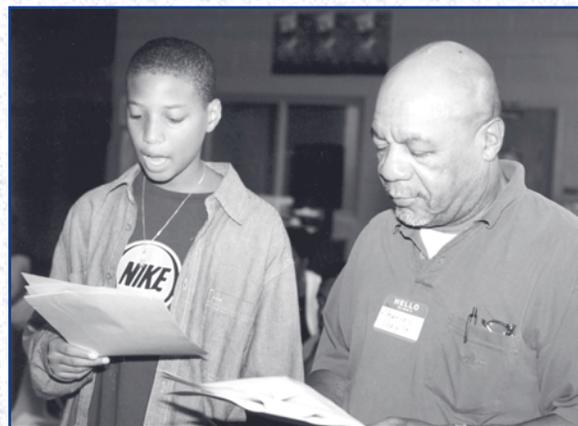
The Core Group still plays a major role in the St. John program. These volunteers provide the program with leadership, expertise, and assistance in 10 major program areas: academics, counseling, cultural/social awareness, program evaluation, mentor liaison, parental involvement, recreation, school liaison, substance abuse, and values education. The involvement of this group allows the program to provide improved support to the youth, parents, and mentors across a broad range of needs.

- ***The infrastructure of the church itself.*** The consistent administrative support provided by the St. John Baptist Church proved to be very valuable for the program. Church volunteers made significant contributions on labor-intensive tasks such as the monitoring of matches and the coordination of group activities. This administrative support meant that the program could blend volunteers with its few paid staff, increasing its capacity to serve more youth and offer a wider variety of program services. The administrative support of the church is what allowed the program to grow to an appropriate scale, even during the financial windfall provided by the JUMP grant.

- ***Community outreach and networking.*** In the case of the St. John program model, it made sense to reach out to the larger community in the creation and on going support for the program. Some faith-based programs may choose to remain more insular, as would be

appropriate for, say, a mentoring ministry with a heavy emphasis on religious study through the church. But the scope and goals of the St. John Baptist Mentoring Program made community involvement not only viable, but necessary. Community involvement enabled the program to maintain a higher level of mentor involvement and participation, aided in leveraging resources, and opened up avenues (such as the formal partnership with the school) that made accessing and serving youth easier. Pace says that the program uses many methods to build this community support. “Special programs, invited involvement, and public awards have been the primary vehicles for the enthusiasm and support we have enjoyed from the congregation and community over the years,” he says. “Twice a year, programs are held that focus on recognition of the mentees, mentors, and parents or guardians, and these programs are open to the congregation and the community at large. Each year, one of the regular church worship services is earmarked for recognition of the mentees and mentors.

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Members of the congregation and community are asked to serve as guest speakers, workshop leaders, tutors, and performing artists for program events. Recognition awards at the national, state, and county levels have also helped to maintain support for the program.”

- ***Strong commitment and support from the board of trustees, church pastor, program director, and other church leadership.*** The St. John program has survived two

FACING AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE?

As I was putting together this profile of the St. John program, the issue of “growing a program to scale” kept popping up in my mind. Essentially, now that its JUMP funding has proven that the St. John program can function at a high level and serve a significant number of students, the real question becomes, Will it have the chance to do so in the future?

That same question is facing hundreds, if not thousands, of mentoring efforts currently operating around the country. We know that mentoring works—and how it works—more clearly than ever before. And nobody can deny that the mentoring field has seen tremendous growth during the last decade. But looking long-term, is there enough financial support from both government and private sources to maintain not only this one program, but the mentoring movement as a whole? Is it possible that the entire mentoring movement will have trouble “growing to scale”? Or if it is already at an appropriate scale, can it be sustained?

The St. John Baptist Church Mentoring Program, in spite of all its hard work, thoughtful planning, and success, is in the same boat as nonprofits and youth service agencies around the country: facing a somewhat uncertain future. Can the program find enough support to fully complement the tremendous amounts of time and energy that their volunteers bring to the table? Will it be able to serve the numbers of children it could serve with a larger funding base? The seed money funding opportunities such as JUMP grants depend for their success on the abundance of other resources and a broad base of public, private, and government support. If other funding opportunities fail to materialize, countless promising programs that have taken root are destined to shrink substantially—or shut down altogether.

