

Bill.

Pls see me about this
or
note

To: Mike Smith
From: Judy Wurtzel
Re: Mentoring
Date: August 17

Attached is a piece on mentoring prepared for the interagency workgroup on mentoring (basically Peter Edelman, Susan Stroud and me) by Marc Friedman. I think it is a great monograph.

The Corporation for National Service is planning to print many thousand copies in booklet form and wants our help in getting it out and around. I have the following ideas and, if you agree, Bill Kincaid and Mary Clare Gumbleton (OIIA) can follow up on them.

1. The most ambitious idea I have is to send it to Tom Payzant, JD Hoyer and David Longanecker and encourage them to include this piece or some version of it as guidance for grantees in Title I, School to Work and Trio as they develop guidance for these programs.

2. In addition, or in lieu of this, consider mailing to grantees under these programs (we would have to cover mailing costs).

3. Mail them to a fairly wide list of ED contacts that include: major education organizations such as AASA, CCSSO, great city schools, etc...; every chief; all the family involvement partners, Urban League; Labs and Centers; etc...

4. Put it on line and get it into Ask Eric etc....

5. Peter, Susan and I thought the mailing would go out under a letter from the interagency committee (Peter is talking with Rasco about this).

Once you have had a chance to read the monograph and decide whether you think it is worth distributing, etc... please let Bill or Mary Clare know how you want to proceed.

Mary Clare will then follow up with Susan Stroud with ideas, numbers of copies we will distribute, etc.....

cc: Bill Kincaid, Mary Clare Gumbleton

Mary Clare -

will follow up -

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- Val } ok?

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② Corporation - states? Dissem strategy?

③ Tension - Youth Strategy?

④ One paper on flexibility that supports - she will explore possibility of.

MAKING THE MOST OF MENTORING

SECOND DRAFT

March 1995

Marc Freedman

"The concentric circles of responsible adults that buffered and shaped children's lives have disappeared one by one. The neighbors are minding their own business. The corner storekeepers have gone to the mall. The respected elders have moved or been intimidated into silence. The parents have gone to work, or sometimes just gone.

For all the reams of research and the endless social jargon, the current troubled state of children in American can be summed up pretty much in one sentence. There aren't enough caring adults in their lives."

Ellen Goodman, "Kids Need a Mentor," Boston Globe, March 21, 1995

SUMMARY

Over the past decade interest in providing more adult support for young people, particularly those young people living in poverty, has grown dramatically. Today, one-to-one mentoring programs matching adult volunteers with youth are sponsored by a wide array of organizations and civic groups, ranging from IBM to the Rainbow Coalition, from the Junior League to the National Guard. The high level of interest in mentoring by national organizations is matched by considerable ferment at the local level. Kansas City, Oakland, Minneapolis, Baltimore, and dozens of other cities have launched their own mentoring campaigns.

In the context of so much mentoring activity at the program level, and growing policy interest in mentoring in areas as diverse as welfare reform, education, violence prevention, school-to-work transition, and national service, this paper is designed to provide practitioners and policy makers alike with a brief overview of knowledge emerging from the experience of mentoring programs, and a set of recommendations aimed at moving this field to the next level of development. Specifically, it is written for two audiences: those in Congress and the Administration engaged in a wide variety of tasks, from drafting legislation to writing RFP's and making grants in areas related to mentoring and youth development; and those working at the community level to implement programs to support and develop young people.

In general, this piece contends that rising interest in mentoring is a positive phenomenon. Far too many youth grow up today without sufficient adult guidance and support. At the same time, research from the social sciences suggests that the presence of caring adults from the community can make a critical difference in the life chances of young people.

Nevertheless, the experience of one-to-one mentoring programs formally matching adult volunteers and youth suggests that these efforts--the most popular form of mentoring activity--can only go part of the way toward filling the void in adult contact that so many young people experience. Substantially reducing the isolation facing these youth will require a more comprehensive strategy incorporating, yet also moving beyond, the contributions of volunteers.

In keeping, this paper proposes a three-part strategy aimed at realizing the full potential inherent in mentoring, built upon: 1) fortifying volunteer efforts to mentor youth; 2) identifying the role compensated individuals working with youth in a sustained and intensive manner--both salaried youth workers and stipended national service participants--can play in mentoring; and, 3) describing how volunteers, staff, and national service participants can be brought together in the creation of "mentor-rich" environments for youth.

I. THE RISE OF MENTORING

Mentoring is a sustained, close, developmental relationship between an older, more experienced individual and a younger person, with the goal of building character and competence on the part of the protege. According to Uri Bronfenbrenner, a developmental psychologist and emeritus professor at Cornell University, this relationship is distinguished by a "special bond of mutual commitment" and "an emotional character of respect, loyalty, and identification."

Mentoring is a familiar relationship, not only in the broader culture (the original Mentor was a character in Homer's *The Odyssey*), but in American social policy. Next year our largest mentoring program, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, will celebrate its 90th birthday; today, this program engages over 70,000 adult volunteers, one-to-one, with young people from single-parent families in more than 500 programs across the U.S.

Over the past decade Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other established volunteer mentoring efforts have been joined by a new wave of one-to-one programs aimed at assisting young people--particularly those young people growing up in high-risk situations--to improve school performance, develop social skills, expand access to the labor market, and, generally, help these youth navigate the often treacherous course to adulthood. Over the past decade dozens of corporations, universities, youth organizations, and civic groups have launched mentoring initiatives. Nationally, organizations such as One-to-One have joined Big Brothers/Big Sisters in promoting the mentoring cause, and others, including the Public Broadcasting System, Proctor and Gamble, and the Rainbow Coalition (to name just a few) have promulgated mentoring projects. Numerous private foundations, among them the Carnegie Corporation, Commonwealth Fund, Kellogg Foundation, and MacArthur Foundation are currently funding mentoring programs, while research organizations including Public/Private Ventures and the Center for Urban and Minority Education at Columbia University are actively involved in evaluating mentoring efforts.

Federal government support for mentoring programs ranges from long-standing efforts like Department of Education's Trio programs, a \$500 million initiative that includes mentoring and adult support elements, to more recent additions such as the Department of Defense's Navy Kids project, the Department of Justice's Juvenile Urban Mentoring Program (JUMP), and a variety of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) projects emanating from the Department of Labor.

Mentoring activity is also growing at the state and local levels. Rhode Island and New York have established statewide mentoring campaigns, while mentoring networks now exist in Boise, Boston, Minneapolis and dozens of

other locations. Baltimore and Oakland have each established organizations to promote and support mentoring programs.

Understanding Mentoring's Rise

Why so much interest in mentoring--and why now? The answer is complex, but can be attributed to at least two reasons. The first reflects Ellen Goodman's sentiment, recorded in the epigraph to this paper, that too few of our young people today receive adequate caring, guidance, and support from adults. As psychologist Laurence Steinberg of Temple University observes, most do not even experience one significant, close relationship with an adult outside their immediate family before reaching adulthood themselves.

The institutions we've relied on historically for the nurturance of youth have changed in ways that dramatically reduce their capacity to deliver it. Most notably, there are fewer adults in families. Today more than one in four children is born into a single-parent household, more than two of three African-American children. The 1980s alone saw a doubling of no-parent households. Regardless of the number of parents in the household, changes in the nature of work make it far more difficult for adults to spend time with their kids; as research by Harvard economist Juliet Schor shows, since 1970 alone, the average American works an additional 164 more hours a year. This shift is the equivalent of an extra month's work, a good part of it coming at the expense of time with children.

