



Mentoring *Matters*

An e-newsletter for the mentors of Chester County Futures

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MENTORING TEENAGERS BENEFITS BOTH THE TEENS & THEIR MENTORS

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All children are born with the potential to lead full, successful, meaningful lives, and to make significant contributions to the world around them.

Unfortunately, not all children have access to adults who can help them to achieve all of their goals. Even the most talented and motivated of preteens and teenagers need to have helpful, encouraging adults in their lives, adults they can trust and can learn from.

If you think back to your own childhood, you may be able to recall an adult who played the role of a valuable mentor in your life. Perhaps it was one of your parents, or a grandparent, aunt or uncle, or perhaps it was a teacher or a coach who took the time to talk to you-and also listen to you-about life's joys and challenges, and what you hoped to achieve in your life.

To put it in the simplest possible terms, mentors make the youths they mentor feel good about themselves and deeply valued as human beings. Ideally, a mentor works in tandem with other nurturing adults in a child's life, but sadly, this is not always the case. Some children do not have other caring adults they can turn to, and in these cases, mentors may assume a more central role in their mentees' lives.

Think of mentors as nurturing adults who volunteer to give their time and energy to young people, offering them encouragement, support, guidance, suggestions, kindness and positive role modeling. A mentor's role is to enable mentees to stay focused and motivated in school and other activities by providing them with a sense of structure, helping them to overcome obstacles, and encouraging them to work toward achieving their educational and (eventual) career goals.

Many mentees find that when they have caring adult mentors in their lives, their grades go up; their life and career goals become more crystallized; and their sense of self-esteem increases substantially.

How Mentoring Benefits Mentors

Dr. Jean Rhodes opens with the following lovely quote from Charlotte's Web, which so beautifully captures what mentoring can mean to the individuals who are doing the actual mentoring: "Why did you do all this for me?" [Wilbur] asked. "I don't deserve it. I've never done anything for you." "You have been my friend," replied Charlotte. "...By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift my life a trifle. Heaven knows, anyone's life can stand a little of that."

The research also indicates that adults who mentor youths often learn how to make sense of and come to grips with their own experiences as teenagers. That is, the mentoring relationship helps them to revisit how they felt as teenagers, and how they coped with their own youthful challenges.

What Factors Contribute To A Successful Mentoring Relationship?

Some of the articles in "The Research Corner" of Mentoring.org compare a positive mentor-mentee relationship with a positive counselor-adolescent client relationship. Of course, mentors are usually not professional therapists, but they are caring adults in teenagers' lives; and both mentors and therapists share the common goal of nurturing the positive growth and development of the teenagers in their care.

Free Opportunity for Mentors and Students

People's Light and Theatre Company

FREE for mentors and students

Tickets are available for any performance, with the exception of Saturday evenings. To reserve tickets for a performance, please contact Futures' Office Manager Angela Greaser at 610-458-9926 or agreaser@ccfutures.org

GoPhila.com

Visit <http://www.gophila.com/Phil/EventsCalendar/> and click the "FREE" section. This will give you access to a calendar of free events being held in the Philadelphia region.

ANY QUESTIONS???

We would like to feature your mentoring questions in our e-newsletter! Email any questions to Audrey Smith at asmith@ccfutures.org.

What Futures' Students are Saying...

"Ken, you are the best mentor anyone could ever have. You rock the world!!!!!!"
(original quote by Rosendo, KHS 9th grade, to mentor Ken)

"In a friend, you find a second self."
(quote by Isabelle, submitted by Rosendo)

"The whole point of being alive is to evolve into the complete person you were intended to be."
(quote by Oprah Winfrey, submitted by Mayra, KHS 9th grade, to her mentor Donna)

"You can have everything in life that you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want."
(quote by Zig Ziglar, submitted by Gaby, KHS 9th grade)

"To recognize another's inwardness is to have seen the sacred."
(quote by Peter Koestenbaum, submitted by Emely, KHS 9th grade)
*** NOTE - she has no mentor**

EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS: SKILLS TO HELP DEVELOP THE MENTOR RELATIONSHIP

Listening:

One of the most overlooked aspects of communication is the act of listening. Listening in the true sense means not talking, not lecturing, and not advising. Many times, a few minutes spent really listening will defuse much of the frustration of adult-youth communication.

Attitude:

Another important aspect of communication is attitude. During communication, youth often react not to what adults are saying, but the way they say it. This is especially true with teenagers. Be aware of your attitude after a particularly tough day; it may negatively affect the way you talk or listen to your mentee.

Humor:

Humor is often the missing link in many adult/youth relationships. Sometimes even the most intense discussions can use an injection of humor. It can serve to relieve a particularly stressful moment and, at the least, can indicate that things are still okay in the world.

Basic rules of communication
(Source: Students In Business, Inc.,
Be A Mentor Program)

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