Those of us who advocate for youth mentoring hope that not only will St. John find a way to build back up to an optimum level of youth served, but that mentoring programs across the country will find the support they need to build their programs to scale in the coming years. If we are ever to make youth mentoring what it can be for this country, it is imperative that we grow it to scale one local program at a time.

—Michael Garringer

changes in leadership—changes that often cripple mentoring efforts—one at the project director level and one being the church pastor. The program survived because there was strong buy-in across the board by the church leadership. The Core Mentoring Group and the incoming pastor, Dr. Robert A.F. Turner, made certain that there was strong support for the program from the board of trustees on down to the congregation. This ensured that the program would survive changes in both program leadership and the level of outside financial support.

- ***The importance of building trust with mentees and parents.*** This is true for any type of mentoring program. The St. John program placed a priority on pre-match training for mentors so that when they walked into their mentoring relationships, and the lives of the participating families, they were prepared to start the relationship off in a positive way. Listening and communication skills were particularly important in building trust with the youth. The program also built trust with parents by offering services specifically designed to increase their participation in the program and their access to other forms of support. Thus, parents came to view the program as a valuable resource that was reaching out to the entire family. The parent support groups were particularly crucial in this regard.
- ***Group activities that supplement the one-on-one matches.*** While most of the mentoring was through one-on-one relationships, the many group activities sponsored by the program contributed heavily to the positive outcomes for youth and the success of the program. These group activities enhanced mentees’ social relationship skills in ways that time spent with just their mentors could not. These group events also fostered a sense of community across all program participants, leading to greater volunteer satisfaction and increased sense of support by the mentees.

In many ways, the St. John Baptist Mentoring Program story is a common one: A group of dedicated individuals came together and reached out to the community by starting a mentoring program. They’ve gone through many of the ups and downs that youth mentoring programs of all types experience. The story of this one faith-based program can help guide other groups of concerned individuals meeting in churches around the country, wondering how they, too, can help their community. ♦

I remember one day when someone called and was put off by the fact that we were faith-based. She simply didn't understand our rationale. Later that day we received a call with a list of a dozen prospective mentors who had attended the Billy Graham crusade, which was in town. I did the math—lose one, gain 12. I think we came out ahead.

NMC: How strongly does your organization's mission and vision influence the work you do?

DJ: Our mission statement has been essential to our program growth. Having a clearly defined mission and values has helped us to hire some highly motivated staff and recruit a strong board of directors. Additionally, many donors and volunteers have also become engaged in the work of Kinship because they were attracted to its faith-based structure. It helps us to limit our scope when we are researching funding sources and also keeps us focused on our work.

Our mission statement follows: "Kinship of Greater Minneapolis helps children, ages five through 15, in need of additional support realize their God-given potential through adult friendships. Kinship also provides a unique service opportunity for individuals, couples, and families to put their faith into action on behalf of children. The core values and beliefs that guide our program are that:

- ◆ Children deserve the opportunity for healthy social, physical, spiritual, and intellectual development
- ◆ Regular, long-term relationships with a variety of adults are vital to healthy child development
- ◆ Prevention is more valuable and effective in human development than interventions occurring after considerable suffering and hurt have scarred lives
- ◆ We are motivated by the command of Jesus Christ to love our neighbor as ourselves; the Christian church is mandated to respond to the needs of hurting children and their families
- ◆ People need opportunities to put their faith into action; Kinship provides the structure and organization for them to do this effectively
- ◆ We believe in inclusiveness and collaborative efforts that bring people together of different races and creeds
- ◆ Christian witness speaks most loudly when it is a comforting response to the needs of others, when

it is not judgmental or proud, and when unconditional love is present

- ◆ The quality of Kinship service and relationships is more important than quantity; we believe in careful screening, matching, and follow-up support of program participants
- ◆ Kinship's professional staff is qualified, motivated, and committed to this mission

NMC: What have been the biggest challenges for Kinship over the years? Are those challenges specific to a faith-based organization or are they common across many types of nonprofits and youth service agencies?