At the same time, the institutions that might compensate for these shifts, neighborhoods and schools, are themselves far from nurturing places. A recent J. Walter Thompson poll shows that three of four Americans do not know the person living next door; meanwhile, in many urban neighborhoods, the fear of violence has driven community adults, once an important source of socialization and support, behind barred doors. Community youth organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and Y's have helped pick up some of the slack, but are often strapped for adequate staff and funding.

This problem is particularly acute in our public schools. Once bastions of adult guidance, these institutions today are often impersonal places, reeling in the wake of budget cuts. Student-counselor ratios commonly approximate 500 to 1 in urban districts. Class size is frequently 30 or 40 students, and the average teacher will often face 200 students in a single day. Even the most caring find it hard to connect with more than a few young people.

These figures are all the more troubling given the level of stress young people confront. Growing up has never been easy, but today's youth face a bewildering array of pitfalls. Those young people living in the inner-city are

particularly besieged, encountering environments akin to war zones. Seventy percent of inner-city children have witnessed someone being beaten by the age of 15, while nearly a third have seen someone being shot.

The combination of substantial stress with the erosion of natural institutions for adult support of youth is one reason promulgating the quest for new sources of mentors. There is widespread concern that we've entered a period where kids are not getting the adult support they need at precisely the juncture they need it most.

The second reason for mentoring's rise is the perception that close relationships with unrelated adults can supplement the work of parents and make a vast difference in the lives of youth. While this sense accords with a broader cultural perception linking mentoring with success (one Harvard Business Review article proclaims, "Everyone Who Makes It Has a Mentor"), it also squares with important research from the social sciences focusing on "resilient" youth--young people who overcome the odds of poverty despite vast obstacles.

Research spanning a variety of disciplines suggests that mentoring relationships are linked to resiliency. In the most substantial of these studies, developmental psychologist Emmy E. Werner of the University of California-Davis followed five hundred children growing up in poverty on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. Examining their lives over a thirty year period, Werner found that the youth who managed to make it, against the odds, all could count on the support of an adult mentor other than their parents. Sometimes this person was a grandparent or other relative, but usually it was a neighbor, teacher, coach, or minister.

In another illustration, anthropologists William Kornblum of New York University and Terry Williams of City University of New York followed 900 children in urban and rural poverty. In their book *Growing Up Poor*, Williams and Kornblum conclude that "The probabilities that teenagers will end up on the corner or in a stable job are conditioned by a great many features of life in their communities. Of these, we believe the most significant is the presence or absence of adult mentors." These findings are reproduced in numerous other studies, across not only diverse disciplines but cultural circumstances as well.

Taken together, the erosion of adult connections for youth and evidence suggesting the positive effects of its presence, has produced a vigorous search for ways to replenish this support, and fueled interest in developing volunteer mentoring efforts for youth.

II. THE EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEER MENTORING

While the reasons behind mentoring's rapid rise to prominence are compelling, they raise basic questions. While resilience research links mentoring and success for young people in poverty, it leaves unexplained whether resilient youth do well because they find mentoring relationships--or whether these youth find mentoring relationships, and use them well, because they possess an inherent capacity to overcome hardship.

This dilemma leads to the issue of whether it is possible for social programs and policies aimed at providing more mentoring relationships to reach youth beyond those with the internal wherewithal to cultivate such bonds on their own. (The resilient youth in Werner's work possess an uncanny ability to attract and recruit potential mentors.) Even if the answer is yes, the question remains whether these orchestrated relationships can generate the same benefits as with the natural bonds charted by Werner, Williams and Kornblum, and others.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Definitive answers to these and other issues remain forthcoming, however, returns from a set of research and evaluation efforts are beginning to uncover what mentoring can do to help young people growing up in poverty. Probably the most important of this research is being conducted by Professor Jean Rhodes and her colleagues at the University of Illinois. Studying a group of girls attending an alternative school for teenage mothers in Chicago, Rhodes has succeeded in dividing the students into girls who have "natural" mentors from the community, and those that do not. Through selective assignments of volunteer "program" mentors, she has created four groups for study: girls with both "natural" and "program" mentors; girls with neither; and girls with one or the other.

Rhodes findings confirm that those young women already demonstrating the ability to find and forge relationships with natural mentors are uniquely suited to make effective use of the "program" mentors assigned to them. (Essentially, she finds, the "rich" do get richer.) However, Rhodes research also suggest a substantial number of young girls without natural mentors are able to bond with--and benefit from--assigned program mentors. The critical difference in connecting with these harder to reach girls appears to be persistence on the part of their mentors, dedicated volunteers who shrug off initial resistance and manage to build trust over time.

Rhodes' finding that the volunteer mentors can reach, and make a difference in, the lives of youth, is supported by a range of program evaluations. For example:

An evaluation of the Career Beginnings demonstration--which includes a number of components in addition to mentoring--shows students with mentors attending college on schedule at a higher rate than a control group;

Research on Project RAISE, conducted by Johns Hopkins University, finds RAISE students improving attendance and grades in English in comparison to controls;

A third study, of the Atlanta Adopt-a-Student program, reveals young people with mentors more likely to enroll in post-secondary education.

Other outcome research on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program, conducted by Public/Private Ventures, will be available 1996, and will provide the first glimpse of the effectiveness of the country's oldest, biggest, and best-known initiative.

In addition to indications that mentoring can help young people cope with difficult circumstances and make progress toward important goals like improving school performance, there is evidence that the benefits of mentoring are reciprocal. Some of these outcomes are in terms of mentor satisfaction, yet the potential runs deeper. Although the isolation of youth is a primary reason behind the creation of mentoring programs--and a valid one--many of the middle-class adults recruited for these matches are just as isolated from the realities of poverty as participating youth are from the institutions and opportunities of middle-class life. At a time when statistics have lost their ability to shock, mentors are brought face-to-face with the unfair manner in which poverty affects innocent children. This education can build not only empathy, but advocacy on the part of the adults.

The significance of this prospect and the wide level of interest mentoring has generated among adult volunteers, should not be underestimated at a juncture in American life characterized by precipitous decline in civic participation. For example, PTA membership has dropped from 12 million to 7 million over the past generation, along with volunteer participation in a wide range of community organizations. The rise of interest and participation in mentoring stands in sharp--and encouraging--contrast to these alarming trends.

The Limits of Mentoring

For all these positive indications, the overall scenario emerging from the new wave of volunteer mentoring activity is mixed. The picture that emerges over and over again from research and other accounts is that this enterprise is

hard, that volunteer mentoring based on formally matching adults and disadvantaged youth, one-to-one, is in the overwhelming number of cases a modest intervention.

Why is mentoring so difficult? The reasons are not surprising. First, mentoring rests on a paradox around the issue of time. People come forward to participate in these programs because they recognize that adults in our society do not spend enough time with kids. Unfortunately, the volunteers tapped for programs quickly discover that they don't have enough time to mentor. They are the same individuals who are working an extra 164 more hours a year, who are struggling to spend enough time with their own kids (this problem is exacerbated by the emphasis on recruiting successful "role models" for these programs, the lawyers, bankers, and other professionals who tend to be the busiest people in society.) The end result is that mentors are often better at signing up, than showing up. This issue is particularly critical in light of Rhodes research underscoring the importance of persistence on the part of mentors.

