



Mentoring Resource Center

FACT SHEET



Welcome to the new MRC Fact Sheet!

As you can see, we've made some changes to the Mentoring Resource Center Fact Sheet. The Fact Sheet will still be a great resource for exploring research, best practices, and innovative strategies related to running your U.S. Department of Education-sponsored mentoring programs. We've expanded the content of each issue to include information about valuable resources and online tools, as well as updates on MRC activities. We think this expanded format will make it even easier for you to keep up to speed on all the resources and services available to you in managing your programs and expanding the reach of mentoring in your community.

As always, let us know if there is anything we can do to improve the Fact Sheet or enhance the many other services we provide grantees of this initiative. Happy reading!

— The MRC Team

Engaging Matches in Volunteer Service

Why involve youth in volunteer service?

All young people have much to gain from engaging in volunteer service. A quality volunteer experience can provide opportunities for young people to learn and practice new skills, develop career interests, interact with a variety of adults in positive ways, and earn respect and praise. Research has demonstrated that when youth participate in quality volunteer opportunities they are less likely to be involved in risky behaviors and more likely to feel empowered and connected to their school or community.

But not all youth are equally engaged in service. According to findings from the Corporation for National and Community Service's 2005 Youth Volunteering and Civic Engagement Survey, youth from disadvantaged circumstances—living at or below 200 percent of the poverty level—are much less likely to volunteer than their more advantaged peers (Spring, Dietz, & Grimm, 2007). Youth in these circumstances often lack some important avenues and incentives to volunteer. They are less likely to be involved in school activities and civic organizations and less likely to have family members who volunteer. Disadvantaged youth are also less confident that they can make a difference in their communities, are less likely to believe that people can be trusted, and are less positive about their own futures than their more privileged peers.

But these attitudes often change when disadvantaged youth volunteer. Youth who volunteer are almost 40 percent more likely to believe they can make a difference in their community, are more likely to say they will volunteer again,

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and are more interested in politics and other civic issues. The volunteer experience also increases their belief that they will graduate from a four-year college. (Spring, Dietz & Grimm, 2007.)

Mentoring and Volunteer Service

Mentoring programs can help young people who might not otherwise volunteer by making service opportunities available to matches. Engaging matches in volunteer activities not only helps mentees learn about the rewards of volunteering, but also provides an excellent way for mentors and mentees to get to know each other. And as they share in these meaningful and fun experiences, their relationship is more likely to flourish.

Volunteer service can also expand the impact of mentoring by offering real-life experiences in a safe, supportive setting, allowing youth to develop new assets and test new skills. These experiences can help mentored youth become more competent and confident by:

- Introducing them to new people and environments in the community—schools, workplaces, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and recreation centers
- Providing them with opportunities to learn and practice new skills and abilities
- Helping them see that their actions are appreciated and have a meaningful impact
- Expanding their awareness of the context in which they live: community assets, issues and needs, current events, and significant societal problems
- Providing experiences that can help them build a résumé, obtain school credit, or fulfill a graduation requirement

Developing Volunteer Service Opportunities

Including volunteer service as one of the activities your matches can do together can be a fairly informal and simple process in which matches are given general guidelines about volunteer activities and then plan and implement them on their own. Alternatively, programs may decide to develop a more structured volunteer service component that offers additional opportuni-

ties and supports to matches. Either way, you'll want to sit down with your program staff and partners before you get started, to make sure that volunteer service is a good fit for your program. Here are some questions to think about:

- What are your goals and desired outcomes? Are you interested in a broader range of meaningful activities for matches? Do you have specific outcomes that volunteer service could help you meet, such as increasing students' connection to their school or community or teaching them how to set personal goals? Even if your goals are simple, it helps to clarify them up front.
- Do you need to get approval and buy-in from your partners and others? Volunteer projects on school property will require approval from school administrators and other personnel. (For example, a schoolyard clean-up project will need support from school maintenance staff.) Off-site activities may require approval from the school as well as your own board of directors. Parents need to give permission for any off-site activities. Even if mentors and mentees are finding and doing projects on their own, it will help if school staff are aware and have given the OK.
- Do you need a budget? A small pot of money or in-kind donations can help you provide simple "rewards" for service, such as treats during a planning meeting or activity, certificates for a job well done, or prizes for exceptional service.
- Who will organize and track volunteer activities? If you decide to take a more structured approach, someone needs to be responsible for lining up volunteer activities and letting matches know about them. This could be a staff person at your program or school, an AmeriCorps member, or a volunteer. Tracking service activities can be done as part of match supervision.
- When and where can volunteer activities take place? Some programs will be limited to on-site projects, while others may be able to allow off-site experiences, possibly as a group effort with staff supervision. Community service projects can also make a great summer activity to help keep your matches active over the break.