DJ: Our two biggest challenges have been recruiting long-term mentors and developing a strong base of financial support. In addition to recruiting through churches, we also utilize newspapers, radio, service groups, and corporations to locate people interested in befriending children. Word of mouth is our largest source of volunteers. *[See Dan Johnson's church volunteer recruitment tips on page 14.]*

To start up our program, our financial support consisted primarily of grants from corporations and foundations. I'm pleased to report that being faith-based has not been a significant barrier for funding. We serve kids from a whole range of racial and religious backgrounds and do not use funding for a religious indoctrination. We are not a United Way agency, nor do we receive significant government funding. We have diligently been working to develop a strong base of individual support. In addition to annual appeals, we have two special-event fundraisers per year—a golf event and a dinner auction. Our goal is to have half of our annual revenues come through individual funding.

Initially, somewhat to our surprise, we discovered that churches were much more willing to help on recruitment of mentors than they were able to give financial support at a significant level.

NMC: Many programs shy away from doing program evaluations. Why did you decide to do one?

DJ: We were encouraged by some of our larger corporate funders, like the Pillsbury Foundation and the Cargill Foundation, to develop outcome

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measurements. It has been a useful exercise for us. With increasing scrutiny and scarce resources, we have been pleased to offer strong indicators of success. For example, our average match length is two and a half years. Dr. Jean Rhodes, a professor at the University of Massachusetts (and the author of *Stand By Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth*), has done a considerable amount of research on mentoring, and has noted that the duration of the mentoring relationship is the single most important benchmark of a successful outcome.

10 PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE CHURCH RECRUITMENT

Both faith-based and secular programs are increasingly looking to faith institutions as “volunteer-rich” environments with large numbers of potential mentors. Here, Dan Johnson of Kinship of Greater Minneapolis shares his top 10 tips for recruiting volunteers from congregations.

1. Realize how your volunteer opportunity fits within the mission of the congregation. Why should it be interested in supporting the work of your agency?
2. Obtain the blessings of the head pastor/priest/rabbi. Without his or her support, efforts to continue supporting your volunteer recruitment may later be cut off. He or she may also choose to boost your effort from the pulpit.
3. Begin to target prospective churches: those that are active and have a heart for people that are in your service area where you currently have volunteers.
4. Target prospective volunteers. You may be able to get names of prospective candidates from the pastor, social ministries committee, or others within the church.
5. Present specific needs to the church. For example, provide profiles of kids on your waiting list, with names, ages, interests, locations, and the types of volunteers sought.
6. Develop a plan of action for the congregation. Provide specific, year-round opportunities for volunteer recruitment, such as “Kinship Sunday,” an adult forum, temple talk, posters, and so on.
7. Develop church representatives. Write a job description for these positions and then have them help you with ongoing recruitment.
8. See if you can be listed on the church’s time and talent survey along with the church’s other ministry opportunities.
9. Keep at it. Patience and steadfastness are crucial. Every congregation has numerous needs for “in-house” volunteers, such as Sunday School teachers and ushers, to maintain its own operations. Don’t expect great numbers of volunteers, particularly right away.
10. If your state sponsors a mentoring or volunteerism week, make the most of it to highlight your volunteer opportunity. Schedule forums, set up displays, utilize bulletin inserts, and solicit announcements from the pastor/priest/rabbi.

NMC: As someone who has been very successful at making a faith-based mentoring program work, what advice would you give congregations or ministries thinking about starting up a program?

DJ: First, you need to weigh the costs of developing and maintaining a mentoring program. The demands of operating and supporting a traditional mentoring program are much like supporting an adoption agency—without receiving the fees for service. It will likely require a full-time staff to do the recruitment, orientation, screening, matching, and follow-up support. Most churches don’t have the resources to individually support a mentoring program by themselves. Therefore, it may be necessary for you to collaborate with existing mentoring programs, or to have a strong network of others who will also support your community mentoring effort.