Persistence is all the more important given another obstacle confronting mentoring programs, that of social distance. Most mentoring efforts, as already suggested, focus recruitment on middle-class and upper middle-class role models, individuals seen as exemplars of how to make it in the mainstream world and of the rewards that accompany doing so. On the other hand, the youth targeted tend to come from the other side of the tracks. Vast differences exist in class, culture, generation, neighborhood, and frequently, ethnic background. Many mentors and youth have never met anyone like their partner before. The opportunities for misunderstanding are considerable.

The paradox around time and the gulf of social distance, taken together with the artificiality of the one-to-one match (which one observer likens to "blind dating as social policy"), can undermine persistence and produce disappointment. The last point raises the reality that mentoring, often portrayed as a win-win situation, can in fact be quite risky. When misunderstandings occur, or when mentors drop out, the result is frequently devastating. For youth who have been let down by adults in the past, it can mean that it will be that much harder to trust again. For adults, whose initial involvement is often motivated by a fragile sense of goodwill, the result is increased cynicism.

Those obstacles facing mentoring and its inherent risks are made dramatically worse by an attitude toward this enterprise that might be called Fervor without Infrastructure, unrealistic expectations about mentoring coupled with naiveté about what it takes to make this strategy work.

Lessons for Volunteer Mentoring Programs

The experience of volunteer mentoring programs over the past decade, while clear about the obstacles and limitations confronting these programs, in no ways counsels their abandonment, or the abandonment of other volunteer efforts in the important work of providing more adult support for youth. Rather, this experience suggests adherence to a set of basic lessons--for individual mentors, program operators, and policymakers--aimed at bringing this form of mentoring to its full potential. Eight such lessons--illustrate, although by no means exhaustive--are set out below:

Rethinking Recruitment: Programs have learned to exercise greater care in their recruitment tactics. Initially, many projects emphasized "screening in" potential volunteers in their quest to reach as many kids as possible, a practice that can lead to fanning unrealistic notions of mentoring in potential recruits. People would come to the program, explains one program director, "expecting that they're going to save the world...and we fed them on that." However, as his program struggled through the first years and many of these individuals dropped out, this director shifted away from screening people in, to "screening them out"--letting them know about the harder realities of mentoring from the start so that only those individuals genuinely committed would become involved. In retrospect he concludes, "We lost some people--the total number of mentors we could claim in the program went down--but the percentage actually performing went up."

As programs continue to gain experience, however, many operators are beginning to move toward a further correction. While "screening out" has the advantage of discouraging volunteers unable to make the significant commitment mentoring entails, this strategy can result in turning away good people who might be able to help youth in other, more circumscribed, ways. In response to this problem, some programs have moved to provide a wider variety of roles for potential volunteers. The Philadelphia Futures program, for example, offers a menu of volunteer options, including tutoring, role modeling, and providing scholarship support, along with mentoring. The program also works with interested adults in helping them select the role most compatible with their personality, time availability, and resources.

Teaching the Art of Mentoring: Training is an essential part of preparing mentors for their job, especially as we learn more about the practices of effective mentors. For example, a series of research reports indicates that mentors who emphasize listening to youth early on in the relationship--and avoid the impulse to impose preconceived plans for the young person's improvement--are best able to establish trust and forge a connection. Later, these effective mentors are able to move toward balancing support with challenging them to move toward goals. One of the most effective strategies for imparting these and other lessons to aspiring mentors

is through engaging experienced mentors who can share both triumphs and travails, and provide an accurate glimpse of what it means to be matched with a young person.

It is just as important to provide youth with this advance glimpse of the mentoring process. Although mentoring is a familiar word to adults in the business world, for example, it is often a foreign concept to inner-city adolescents. When told that they are being assigned a mentor, many youths are resistant or bewildered. Some undoubtedly wonder, "What does this say about me--that I need help? That I am deficient?" These and other issues are best addressed before the young person is matched.

A Variety of Adults: Young people can benefit from contact with a variety of adults. Common ethnic and cultural ties do appear to be an advantage in forging connections as those ties mitigate barriers to trust and provide young people with models that look like them. At the same time, exposure to mentors of other backgrounds can help orient youth to individuals and situations contributing to the bicultural competence many inner-city youngsters must develop; cross-ethnic matching can also contribute to the social development of the mentor, who learns about the young person's world through the mentoring process.

Although much attention focuses on the ethnic background of mentors and youth, class issues appear to play a significant role in relationship formation. Several studies of mentoring programs conclude that the most successful mentors are individuals who have weathered hard lives, often coming from the same neighborhoods as the youth. Mentoring programs, intent in finding successful "role models," might do well to recruit more individuals from such backgrounds. Recent ethnographic studies suggest that many working-class and lower-income exemplars of character and competence remain in our inner-city neighborhoods and might potentially be reconnected with youth through the development of new mechanisms.

Integrating Mentoring: One program operator states: "It would be wonderful if we could just put these two people together and tell them to relate, but it's not realistic." In her experience, when mentors and mentees have something to do or work on together, it gives them more direction. Tasks can absorb initial nervous energy, provide a basis for conversation between partners, and diffuse the stigma of receiving help.

The key is finding the right task--one that interests both parties. Stephen Hamilton of Cornell University argues that the workplace is ideal.

Integrating mentoring into sports programs, recreation programs, and other youth initiatives is also promising. Community service projects (such as the Boston University/Roxbury Middle School collaboration, part of the Campus Partners in Learning initiative) in which mentors and students work side-by-side to help others, can also provide an environment conducive to connection.

These points all conspire to the perspective that mentoring need not be a stand-alone strategy. In fact, it is both more likely that mentoring relationships will form, and that these bonds will have the desired benefits, when integrated in the broader context of youth development activities.

Supporting Mentors: Although practitioners differ about the value of upfront training of mentors, most share an unequivocal belief in the importance of supporting mentors and the consequences of failing to do so. To combat the isolation in which much mentoring is conducted, some initiatives organize self-help groups for mentors to provide each other with emotional support, share experiences, and develop solutions to common difficulties. Mentoring teams, where several adults share the job of mentoring several youths, also help reduce isolation in some programs. As an added advantage, these teams help provide consistency for young people. When one of the adults cannot make it to a scheduled session, the young people can still expect to see one or two of the other mentors on the team.

Staff, the Glue in Mentoring: The most important source of support for mentors is also the most important single ingredient in successful mentoring programs: field staff. These individuals are in contact with the kids, the mentors, school staff, and families. Not surprisingly, in programs where such staff are a full-time presence, the whole mentoring effort tends to revolve around them; they are the "glue" in this process.

Field staff assume many critical functions, from helping make sure that people show up, to brokering and interpreting for adults and youths, to serving as "mentors to the mentors." In part, these youth workers support young people, often with the advantages of social and physical proximity to them. Many come from socioeconomic backgrounds similar to the youths and set up shop right in the schools or youth programs the young people attend. Although some programs attempt to subsist on volunteer coordination, experience suggest that employing full-time youth workers in this role is a far more effective path.

New Sources of Volunteers: As already stated, one of the great ironies of the volunteer mentoring movement has been its focus on recruiting the busiest people in society--middle-class, middle-age, 'role models.' Mentoring

programs would do well to look at some new sources of potential volunteers, in particular, older adults. Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population, and there will be twice as many individuals over 60 in thirty years as there are today. Not only do many older persons possess the time required to mentor (a substantial portion of Americans are now spending a third of their life in retirement), but their experience as citizens, workers, and parents renders them a deep repository of the social capital so many youth require.