Finding Quality Service Projects

Almost every school or community has a long list of needs that volunteer service can help fill, so you and your matches should have no lack of possibilities. Finding activities that are rewarding, offer learning opportunities for youth, and are a good fit for your mentoring program may be more difficult; here are some suggestions for how to locate appropriate volunteer service activities:

- Develop a flyer that describes your program and explains what kinds of service projects your matches can do and distribute it to potential volunteer service sites.
- Contact school clubs, parent groups, and other formal groups in the schools you serve to ask them for projects that your matches can do on campus.
- Contact your local volunteer center to see if they have community projects your matches can do. Some organizations may also have projects that can be done at the mentoring site—making posters, stuffing envelopes, making phone calls.
- Invite matches to propose their own ideas for meaningful service projects. Bring together a group of matches to brainstorm, or have matches work together during their scheduled mentoring time to come up with some good ideas. Matches will be more invested in helping and getting involved in service activities if the ideas are their own. Communicate any guidelines or constraints; don't let them come up with a fantastic volunteer service project that you are not able to implement due to financial or programmatic limitations.
- Find out if your school has a service learning component for students that offers classroom support and credit for the experience. If so, mentors can encourage their mentees to participate and help teachers by finding volunteer projects suitable for service learning. For example, a food drive project could become a service learning experience for a science

class by having students read and interpret food labeling on donated items and talk or write about nutrition. Mentees may be more eager to participate in volunteer service if they receive class credit.

Help youth reflect on their achievements

Reflection is a crucial part of service, helping to give meaning to the volunteer experience. For matches, doing the project is only part of the experience. Dedicated time for reflecting on what they did, what it meant to the recipient of the service, and what it meant to them personally, can reinforce the youth's sense of accomplishment and help both youth and mentors see what they have learned.

As you set up your volunteer service component, encourage mentors and mentees to reflect together on the experience and offer some tools or activities to help them. Some matches may simply have a conversation based on the reflection topics in the previous paragraph, while others will want to develop a journal, scrapbook, or other physical representation of their experience. Because skill development and self-awareness are key outcomes for mentoring programs, encourage mentors and mentees to talk about the new skills, abilities, or interests they gained as a result of volunteering. See the resources list at the end of this article for more on reflection.

Supporting mentors

Mentors may need some additional support and advice to make the volunteer service experience positive and fruitful for both mentees and themselves. To get them off to a good start, offer a special training to help mentors make their volunteer service activities successful. Here are some tips to share with mentors:

- Get to know your mentee before suggesting a volunteer service activity. Find out what her skills, interests, and personality traits are so you can help her choose a service activity that's right for her.
- Make sure your mentee knows exactly what the work will be, how long the project will take, what the goals and rewards are, and other details.
- Be prepared if your mentee balks at responsibility or expresses anxiety about the tasks.



See page 7 for ideas for school-based service projects

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Welcome to the Pub Hub, a new feature in the MRC Fact Sheet that will introduce you to publications and resources (some brandnew, some recently unearthed) that can help your mentoring program grow, improve, and meet new challenges. We'll be looking at both online resources and new additions to the MRC Lending Library. And if you come across resources you think others would like to hear about, please let us know (edmentoring@emt.org) and we'll add them to a future issue.