NMC: What advice would you give a community-based organization that is looking to partner with a faith-based organization?

DJ: While organizations might want to simply tack churches on as an additional volunteer recruitment or funding source, I don’t think it will be an easy marriage if there are not some commonly held core values and beliefs. You must each communicate your missions and see where they intersect. It also helps if you have some shared values.

You may need to do some convincing of the faith-based organization about the importance of strong program procedures, including screening. As I tell folks, if the pope were to apply to our program, we would put him through all of the same thorough screening we do for each of our Kinship mentors. We need to be especially careful for people with good intentions to make sure that they have the training and personal attributes to successfully carry out a long-term relationship with a child. If not, they should be redirected. We can do more harm than good if we set kids up for more broken promises. ♦

You can learn more about the Kinship programs, and read the evaluation impact statement for the Minneapolis program, on the Web at www.kinship.org.

A Faith-Based Initiative Continues To Grow

The NMC checks in with Public/Private Ventures about its recent efforts

In 1998, Public/Private Ventures, the highly esteemed research and policy organization based in Philadelphia, began a demonstration project in 15 cities to assess the effectiveness of partnerships among faith-based institutions and the juvenile justice system. Much of the project was inspired by the success of the Boston Ten Point Coalition, a coalition of small, predominantly African American churches that has had tremendous success in reducing juvenile crime and homicide rates. The project hopes to investigate the potential, limitations, and effective practices of faith-based organizations' efforts to work with high-risk youth.

The NMC recently spoke with several P/PV staff about the progress of the initiative and some of the findings, successes, and struggles to this point.

NMC: What is the common approach and goals of the initiative across the study's sites?

P/PV: All 12 remaining NFBI (National Faith-Based Initiative) sites are collaborating with local justice, faith, and social service partners to target, recruit, and provide a set of services to high-risk youth. Their goals are to affect the life chances of these youth through mentoring, job training, and placement, and educational and relational programming. The sites are also focused on developing their organizational capacity and sustainability so that they can continue over the long term.

The most successful and comprehensive sites have developed local advisory groups, composed of justice, faith, and social service partners who advise and shape the local initiatives; recruit high-risk youth from justice partners; provide a few focused high-quality direct programs; meet other needs of youth by providing partner and referral services; and case manage youth by tracking attendance and providing follow-up support, prevention, and crisis intervention services. The local initiatives are led by governing boards and/or executive staff, whose task is to enhance the quality of the internal organizational components, such as strategic planning, financial sustainability, and data collection.

NMC: Could you give our readers two or three illustrative successes from across the programs?

P/PV, Brooklyn: The Brooklyn site, Youth and Congregations in Partnership (YCP), has successfully developed all program components discussed above. The Brooklyn district attorney's office, which developed YCP, an intervention program for youth who have committed felony offenses, leads this site. YCP developed an advisory group made up of faith, juvenile justice, social service, parent, and youth partners, which provide guidance to the initiative. Their high-quality program works with high-risk, court-adjudicated youth and provides them with faith-based, congregational team mentoring (three to five adult faith-based mentors from a congregation provide mentoring to one youth per mentor team) and heavy case management. Additionally, they provide partner services in the form of art therapy/mural development, Job Corps and job training/placement, and referral services for counseling, mediation, anger management, education assessment, and drug and alcohol treatment. Through great perseverance, YCP leadership has been able to slowly build its local funding partners, including the Pinkerton Foundation, so it can sustain its efforts over the long term.