Young people are also a promising source of volunteers. Some programs even engage adolescents being mentored by adults as mentors themselves, pairing them up with local elementary school students. These so-called "tripartite" programs, such as the Young Leaders program in Washington, DC, have numerous advantages. Not only do they support the elementary school children, they also provide participating adolescents with the experience of being mentors themselves. Furthermore, since many of these programs match adolescents and elementary school children growing up in the same neighborhoods, they can also be seen as community-development strategies.

Building Infrastructure: While the lessons set out above can contribute to strengthening mentoring at both the relationship and program level, institutional infrastructure is also required to support and sustain this activity over time. However, as one study of New York City programs concludes, the mentoring field has been sorely lacking in this infrastructure, imperative for ensuring quality service delivery over time, building a track record of reliability, and developing ongoing sources of funding.

The biggest exception to this deficiency is Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, which maintains a national organization that provides standards, technical assistance, research, and other supporting functions, and reveals one model of how solid infrastructure can enhance the practice of mentoring. Elsewhere, a number of cities and states have moved toward creating local organizations and networks to promote and strengthen mentoring efforts. However, these initiatives remain more the exception than the rule, and an effort to develop more local and regional mentoring centers is much needed.

Also required are consistent and long-term sources of funding. Too many mentoring programs are launched amid an initial burst of enthusiasm (by private foundations, business collaborates, and civic groups alike) only to be abandoned after the start-up phase in favor of new fads arriving on the social policy landscape.

III. YOUTHWORKERS AS MENTORS

Adapting the lessons set out above will help volunteer mentoring programs better address youths' need for adult contact and strengthen the support available to adults who provide that contact. However, it would be a mistake either to underestimate the extent of these needs or to overestimate the power of voluntary efforts alone to meet them. As one program director warns, "You're not going to have enough mentors. It's not going to work for a lot of kids. There will be a huge hole."

The hole will continue to exist, even if responsible volunteer mentoring prevails, because the isolation of young people is a structural problem resulting from a set of fundamental changes in our society. For example, poverty serves in many reinforcing ways to undermine natural support networks for young people. Rather than thinking of volunteer mentoring as a sufficient solution to the structural problem of youth isolation, we would do well to think of this important movement as a critical step in the right direction, one that highlights an unmet need, goes part of the way toward redressing it, and calls out for reinforcements.

From where might these reinforcements come? Mentoring programs themselves provide essential clues, particularly in the staff roles discussed in the previous section. These paid youth workers tend not only to be mentors to the mentors but oftentimes to the young people as well. As the director of the Career Beginnings mentoring initiative explains, "In a lot of Career Beginnings programs, the primary relationships are between the case managers and the kids, and only secondarily and maybe supportively, between the [volunteer] mentors and the kids." This insight comes from the I Have a Dream project as well, where one report describes the youthworker who coordinates each project on full-time basis as functioning "more like a parent, aunt or uncle, or an older sibling than a bureaucrat," while an Education Week article describes them as being "like guardian angels who provide the daily guidance and support needed to make sure the students have a shot at collecting on their sponsor's tuition offer."

In this way, volunteer mentoring programs--as well as efforts like I Have a Dream--end up serving as back doors to traditional youth work; the need to administer the program serves as justification for hiring adult staff who themselves come to provide the most critical mentoring delivered by the program. Back door or not, the role many staff play underscores the basic insight that mentoring, while cast as a voluntary relationship, is by no means the exclusive province of volunteers.

Indeed, these youth workers are generally in a much better position than volunteers to mentor young people because their roles are structured for, and consistent with, fundamental principles about connecting with kids: namely, that a consistent and persistent presence is essential for successful mentoring.

Because they are available to kids on a regular and intensive basis--because persistence essentially is built into their role--these youthworkers are particularly promising sources of adult support. They are on hand, in the school or youth program, day in and day out. When troubles arise in the youths' lives, they are not away on a business trip or even downtown in an office building. They can attend to the issue immediately. Many also come from the same neighborhoods as the kids, thus minimizing the social distance problem impacting many volunteer programs focused on middle-class professionals.

The individuals who come forward to fill these youth worker positions tend to combine the full-time, formal presence of a professional social worker with the sense of mission associated with volunteers. Their role, with its focus on the provision of relationships, is often unique in the context of the schools and social programs where they set up shop. As a result, these individuals are frequently overwhelmed by need as they become established and trusted. Young people flood their offices in search of someone to talk to or help them out.

Although some of these youth workers are finding opportunities to connect with youth through coordinator and other positions in a variety of mentoring programs and related initiatives, an important next step for the youth development field is to open up more direct opportunities for these individuals to practice their intensive, full-time, persistent brand of mentorship--especially as evidence continues to accumulate that these youth workers are linked closely to the success of programs. For example, recent research findings from the highly-effective Quantum Opportunities Program focused on adolescents from welfare families, identified these youthworker roles as critical to the program's record of achievement. In the words of a March 1995 New York Times editorial, "the adult supervisors...became not just mentors, but surrogate parents or family members, with roots in the same community."

Fortunately, there is evidence that programs focused on engaging youthworkers as mentors are becoming increasingly widespread. The Key Program In Massachusetts and Maryland's Choice initiative both follow this model. Another variation is the Friends of the Children project in Portland, Oregon. Endowed by a local financier with a longstanding interest in youth programs, and supported by Portland's Meyer Memorial Trust, Friends of the Children "employs full-time caring, loving adults who each work intensively with eight at risk young children and their families." The program's goal is for these full-time mentors to become a substantial part of the children's lives "from early childhood to young adulthood." Beginning with second graders already identified by teachers and school staff as headed for trouble, the Friends spend time in the classroom, become a bridge between school and

home, essentially becoming surrogate family. Their focus is on developing life skills, including problem solving, conflict resolution, and character.

As evidence mounts about the significant mentoring role youthworkers can play in a wide variety of settings, and new initiatives of this type continue to be launched, a number of national leaders have called for the creation of new mechanisms for supporting such efforts. David Liederman, executive director of the Child Welfare League of America, urges establishment of a corps of inner-city youth workers, "able to hit the streets and work directly with kids in their own neighborhoods." He argues that these are the role models kids really need--not famous athletes on television, but caring adults they can "see, touch, and talk to." The writer Brent Staples concurs: "That's what a role model is: someone who loves and works and encourages and lays on hands. All the rest is noise and empty air."

Liederman's vision of a "small army of trained, committed youth workers talking about and developing positive values" may be in the process of being realized through two current programs which underscore that this army might consist not only of salaried youthworkers like the staff of I Have a Dream, but stipended national service participants. These are the AmeriCorps program and the Foster Grandparent Program, both administered by the Corporation for National Service.

A significant portion of AmeriCorps' 20,000 national service participants are working in direct and intensive mentoring roles with youth. In fact, after hiring four Friends through foundation and other private sources, the Friends of the Children program was able to engage 20 more with AmeriCorps support. Taken together, AmeriCorps funding for this activity may well be on the way to producing the "small army" of youthworkers Liederman envisions.

The Foster Grandparent Program, a little-known initiative with roots in the War on Poverty, is itself a significant platoon in this developing army. Foster Grandparents worked one-on-one with 90,000 children last year, making it the biggest one-to-one program in the U.S. These Grandparents are primarily low-income women over the age of 60, half of them members of ethnic minorities, who serve every day in schools, Head Start centers, and youth organizations. Their mandate is to work directly with disadvantaged or disabled young people, for which the program's 23,000 participants receive a small, non-taxable stipend of \$9.80 per day.