Online Resources

■ MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership recently released a new set of publications designed to give youth mentoring programs both research and tools that can improve their programming. The *Research in Action* series offers 10 resources on a variety of topics, such as peer and school-based mentoring, strengthening relationships, and promoting youth development, all written by leading experts and researchers. Each publication provides an overview of research and best practices and at least one tool programs can use to build on that knowledge:

- Issue 1: Mentoring: A Key Resource for Promoting Positive Youth Development
- Issue 2: Effectiveness of Mentoring Program Practices
- Issue 3: Program Staff in Youth Mentoring Programs: Qualifications, Training, and Retention
- Issue 4: Fostering Close and Effective Relationships in Youth Mentoring Programs
- Issue 5: Why Youth Mentoring Relationships End
- Issue 6: School-Based Mentoring
- Issue 7: Cross-Age Peer Mentoring
- Issue 8: Mentoring Across Generations: Engaging 50+ Adults as Mentors
- Issue 9: Youth Mentoring: Do Race and Ethnicity Really Matter?
- Issue 10: Mentoring: A Promising Intervention for Children of Prisoners

You can learn more about these new publications, and download each issue in PDF format, on the MENTOR Web site at: http://www.mentoring.org/access_research/research_in_action/research_in_action_series/

■ A new online resource has emerged for programs serving youth in the juvenile justice, foster care, and other systems: the **Mentoring System Involved Youth Web site**: <http://www.mentoringsiyouth.org/index.html>. The site provides a downloadable newsletter featuring updates on four demonstration sites serving these populations and listings of new resources and grants for service providers. The site includes annotated bibliographies on topics such as mentoring youth in foster care and juvenile justice reentry (click on the "resources" link to access the bibliographies). More resources and events are promised, so this is a site worth bookmarking and checking on from time to time.

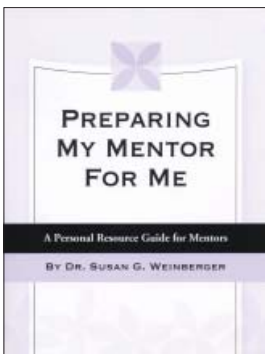
■ Former Public/Private Ventures president Gary Walker has released a new policy paper titled *Mentoring, Policy and Politics*. This article provides an overview of the reasons for mentoring's appeal and growth as a cornerstone youth-service, while also looking forward at emerging trends that can both help the mentoring movement grow (as well as present challenges to its long-term future). This theoretical piece may be useful in explaining aspects of mentoring to stakeholders and funders. Downloadable at: http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/224_publication.pdf

■ Finally, we want to highlight a set of online trainings that will be valuable to many ED mentoring grantees: Webinars provided by the LEARNS project. LEARNS, funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service, provides training and technical assistance to projects focused on mentoring and education success. LEARNS currently offers three downloadable webinar trainings on creative volunteer recruitment, making and supporting matches, and youth literacy. As with the MRC Web seminars, LEARNS trainings offer a downloadable mp3 audio file of the presentation along with a transcript and slides. New webinars are added as they become available and all can be accessed on the CNCS Resource Center Web site at: http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/online_pubs/learns/webinars.php



New in the MRC Lending Library

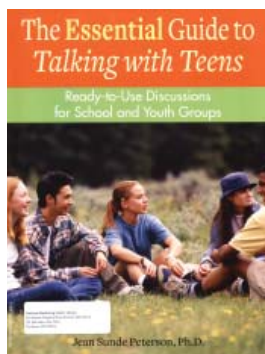
One of the unique services we provide U.S. Department of Education mentoring programs is our MRC Lending Library. The collection boasts more than 400 titles on mentoring youth, running a successful program, and many other facets of youth development, education, and nonprofit management. In each edition of the Pub Hub we'll review some of the new additions to the collection that you may be interested in. Learn more about how to borrow items and search the collection on the MRC Web site at: http://www.edmentoring.org/lending_library.html



Preparing My Mentor for Me. This resource for mentors, written by mentoring leader and MRC trainer Dr. Susan Weinberger, provides advice, strategies, and context as volunteers prepare to assume their mentoring role. A wonderful resource for mentees to give to their mentors at the first meeting,

it offers tips on establishing ground rules, showing affection, setting goals with youth, and more. In addition to being loaned from the collection, interested programs can also purchase copies (all proceeds go to local mentoring programs) from the Connecticut Mentoring Partnership Web site: <http://www.preventionworksct.org/publications.html>