P/PV, Denver: A Denver intermediary group, the Denver Metro Black Church Initiative, first led the Denver site. However, after two years in the initiative, Grace and Truth Pentecostal Church became the lead agency for the Denver site based on its leadership and track record of serving high-risk girls in Denver. P/PV has provided intensive technical assistance to this site and, over the past year, it has become an incorporated, nonprofit agency (Positive Connection, Inc.), with a governing board, local funding partners, and an expanded staff. It has extended its program reach and now serves approximately 85 high-risk, court-adjudicated girls each year. With recent additional funds, it is also assisting a local school by serving 30 girls who are at least two years below grade level in literacy.

NMC: What differences have emerged among the sites as to why some are more successful while others struggle?

We have found the ability to stay focused on program structure and implement the programs effectively and consistently is critical to success. Tied to this are the organizational disciplines of strategic

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planning; program management and monitoring; and the development of accountability structures, including periodic internal evaluation, work planning, data collection, and reporting to the board(s) and funder(s), while keeping the needs of the youth central to the program.

Some of the sites that struggled a bit more shifted the focus from their mission and began expanding programs without first planning for the expansion and raising the requisite resources needed to expand. This can happen for a variety of reasons, including desiring to serve all community needs and/or seeking funding. Whatever the reason, we find that this type of non-strategic expansion compromises program resources, quality, and development.

NMC: What have the sites' experiences taught you about having realistic expectations of program effectiveness when the children and youth being served are at high risk?

P/PV: We have learned that the importance of ongoing involvement with all youth is critical when attempting to make a lasting impact on their lives. In the late 1980s, the Carnegie Corporation's Council on Adolescent Development began to publish research findings that emphasized adolescents' needs for a continuity of supports throughout their teen years, including guidance and support from adults and positive activities, particularly during non-school hours. P/PV's own mentoring research had provided information about the characteristics that make for productive adult-youth relationships, including those that take place in programmatic settings.

One of the most crucial lessons we have learned is the need to build in a system of accountability that ensures this type of continual support/service delivery to high-risk youth, that is, structured case management. We have also learned that structured case management needs to be coupled with consistent follow-up and data tracking—a management information system (MIS). The following components are critical to ensuring that consistent, supportive programming is delivered to high-risk youth:

- ◆ A standard intake (youth and family) is completed for each youth
- ◆ A needs assessment is completed for each youth
- ◆ A program plan is developed for each participant (outlining direct and referral services)

- ◆ Staff conduct weekly or biweekly follow-up with referral service providers, youth, and family
- ◆ An MIS system is developed that tracks participant demographic information (such as age and sex), risk level (self-esteem, delinquent behavior), attendance, referral data, and outcomes
- ◆ Staff need an immediate follow-up plan for youth who are absent from programming

NMC: Based on your experiences, what are the most significant factors needed to make interagency collaborations work? Does the fact that your sites are all faith-based change the dynamics? Make it easier? Harder?

P/PV: Partnering among nonprofit organizations, whether faith-based or secular, is challenging. Thus, we were somewhat surprised to see how smoothly the partnerships among faith-based organizations operated once they were formed. Currently, 127 predominantly small, African American faith-based organizations or congregations are actively involved in the initiative across the 12 sites.

There were several reasons these partnerships were effective. Congregations were united by a common mission to minister not only to their own congregations but also to the neighborhood outside the church building. Also, congregations did not want to tackle the difficult work of a high-risk youth initiative alone. They found strength in numbers and were able to pool the resources of each congregation, sharing facilities, political networks, and volunteers to support the initiative.

NMC: Looking into your crystal ball, paint a picture or vision of what these model programs will look like five years from now.

P/PV: We have found that the sites experiencing the most success are meeting a critical, recognized need in their communities, and have formed strong partnerships with faith-based, justice, and social service community-based service providers. The notion of pooling resources and identifying local funding streams is going to be essential to the long-term sustainability of these groups.

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The National Mentoring Center Bulletin

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A Church/BBBS Partnership Finds Success Where It Counts: With Kids

ATLANTA, Georgia—Faith-based partnerships have provided a successful avenue for expansion for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Metro Atlanta (BBBS), one of the oldest and largest mentoring organizations in the city. BBBS's work with Cascade United Methodist Church offers an example of how a secular organization can join forces with a faith community to achieve shared goals.