Taken together, these two efforts still remain relatively small--certainly in comparison to the need--yet point out ways in which policy can contribute to bolstering this important route toward providing enhanced adult support to youth.

IV. CONCLUDING COMMENTS: TOWARDS MENTOR-RICH ENVIRONMENTS

As we seek to develop more powerful strategies for supporting kids it is essential that we combine the efforts of volunteers and staff in ways capable of transforming the two institutions where young people spend the majority of their time outside the home: schools and community youth organizations. In doing so, we should seek to move beyond trying to locate any one supermentor capable of singlehandedly meeting all the needs of a young person; rather, our goal must be to help construct a web of support, a portfolio of adults working together, as partners, to help out with the long-term, complex process of developing youth.

Ultimately, this approach dictates changing schools and community youth programs so that these become places where youth interact with an array of caring adults. In creating such mentor-rich environments, we will need to fill them not only with volunteer mentors, who constitute one link in a continuous chain of caring, but also with youthworkers, teachers, coaches, supervisor, counselors, and other adults who have the time and inclination to establish close ties with young people.

Young people exposed to mentor-rich settings are in a position to avoid many of the vicissitudes of formal, matched, volunteer mentoring. Rather than being assigned an adult and instructed to form a one-to-one bond with this person, young people in mentor-rich settings would find ample opportunities for natural connections to develop. In such settings, youth are in a position to select the right mentor at the right time, pick mentors for different reasons, and experience aspects of mentoring from a variety of sources. In fact, a significant body of research suggests that the schools and social programs with these features are most successful at reaching and developing young people.

As we go about trying to create adult-rich environments in these institutions--essentially "stocking the pond" with interested adults in a variety of capacities--we might simultaneously work to develop the capacity of youth "to fish," to develop their ability to make best use of the adults they find in their path. Doing so builds off the lesson from research that resilient youth--those young people who overcome the odds of poverty, at least in part through recruiting mentors from the surrounding community--possess a valuable ability to initiate relationships with adults. We might well strive to distill and teach these lessons to a wider spectrum of kids.

In the end, pursuing the three strategies set out above will not, in and of themselves, counteract all the social, economic, and cultural forces undermining the ability of our communities to nurture and support their young people. However, this combination of efforts should move us

dramatically past those of volunteer programs alone, and help us to begin reconstructing the social infrastructure our young people so desperately require.

Author: Mary Clare Gumbleton at WDCE03
Date: 9/8/95 1:47 PM
Priority: Normal
TO: William Kincaid at WDCT01
Subject: mentoring

----- Message Contents -----

Hi, Bill,
As you probably know Judy Wurtzel has asked me to help out with her
interagency group on mentoring. I'm just checking in with you to see
where we are at with it and what the Department is doing.
Mary Clare
401-1608

To: Mike Smith
From: Judy Wurtzel
Re: Mentoring
Date: August 17

Attached is a piece on mentoring prepared for the interagency workgroup on mentoring (basically Peter Edelman, Susan Stroud and me) by Marc Friedman. I think it is a great monograph.

The Corporation for National Service is planning to print many thousand copies in booklet form and wants our help in getting it out and around. I have the following ideas and, if you agree, Bill Kincaid and Mary Clare Gumbleton (OIIA) can follow up on them.

1. The most ambitious idea I have is to send it to Tom Payzant, JD Hoyer and David Longanecker and encourage them to include this piece or some version of it as guidance for grantees in Title I, School to Work and Trio as they develop guidance for these programs.

2. In addition, or in lieu of this, consider mailing to grantees under these programs (we would have to cover mailing costs).

3. Mail them to a fairly wide list of ED contacts that include: major education organizations such as AASA, CCSSO, great city schools, etc... ; every chief; all the family involvement partners, Urban League; Labs and Centers; etc...

4. Put it on line and get it into Ask Eric etc....

5. Peter, Susan and I thought the mailing would go out under a letter from the interagency committee (Peter is talking with Rasco about this).

Once you have had a chance to read the monograph and decide whether you think it is worth distributing, etc... please let Bill or Mary Clare know how you want to proceed.

Mary Clare will then follow up with Susan Stroud with ideas, numbers of copies we will distribute, etc.....

cc: Bill Kincaid, Mary Clare Gumbleton

MAKING THE MOST OF MENTORING

SECOND DRAFT

March 1995

Marc Freedman

"The concentric circles of responsible adults that buffered and shaped children's lives have disappeared one by one. The neighbors are minding their own business. The corner storekeepers have gone to the mall. The respected elders have moved or been intimidated into silence. The parents have gone to work, or sometimes just gone.

For all the reams of research and the endless social jargon, the current troubled state of children in American can be summed up pretty much in one sentence. There aren't enough caring adults in their lives."

Ellen Goodman, "Kids Need a Mentor," Boston Globe, March 21, 1995

SUMMARY

Over the past decade interest in providing more adult support for young people, particularly those young people living in poverty, has grown dramatically. Today, one-to-one mentoring programs matching adult volunteers with youth are sponsored by a wide array of organizations and civic groups, ranging from IBM to the Rainbow Coalition, from the Junior League to the National Guard. The high level of interest in mentoring by national organizations is matched by considerable ferment at the local level. Kansas City, Oakland, Minneapolis, Baltimore, and dozens of other cities have launched their own mentoring campaigns.

In the context of so much mentoring activity at the program level, and growing policy interest in mentoring in areas as diverse as welfare reform, education, violence prevention, school-to-work transition, and national service, this paper is designed to provide practitioners and policy makers alike with a brief overview of knowledge emerging from the experience of mentoring programs, and a set of recommendations aimed at moving this field to the next level of development. Specifically, it is written for two audiences: those in Congress and the Administration engaged in a wide variety of tasks, from drafting legislation to writing RFP's and making grants in areas related to mentoring and youth development; and those working at the community level to implement programs to support and develop young people.

In general, this piece contends that rising interest in mentoring is a positive phenomenon. Far too many youth grow up today without sufficient adult guidance and support. At the same time, research from the social sciences suggests that the presence of caring adults from the community can make a critical difference in the life chances of young people.

Nevertheless, the experience of one-to-one mentoring programs formally matching adult volunteers and youth suggests that these efforts--the most popular form of mentoring activity--can only go part of the way toward filling the void in adult contact that so many young people experience. Substantially reducing the isolation facing these youth will require a more comprehensive strategy incorporating, yet also moving beyond, the contributions of volunteers.

In keeping, this paper proposes a three-part strategy aimed at realizing the full potential inherent in mentoring, built upon: 1) fortifying volunteer efforts to mentor youth; 2) identifying the role compensated individuals working with youth in a sustained and intensive manner--both salaried youth workers and stipended national service participants--can play in mentoring; and, 3) describing how volunteers, staff, and national service participants can be brought together in the creation of "mentor-rich" environments for youth.

I. THE RISE OF MENTORING

Mentoring is a sustained, close, developmental relationship between an older, more experienced individual and a younger person, with the goal of building character and competence on the part of the protege. According to Uri Bronfenbrenner, a developmental psychologist and emeritus professor at Cornell University, this relationship is distinguished by a "special bond of mutual commitment" and "an emotional character of respect, loyalty, and identification."

Mentoring is a familiar relationship, not only in the broader culture (the original Mentor was a character in Homer's *The Odyssey*), but in American social policy. Next year our largest mentoring program, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, will celebrate its 90th birthday; today, this program engages over 70,000 adult volunteers, one-to-one, with young people from single-parent families in more than 500 programs across the U.S.