Library link: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17585&DB=res>

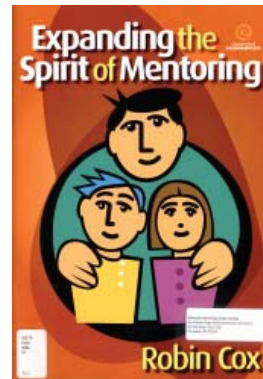


The Essential Guide to Talking with Teens: Ready-to-Use Discussions for School and Youth Groups. This resource will be valuable to any program that provides structured group activities and discussion time for their youth. While designed for both small and large groups (including classrooms),

many of these activities could also be modified to be used by individual mentors on a child-by-child basis. The activities cover many topics that are relevant to mentoring relationships: personal identity, feelings,

family relations, and youth hopes and dreams for the future, to name a few. If you are looking for meaningful group activities for your program, this book is for you.

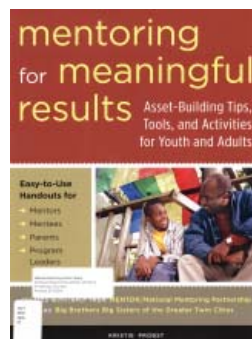
Library link: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17557&DB=res>



Expanding the Spirit of Mentoring: Simple Steps and Fun Activities for a Flourishing Peer Mentor or Peer Support Programme. Author Robin Cox is one of the leading experts in mentoring internationally, helping take mentoring in Australia and New Zealand to new levels. In this guide he provides a number of guiding principles and

activities for peer mentoring programs and peer mentors. These youth-empowering activities address common topics such as team building, communication, and building strengths, and will be a nice complement to almost any peer mentoring program.

Library link: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=17518&DB=res>



Mentoring for Meaningful Results: Asset-Building Tips, Tools, and Activities for Youth and Adults. This 2006 book has proven so popular that we've added more copies to the library. Building on the Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, this guide provides a wonderful selection of ready-to-use handouts that

can be incorporated into mentor training as well as a section of handouts that mentors and youth can use together to stimulate conversations or add a spark to their mentoring activities. This is a resource packed with useful content.

Library link: <http://www.nwrel.org/resource/singleresource.asp?id=16456&DB=res>

📞 Please contact library managers Kay Logan (logank@nwrel.org) or Michael Garringer (garringm@nwrel.org) if you have questions about how ED mentoring grantees can access the collection and borrow materials.

Engaging Matches in Volunteer Service *continued from page 3*

Offer encouragement and reassurance that you are both new at this and that you are there to support him if the job gets too difficult.

- Provide regular positive reinforcement to your mentee, offering praise and encouragement for the skills and abilities you notice him using. Give examples of his achievements, such as: "You really worked hard on that poster." Point out special qualities or skills he is exhibiting, such as being thorough or writing well.
- Find ways to celebrate together after a successful volunteer experience, such as an ice cream treat after the activity or playing a favorite game next time you get together.
- Don't let your mentee give up easily, but recognize when a volunteer activity is really not working out for either or both of you. If the experience is too boring or too challenging, doesn't hold his interest, or isn't providing meaningful service, talk with your program coordinator about finding a new activity.

(Adapted from Goddard, J. (2007, Fall), The ripple effect: When mentors and mentees volunteer together. *The Tutor*. Portland, OR: NWREL)

Recognize and celebrate accomplishments

Celebrate the achievements of matches who engage in volunteer service. Some ideas for recognition include the following:

- Provide certificates of appreciation or personal letters to mentors and mentees signed by the group that received the benefits of the service.
- Use school bulletins, teacher newsletters, or even local media to recognize the services provided by your matches. Highlight the hours of service completed by matches in a given period and who your matches helped, or tell stories of exceptional service.
- Have a pizza day or other special gathering for matches involved in volunteer service projects.
- Let parents, guardians, and other caregivers know of their children's accomplishments and that the program appreciates their work to help others.
- If you have an annual party, picnic, or other large group event, invite a community leader to come and personally recognize matches for their service.
- Get donations of small gifts that can be given to matches in appreciation of their efforts.