The Cascade congregation was looking for a way to get involved with and reach out to the community. After linking up with BBBS, the church has formed 14 matches that meet on or off the church campus for a minimum of eight hours a month. The matches are already getting positive results. One Big Brother and Little Brother matched through the church have developed their own handshake. The "Little" just attended an agency-affiliated five-week golf camp, and the "Big" was there at his graduation to celebrate his achievement. The "Big" has also helped his "Little" with schoolwork, and returned from a recent business trip with a University of North Carolina tennis team T-shirt for his tennis-loving "Little," his name emblazoned on the back.

For other organizations and initiatives seeking to build effective partnerships with faith-based organizations, BBBS would like to suggest that you keep the following in mind:

1. Remember that although faith-based groups may look and act quite differently from community-based initiatives, the basic principles for developing a mentoring program are still the same. The administration of the program should be managed in the same manner, employing written policies and procedures, criminal background checks, confidentiality policies, and other proven approaches.

2. Be careful to tailor your PR materials, training curricula, and forms to the faith-based partner with whom you are working. Get input from the partner about terminology, images, appropriate questions, and so on.

3. Pay careful attention to confidentiality. Faith-based communities are close-knit and often family-oriented, and special care needs to be taken to ensure complete confidentiality for all parties involved.

4. Maintain consistency in staffing as much as possible. Faith-based groups are often sensitive to perceived instability, and a constantly changing staff liaison may not be helpful.

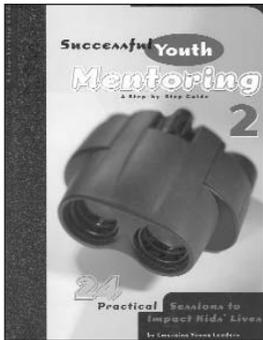
5. Make certain that your program provides adequate training for the mentors, the mentees, and the parents. Research indicates that clear and consistent training for everyone involved will help prolong the match and keep it healthy and fun.

In addition to its faith-based initiatives, BBBS of Metro Atlanta has been successful in partnering with corporations, other nonprofit organizations, and community groups. The agency, a 42-year-old affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, has also developed a number of programs for children with specific needs, for example, Hispanic children, children dealing with HIV and AIDS, and hearing-impaired students, among others. For more information on trainings and the annual mentoring conference, visit the Web site at <http://www.thementoringinstitute.net/> or contact Lynne King, associate vice president of training and education at 404-601-7046. ♦

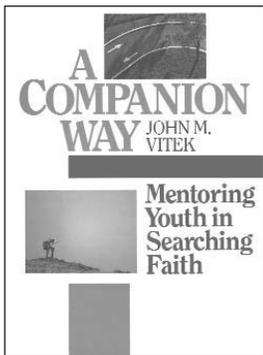
"ONE BIG BROTHER AND LITTLE BROTHER MATCHED THROUGH THE CHURCH HAVE DEVELOPED THEIR OWN HANDSHAKE."

Resources Offer Strategies for Faith Efforts

A wide variety of how-to guides and faith-based resources is available in the NMC Library

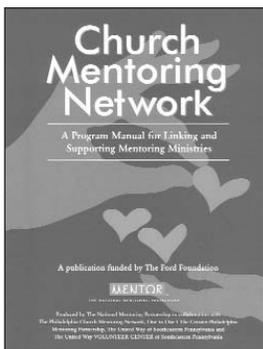


The past decade has seen a dramatic rise in the popularity of mentoring as a strategy for supporting and guiding youth. A growing number of faith communities have joined in the movement. Many churches and other houses of worship are beginning to implement mentoring services, either as stand-alone programs or as supplements to their existing youth education and outreach efforts. The following resources, available for loan from the NMC Lending Library, can assist churches and other faith institutions in developing mentoring programs through their congregations. They may also be useful to community-based programs that are partnering with faith institutions or adding faith-based components to existing services.