Over the past decade Big Brothers/Big Sisters and other established volunteer mentoring efforts have been joined by a new wave of one-to-one programs aimed at assisting young people--particularly those young people growing up in high-risk situations--to improve school performance, develop social skills, expand access to the labor market, and, generally, help these youth navigate the often treacherous course to adulthood. Over the past decade dozens of corporations, universities, youth organizations, and civic groups have launched mentoring initiatives. Nationally, organizations such as One-to-One have joined Big Brothers/Big Sisters in promoting the mentoring cause, and others, including the Public Broadcasting System, Proctor and Gamble, and the Rainbow Coalition (to name just a few) have promulgated mentoring projects. Numerous private foundations, among them the Carnegie Corporation, Commonwealth Fund, Kellogg Foundation, and MacArthur Foundation are currently funding mentoring programs, while research organizations including Public/Private Ventures and the Center for Urban and Minority Education at Columbia University are actively involved in evaluating mentoring efforts.

Federal government support for mentoring programs ranges from long-standing efforts like Department of Education's Trio programs, a \$500 million initiative that includes mentoring and adult support elements, to more recent additions such as the Department of Defense's Navy Kids project, the Department of Justice's Juvenile Urban Mentoring Program (JUMP), and a variety of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) projects emanating from the Department of Labor.

Mentoring activity is also growing at the state and local levels. Rhode Island and New York have established statewide mentoring campaigns, while mentoring networks now exist in Boise, Boston, Minneapolis and dozens of

other locations. Baltimore and Oakland have each established organizations to promote and support mentoring programs.

Understanding Mentoring's Rise

Why so much interest in mentoring--and why now? The answer is complex, but can be attributed to at least two reasons. The first reflects Ellen Goodman's sentiment, recorded in the epigraph to this paper, that too few of our young people today receive adequate caring, guidance, and support from adults. As psychologist Laurence Steinberg of Temple University observes, most do not even experience one significant, close relationship with an adult outside their immediate family before reaching adulthood themselves.

The institutions we've relied on historically for the nurturance of youth have changed in ways that dramatically reduce their capacity to deliver it. Most notably, there are fewer adults in families. Today more than one in four children is born into a single-parent household, more than two of three African-American children. The 1980s alone saw a doubling of no-parent households. Regardless of the number of parents in the household, changes in the nature of work make it far more difficult for adults to spend time with their kids; as research by Harvard economist Juliet Schor shows, since 1970 alone, the average American works an additional 164 more hours a year. This shift is the equivalent of an extra month's work, a good part of it coming at the expense of time with children.

At the same time, the institutions that might compensate for these shifts, neighborhoods and schools, are themselves far from nurturing places. A recent J. Walter Thompson poll shows that three of four Americans do not know the person living next door; meanwhile, in many urban neighborhoods, the fear of violence has driven community adults, once an important source of socialization and support, behind barred doors. Community youth organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and Y's have helped pick up some of the slack, but are often strapped for adequate staff and funding.

This problem is particularly acute in our public schools. Once bastions of adult guidance, these institutions today are often impersonal places, reeling in the wake of budget cuts. Student-counselor ratios commonly approximate 500 to 1 in urban districts. Class size is frequently 30 or 40 students, and the average teacher will often face 200 students in a single day. Even the most caring find it hard to connect with more than a few young people.

These figures are all the more troubling given the level of stress young people confront. Growing up has never been easy, but today's youth face a bewildering array of pitfalls. Those young people living in the inner-city are

particularly besieged, encountering environments akin to war zones. Seventy percent of inner-city children have witnessed someone being beaten by the age of 15, while nearly a third have seen someone being shot.

The combination of substantial stress with the erosion of natural institutions for adult support of youth is one reason promulgating the quest for new sources of mentors. There is widespread concern that we've entered a period where kids are not getting the adult support they need at precisely the juncture they need it most.

The second reason for mentoring's rise is the perception that close relationships with unrelated adults can supplement the work of parents and make a vast difference in the lives of youth. While this sense accords with a broader cultural perception linking mentoring with success (one Harvard Business Review article proclaims, "Everyone Who Makes It Has a Mentor"), it also squares with important research from the social sciences focusing on "resilient" youth--young people who overcome the odds of poverty despite vast obstacles.

Research spanning a variety of disciplines suggests that mentoring relationships are linked to resiliency. In the most substantial of these studies, developmental psychologist Emmy E. Werner of the University of California-Davis followed five hundred children growing up in poverty on the Hawaiian island of Kauai. Examining their lives over a thirty year period, Werner found that the youth who managed to make it, against the odds, all could count on the support of an adult mentor other than their parents. Sometimes this person was a grandparent or other relative, but usually it was a neighbor, teacher, coach, or minister.

In another illustration, anthropologists William Kornblum of New York University and Terry Williams of City University of New York followed 900 children in urban and rural poverty. In their book *Growing Up Poor*, Williams and Kornblum conclude that "The probabilities that teenagers will end up on the corner or in a stable job are conditioned by a great many features of life in their communities. Of these, we believe the most significant is the presence or absence of adult mentors." These findings are reproduced in numerous other studies, across not only diverse disciplines but cultural circumstances as well.

Taken together, the erosion of adult connections for youth and evidence suggesting the positive effects of its presence, has produced a vigorous search for ways to replenish this support, and fueled interest in developing volunteer mentoring efforts for youth.

II. THE EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEER MENTORING

While the reasons behind mentoring's rapid rise to prominence are compelling, they raise basic questions. While resilience research links mentoring and success for young people in poverty, it leaves unexplained whether resilient youth do well because they find mentoring relationships--or whether these youth find mentoring relationships, and use them well, because they possess an inherent capacity to overcome hardship.

This dilemma leads to the issue of whether it is possible for social programs and policies aimed at providing more mentoring relationships to reach youth beyond those with the internal wherewithal to cultivate such bonds on their own. (The resilient youth in Werner's work possess an uncanny ability to attract and recruit potential mentors.) Even if the answer is yes, the question remains whether these orchestrated relationships can generate the same benefits as with the natural bonds charted by Werner, Williams and Kornblum, and others.

The Benefits of Mentoring

Definitive answers to these and other issues remain forthcoming, however, returns from a set of research and evaluation efforts are beginning to uncover what mentoring can do to help young people growing up in poverty. Probably the most important of this research is being conducted by Professor Jean Rhodes and her colleagues at the University of Illinois. Studying a group of girls attending an alternative school for teenage mothers in Chicago, Rhodes has succeeded in dividing the students into girls who have "natural" mentors from the community, and those that do not. Through selective assignments of volunteer "program" mentors, she has created four groups for study: girls with both "natural" and "program" mentors; girls with neither; and girls with one or the other.

Rhodes findings confirm that those young women already demonstrating the ability to find and forge relationships with natural mentors are uniquely suited to make effective use of the "program" mentors assigned to them. (Essentially, she finds, the "rich" do get richer.) However, Rhodes research also suggest a substantial number of young girls without natural mentors are able to bond with--and benefit from--assigned program mentors. The critical difference in connecting with these harder to reach girls appears to be persistence on the part of their mentors, dedicated volunteers who shrug off initial resistance and manage to build trust over time.