See the following for more information on how to help matches engage in service. The MRC Lending Library also has several books on this topic, and MRC staff are available to help you locate the resources you need.

References

Spring, K. Dietz, N. Grimm, R., Jr. (2007, March). Youth helping America. Leveling the path to participation: Volunteering and civic engagement among youth from disadvantaged circumstances. Washington, DC. Corporation for National and Community Service. http://www.nationalservice.gov/pdf/07_0406_disad_youth.pdf

Online resources

Goddard, J. The ripple effect: When mentors and mentees volunteer together. *The Tutor*. Fall, 2007. LEARNS, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. http://nationalserviceresources.org/filemanager/download/learns/The_Ripple_Effect_fall07.pdf

Youth Service America's Web site offers program ideas, toolkits, tip sheets, and other resources to help youth engage in community service. <http://ysa.org/home/tabid/37/default.aspx>

100 Ways To Make a Difference in Your Community. Youth Service America Toolbox. http://ysa.org/portals/0/pdf%20documents/100_ways_to_make_difference.pdf

Service reflection toolkit. This Northwest Service Academy offers this resource on how to make reflection a meaningful part of the volunteer service experience. Includes reflection activities. Available on the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory Web site: http://www.nwrel.org/ecc/amicorps/resources/reflect_toolkit/index.html

Project Ideas To Do in Schools

Even if your matches can only do activities at your school or program site, they can engage in meaningful service in hundreds of ways. Here are just a few ideas:

1. Plan an art exhibit/fair at the school. Work with your art teacher(s) to get entries and support.
2. Plan a bike or scooter safety awareness event. Invite local law enforcement, sell safety helmets to help support the event, have a drawing for a free bike tune-up.
3. Make food baskets or set up a regular food drive for the food bank. Learn about hunger issues and write school newspaper articles to increase awareness among other students.
4. Plan and carry out a school improvement project, such as planting flowers, decorating hallways, creating welcome signs. Get input from students, teachers, staff, and the PTA.
5. Start a newsletter for your mentoring program and solicit materials from other matches.
6. Start or improve a school recycling initiative. Make posters, offer incentives to kids to recycle, advocate for "green" products.
7. Set up and host a used book sale to benefit the library or another program.
8. Organize a reading contest for all students. Get prizes donated from a local bookstore. Create a student-driven reading list for the whole school to share.
9. Make boxes filled with donated school supplies or personal care products for homeless family shelters, relief organizations, or schoolchildren in a developing country.
10. Invite business and community leaders or other interesting people to give a brief talk for your afterschool program. Write a story about the event together for the school paper.

News & Notes

San Diego Regional Provides Initial Training. Over 200 participants and presenters gathered at the Westin San Diego on January 10–11 for the first of the Mentoring Resource Center’s Regional Trainings. These initial events provide training, networking, and other learning opportunities designed to get new U.S. Department of Education mentoring grantees off to a successful start. The San Diego event served programs in the western half of the country; programs east of the Mississippi will be attending the Regional Training in Atlanta on March 3–4.

Highlights from San Diego included keynotes from Dr. Susan Weinberger and Dr. Charlie Applestein, whose talk on strength-based mentoring left all in attendance with a renewed appreciation of the valuable role mentors play in affirming young people and creating a context for their positive self-growth and reflection. Slides and handouts from both Regional Trainings will be posted for downloading on the MRC Web site shortly after the Atlanta event.

Web Seminar Announced on Mentor Recruitment. One of the key challenges for new mentoring programs is, not surprisingly, mentor recruitment. Building an initial list of prospective mentors and making critical decisions about program marketing strategies are tasks near the top of every U.S. Department of Education mentoring program’s “to do” list. This Web seminar, scheduled for February 20, features presentations on two critical aspects of mentor recruitment: reaching potential male mentors and recruiting mentors from Hispanic communities. The presentations will be supplemented by the release of online articles on many other aspects of mentor recruitment and dedicated discussions on the ED Mentoring Forum listserv in the weeks leading up to the event. You can learn more about this event on the MRC Web site at <http://www.edmentoring.org/seminar6.html>.

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