Church-Based Mentoring: A Program Manual for Mentoring Ministries (*United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania's Volunteer Centers/Philadelphia One to One, 1994*)

This guidebook covers the basics of developing and managing a “mentoring ministry” for youth. Although the structure promoted in the guidebook is that of congregation members mentoring congregation youth, the mentoring relationships it promotes are not inherently religious in nature. Instead, the guide serves as a very efficient blueprint for creating a program focused on typical “big brother/sister” types of friendship-based relationships. It does cover the involvement of the pastor and other church leaders, especially in the program planning and development section. A very useful collection of sample forms, job descriptions, and program policies makes this guide an excellent starting point for any church or congregation looking to develop a program from scratch.



Church Mentoring Network: A Program Manual for Linking and Supporting Mentoring Ministries (*National Mentoring Partnership, 1999*)

This manual serves as a companion piece to *Church-Based Mentoring*, and focuses on how to set up a larger network of mentoring ministries. The strategies put forth stem from a project in Philadelphia linking African American churches that were engaged in mentoring. The network encouraged the sharing of resources, training ideas, and program tools across churches, essentially keeping participating churches from “reinventing the wheel” in the development of their programs. The manual outlines the benefits and services of an established network and explores the roles and

responsibilities of the planning team, network coordinator, advisory groups, and participating congregations. It is an excellent resource for faith-based programs that want to expand their outreach and partnerships at a municipal or regional level.

Successful Youth Mentoring: A Step-by-Step Guide. 24 Practical Sessions To Impact Kids' Lives, and Successful Youth Mentoring 2 (*Group Publishing/Emerging Young Leaders, 1998 & 1999*)

These guides for mentors offer a number of activities, lessons, and teaching opportunities for use in faith-focused mentoring relationships. The mentoring activities cover familiar topics such as goal-setting, accountability, self-esteem, and personal development while drawing heavily from biblical scriptures and traditional Christian values. Both guides are very thorough and well-organized, providing a blueprint for the building of the mentoring relationship over time. They might not be applicable for many faith-based programs because of the intensive religious focus, but they are perfect for use in programs whose relationships are structured around Christian teachings.

Intensive Caring: Practical Ways to Mentor Youth (*Group Publishing, 1998*)

This resource is designed to assist a congregation in establishing a mentoring program. It covers many of the basics of mentoring and how it can be integrated into a church's existing youth services and programs. It then moves into more practical discussions of how to get the program up and running, different program models a church might choose to implement, and different populations of youth it may wish to serve. Specific chapters are devoted to mentoring young men as they make the transition to adulthood, using mentoring in confirmation, mentoring teen mothers, and using mentoring for leadership development.

A Companion Way: Mentoring Youth in Searching Faith (*Saint Mary's Press, 1998*)

This guide focuses on setting up mentoring programs for youth who are exploring issues of Christian faith. It details the process for setting up the program, complete with information geared toward both youth and adults as they enter into their relationship. The exploration of faith is facilitated by a series of group and one-on-one “sessions” in which mentors and mentees participate.

One on One: Making the Most of Your Mentoring Relationship (*Faith and Life Press/Mennonite Publishing House, 1993*)

This is another well-conceived guide for mentors and program coordinators in “mentoring ministry” programs. It offers a solid overview of the role of a mentor, and tips for establishing the relationship and understanding youth. It also offers a number of useful forms to aid coordinators in implementing the program and helpful discussion tools to aid mentors in teaching life lessons and values through scriptures. It would be valuable and appropriate for

use in programs that have an emphasis on biblical teachings.

Books may be borrowed from the National Mentoring Center library via interlibrary loan at your local public library. The collection can be searched on the NMC Web site at <http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/library.html>. Please contact Resource Associate Michael Garringer (garringm@nwrel.org; 503-275-9647) if you have questions about these or any other mentoring resources. ♦

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We are noting patterns that point to the belief that in coming years the average age of the youth being served will continue to drop as younger children are increasingly becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. We are also seeing that a larger number of young women will be served through these programs—again, as we are witnessing a rise in the involvement of young women in the juvenile justice system. Since most of the sites were developed to meet the needs of high-risk boys and young men, they will need to analyze their programs to ensure they are effectively structured to meet the needs of high-risk girls and young women.