Rhodes' finding that the volunteer mentors can reach, and make a difference in, the lives of youth, is supported by a range of program evaluations. For example:

An evaluation of the Career Beginnings demonstration--which includes a number of components in addition to mentoring--shows students with mentors attending college on schedule at a higher rate than a control group;

Research on Project RAISE, conducted by Johns Hopkins University, finds RAISE students improving attendance and grades in English in comparison to controls;

A third study, of the Atlanta Adopt-a-Student program, reveals young people with mentors more likely to enroll in post-secondary education.

Other outcome research on the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program, conducted by Public/Private Ventures, will be available 1996, and will provide the first glimpse of the effectiveness of the country's oldest, biggest, and best-known initiative.

In addition to indications that mentoring can help young people cope with difficult circumstances and make progress toward important goals like improving school performance, there is evidence that the benefits of mentoring are reciprocal. Some of these outcomes are in terms of mentor satisfaction, yet the potential runs deeper. Although the isolation of youth is a primary reason behind the creation of mentoring programs--and a valid one--many of the middle-class adults recruited for these matches are just as isolated from the realities of poverty as participating youth are from the institutions and opportunities of middle-class life. At a time when statistics have lost their ability to shock, mentors are brought face-to-face with the unfair manner in which poverty affects innocent children. This education can build not only empathy, but advocacy on the part of the adults.

The significance of this prospect and the wide level of interest mentoring has generated among adult volunteers, should not be underestimated at a juncture in American life characterized by precipitous decline in civic participation. For example, PTA membership has dropped from 12 million to 7 million over the past generation, along with volunteer participation in a wide range of community organizations. The rise of interest and participation in mentoring stands in sharp--and encouraging--contrast to these alarming trends.

The Limits of Mentoring

For all these positive indications, the overall scenario emerging from the new wave of volunteer mentoring activity is mixed. The picture that emerges over and over again from research and other accounts is that this enterprise is

hard, that volunteer mentoring based on formally matching adults and disadvantaged youth, one-to-one, is in the overwhelming number of cases a modest intervention.

Why is mentoring so difficult? The reasons are not surprising. First, mentoring rests on a paradox around the issue of time. People come forward to participate in these programs because they recognize that adults in our society do not spend enough time with kids. Unfortunately, the volunteers tapped for programs quickly discover that they don't have enough time to mentor. They are the same individuals who are working an extra 164 more hours a year, who are struggling to spend enough time with their own kids (this problem is exacerbated by the emphasis on recruiting successful "role models" for these programs, the lawyers, bankers, and other professionals who tend to be the busiest people in society.) The end result is that mentors are often better at signing up, than showing up. This issue is particularly critical in light of Rhodes research underscoring the importance of persistence on the part of mentors.

Persistence is all the more important given another obstacle confronting mentoring programs, that of social distance. Most mentoring efforts, as already suggested, focus recruitment on middle-class and upper middle-class role models, individuals seen as exemplars of how to make it in the mainstream world and of the rewards that accompany doing so. On the other hand, the youth targeted tend to come from the other side of the tracks. Vast differences exist in class, culture, generation, neighborhood, and frequently, ethnic background. Many mentors and youth have never met anyone like their partner before. The opportunities for misunderstanding are considerable.

The paradox around time and the gulf of social distance, taken together with the artificiality of the one-to-one match (which one observer likens to "blind dating as social policy"), can undermine persistence and produce disappointment. The last point raises the reality that mentoring, often portrayed as a win-win situation, can in fact be quite risky. When misunderstandings occur, or when mentors drop out, the result is frequently devastating. For youth who have been let down by adults in the past, it can mean that it will be that much harder to trust again. For adults, whose initial involvement is often motivated by a fragile sense of goodwill, the result is increased cynicism.

Those obstacles facing mentoring and its inherent risks are made dramatically worse by an attitude toward this enterprise that might be called Fervor without Infrastructure, unrealistic expectations about mentoring coupled with naiveté about what it takes to make this strategy work.

Lessons for Volunteer Mentoring Programs

The experience of volunteer mentoring programs over the past decade, while clear about the obstacles and limitations confronting these programs, in no ways counsels their abandonment, or the abandonment of other volunteer efforts in the important work of providing more adult support for youth. Rather, this experience suggests adherence to a set of basic lessons--for individual mentors, program operators, and policymakers--aimed at bringing this form of mentoring to its full potential. Eight such lessons--illustrate, although by no means exhaustive--are set out below:

Rethinking Recruitment: Programs have learned to exercise greater care in their recruitment tactics. Initially, many projects emphasized "screening in" potential volunteers in their quest to reach as many kids as possible, a practice that can lead to fanning unrealistic notions of mentoring in potential recruits. People would come to the program, explains one program director, "expecting that they're going to save the world...and we fed them on that." However, as his program struggled through the first years and many of these individuals dropped out, this director shifted away from screening people in, to "screening them out"--letting them know about the harder realities of mentoring from the start so that only those individuals genuinely committed would become involved. In retrospect he concludes, "We lost some people--the total number of mentors we could claim in the program went down--but the percentage actually performing went up."

As programs continue to gain experience, however, many operators are beginning to move toward a further correction. While "screening out" has the advantage of discouraging volunteers unable to make the significant commitment mentoring entails, this strategy can result in turning away good people who might be able to help youth in other, more circumscribed, ways. In response to this problem, some programs have moved to provide a wider variety of roles for potential volunteers. The Philadelphia Futures program, for example, offers a menu of volunteer options, including tutoring, role modeling, and providing scholarship support, along with mentoring. The program also works with interested adults in helping them select the role most compatible with their personality, time availability, and resources.

Teaching the Art of Mentoring: Training is an essential part of preparing mentors for their job, especially as we learn more about the practices of effective mentors. For example, a series of research reports indicates that mentors who emphasize listening to youth early on in the relationship--and avoid the impulse to impose preconceived plans for the young person's improvement--are best able to establish trust and forge a connection. Later, these effective mentors are able to move toward balancing support with challenging them to move toward goals. One of the most effective strategies for imparting these and other lessons to aspiring mentors

is through engaging experienced mentors who can share both triumphs and travails, and provide an accurate glimpse of what it means to be matched with a young person.

It is just as important to provide youth with this advance glimpse of the mentoring process. Although mentoring is a familiar word to adults in the business world, for example, it is often a foreign concept to inner-city adolescents. When told that they are being assigned a mentor, many youths are resistant or bewildered. Some undoubtedly wonder, "What does this say about me--that I need help? That I am deficient?" These and other issues are best addressed before the young person is matched.

A Variety of Adults: Young people can benefit from contact with a variety of adults. Common ethnic and cultural ties do appear to be an advantage in forging connections as those ties mitigate barriers to trust and provide young people with models that look like them. At the same time, exposure to mentors of other backgrounds can help orient youth to individuals and situations contributing to the bicultural competence many inner-city youngsters must develop; cross-ethnic matching can also contribute to the social development of the mentor, who learns about the young person's world through the mentoring process.

Although much attention focuses on the ethnic background of mentors and youth, class issues appear to play a significant role in relationship formation. Several studies of mentoring programs conclude that the most successful mentors are individuals who have weathered hard lives, often coming from the same neighborhoods as the youth. Mentoring programs, intent in finding successful "role models," might do well to recruit more individuals from such backgrounds. Recent ethnographic studies suggest that many working-class and lower-income exemplars of character and competence remain in our inner-city neighborhoods and might potentially be reconnected with youth through the development of new mechanisms.