NMC: If you were talking to a group of community activists from faith-based and other community-based, grassroots organizations, what would be the central messages you would give them if they were looking to go down the same road as your initiative?

Small to mid-sized faith-based organizations and community-based organizations should consider the following essential elements:

Focus on Mission: The organization should have a clearly defined vision and mission for what it is seeking to accomplish. Programs are successful when they are focused, passionate, and diligent and work daily on fulfilling their mission.

Strategic Planning: A key to focusing on mission is engaging in the strategic planning process. We recommend the establishment of a plan that clearly outlines the nature of the partnership/collaboration and the programmatic components. For each program component, there should be goals and objectives with short- and long-term benchmarks, measurable outcomes, and persons responsi-

ble. We further recommend that the sites translate these goals, benchmarks, and outcomes into an operational work plan they can use to guide and monitor their progress. The work plans should be reviewed and updated weekly by leadership and staff to ensure that the program is on target toward meeting its goals.

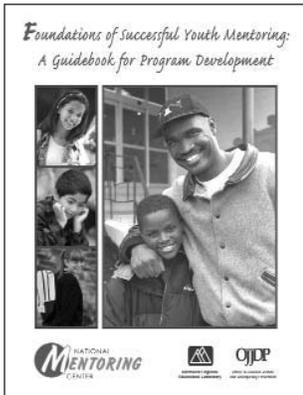
Collaboration Is Key: Although the individual organization may not be able to meet all the needs of high-risk youth, they might be able to create a network of supports that can address the issues facing these youth and their families through the effective use of referral agencies and collaborative partners. Over the course of this demonstration, we found that in several cases there were organizations in close proximity conducting similar work that was greatly enhanced by collaboration. By seeking out partners that have experience and a proven track record in a particular service area, the strength of the overall collaboration is improved.

Build Sustainability Systems Early: It is never too early to begin planning for long-term sustainability, particularly financial sustainability. Identifying key stakeholders in the community that can be champions of the organization early in the process is critical. A long-term sustainability plan should be developed early in the process to seek out local funding streams and potential revenue-generating service contracts. Organizations should be sure to build a diversified financial plan, including individuals, corporations, foundations, congregations, wills, estates, and trusts.

You can learn more about P/PV’s faith-based initiative in their most recent report, *Moving Beyond the Walls: Faith and Justice Partnerships Working for High-Risk Youth*, which can be downloaded from the Web at: <http://www.ppv.org/content/faith1.html>. ♦

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New NMC Guidebook Offers Overview of Program Development



The National Mentoring Center has just released *Foundations of Program Success: A Guidebook for Mentoring Programs*. This guide—the Center’s most comprehensive publication to date—systematically defines the components essential for successful mentoring programs of all shapes and sizes.

The guide draws upon the national evaluation of Juvenile Mentoring Programs, the body of mentoring research and program development literature, and the Center’s experience as a technical assistance provider to identify 31 separate program elements across five broad categories of program design:

- ◆ Strong agency capacity for service delivery
- ◆ Effective program practices
- ◆ Strong formal partnerships and informal collaborations
- ◆ Sustainable resource development and funding
- ◆ Useful program evaluation

Most mentoring research indicates that programs which lack this foundation for service development and delivery are at a greater risk for program failure and are less likely to meet program goals.

In addition to discussing each program component, the guidebook provides self-assessment questions to help users think through each aspect of program design and implementation. Also included are recommended resources that can assist in the development of the program. The guide is designed to cover all the key elements of running a program, while also being flexible enough for use across a wide variety of program models, including community-based, school-based, faith-based models.

Copies may be downloaded from the NMC Web site, www.nwrel.org/mentoring/foundations.html
Print copies can be ordered by calling the Center at (503) 275-0135.



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