Integrating Mentoring: One program operator states: "It would be wonderful if we could just put these two people together and tell them to relate, but it's not realistic." In her experience, when mentors and mentees have something to do or work on together, it gives them more direction. Tasks can absorb initial nervous energy, provide a basis for conversation between partners, and diffuse the stigma of receiving help.

The key is finding the right task--one that interests both parties. Stephen Hamilton of Cornell University argues that the workplace is ideal.

Integrating mentoring into sports programs, recreation programs, and other youth initiatives is also promising. Community service projects (such as the Boston University/Roxbury Middle School collaboration, part of the Campus Partners in Learning initiative) in which mentors and students work side-by-side to help others, can also provide an environment conducive to connection.

These points all conspire to the perspective that mentoring need not be a stand-alone strategy. In fact, it is both more likely that mentoring relationships will form, and that these bonds will have the desired benefits, when integrated in the broader context of youth development activities.

Supporting Mentors: Although practitioners differ about the value of upfront training of mentors, most share an unequivocal belief in the importance of supporting mentors and the consequences of failing to do so. To combat the isolation in which much mentoring is conducted, some initiatives organize self-help groups for mentors to provide each other with emotional support, share experiences, and develop solutions to common difficulties. Mentoring teams, where several adults share the job of mentoring several youths, also help reduce isolation in some programs. As an added advantage, these teams help provide consistency for young people. When one of the adults cannot make it to a scheduled session, the young people can still expect to see one or two of the other mentors on the team.

Staff, the Glue in Mentoring: The most important source of support for mentors is also the most important single ingredient in successful mentoring programs: field staff. These individuals are in contact with the kids, the mentors, school staff, and families. Not surprisingly, in programs where such staff are a full-time presence, the whole mentoring effort tends to revolve around them; they are the "glue" in this process.

Field staff assume many critical functions, from helping make sure that people show up, to brokering and interpreting for adults and youths, to serving as "mentors to the mentors." In part, these youth workers support young people, often with the advantages of social and physical proximity to them. Many come from socioeconomic backgrounds similar to the youths and set up shop right in the schools or youth programs the young people attend. Although some programs attempt to subsist on volunteer coordination, experience suggest that employing full-time youth workers in this role is a far more effective path.

New Sources of Volunteers: As already stated, one of the great ironies of the volunteer mentoring movement has been its focus on recruiting the busiest people in society--middle-class, middle-age, 'role models.' Mentoring

programs would do well to look at some new sources of potential volunteers, in particular, older adults. Seniors are the fastest growing segment of the population, and there will be twice as many individuals over 60 in thirty years as there are today. Not only do many older persons possess the time required to mentor (a substantial portion of Americans are now spending a third of their life in retirement), but their experience as citizens, workers, and parents renders them a deep repository of the social capital so many youth require.

Young people are also a promising source of volunteers. Some programs even engage adolescents being mentored by adults as mentors themselves, pairing them up with local elementary school students. These so-called "tripartite" programs, such as the Young Leaders program in Washington, DC, have numerous advantages. Not only do they support the elementary school children, they also provide participating adolescents with the experience of being mentors themselves. Furthermore, since many of these programs match adolescents and elementary school children growing up in the same neighborhoods, they can also be seen as community-development strategies.

Building Infrastructure: While the lessons set out above can contribute to strengthening mentoring at both the relationship and program level, institutional infrastructure is also required to support and sustain this activity over time. However, as one study of New York City programs concludes, the mentoring field has been sorely lacking in this infrastructure, imperative for ensuring quality service delivery over time, building a track record of reliability, and developing ongoing sources of funding.

The biggest exception to this deficiency is Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, which maintains a national organization that provides standards, technical assistance, research, and other supporting functions, and reveals one model of how solid infrastructure can enhance the practice of mentoring. Elsewhere, a number of cities and states have moved toward creating local organizations and networks to promote and strengthen mentoring efforts. However, these initiatives remain more the exception than the rule, and an effort to develop more local and regional mentoring centers is much needed.

Also required are consistent and long-term sources of funding. Too many mentoring programs are launched amid an initial burst of enthusiasm (by private foundations, business collaborates, and civic groups alike) only to be abandoned after the start-up phase in favor of new fads arriving on the social policy landscape.

III. YOUTHWORKERS AS MENTORS

Adapting the lessons set out above will help volunteer mentoring programs better address youths' need for adult contact and strengthen the support available to adults who provide that contact. However, it would be a mistake either to underestimate the extent of these needs or to overestimate the power of voluntary efforts alone to meet them. As one program director warns, "You're not going to have enough mentors. It's not going to work for a lot of kids. There will be a huge hole."

The hole will continue to exist, even if responsible volunteer mentoring prevails, because the isolation of young people is a structural problem resulting from a set of fundamental changes in our society. For example, poverty serves in many reinforcing ways to undermine natural support networks for young people. Rather than thinking of volunteer mentoring as a sufficient solution to the structural problem of youth isolation, we would do well to think of this important movement as a critical step in the right direction, one that highlights an unmet need, goes part of the way toward redressing it, and calls out for reinforcements.

From where might these reinforcements come? Mentoring programs themselves provide essential clues, particularly in the staff roles discussed in the previous section. These paid youth workers tend not only to be mentors to the mentors but oftentimes to the young people as well. As the director of the Career Beginnings mentoring initiative explains, "In a lot of Career Beginnings programs, the primary relationships are between the case managers and the kids, and only secondarily and maybe supportively, between the [volunteer] mentors and the kids." This insight comes from the I Have a Dream project as well, where one report describes the youthworker who coordinates each project on full-time basis as functioning "more like a parent, aunt or uncle, or an older sibling than a bureaucrat," while an Education Week article describes them as being "like guardian angels who provide the daily guidance and support needed to make sure the students have a shot at collecting on their sponsor's tuition offer."

In this way, volunteer mentoring programs--as well as efforts like I Have a Dream--end up serving as back doors to traditional youth work; the need to administer the program serves as justification for hiring adult staff who themselves come to provide the most critical mentoring delivered by the program. Back door or not, the role many staff play underscores the basic insight that mentoring, while cast as a voluntary relationship, is by no means the exclusive province of volunteers.

Indeed, these youth workers are generally in a much better position than volunteers to mentor young people because their roles are structured for, and consistent with, fundamental principles about connecting with kids: namely, that a consistent and persistent presence is essential for successful mentoring.

Because they are available to kids on a regular and intensive basis--because persistence essentially is built into their role--these youthworkers are particularly promising sources of adult support. They are on hand, in the school or youth program, day in and day out. When troubles arise in the youths' lives, they are not away on a business trip or even downtown in an office building. They can attend to the issue immediately. Many also come from the same neighborhoods as the kids, thus minimizing the social distance problem impacting many volunteer programs focused on middle-class professionals.

The individuals who come forward to fill these youth worker positions tend to combine the full-time, formal presence of a professional social worker with the sense of mission associated with volunteers. Their role, with its focus on the provision of relationships, is often unique in the context of the schools and social programs where they set up shop. As a result, these individuals are frequently overwhelmed by need as they become established and trusted. Young people flood their offices in search of someone to talk to or help them out.

Although some of these youth workers are finding opportunities to connect with youth through coordinator and other positions in a variety of mentoring programs and related initiatives, an important next step for the youth development field is to open up more direct opportunities for these individuals to practice their intensive, full-time, persistent brand of mentorship--especially as evidence continues to accumulate that these youth workers are linked closely to the success of programs. For example, recent research findings from the highly-effective Quantum Opportunities Program focused on adolescents from welfare families, identified these youthworker roles as critical to the program's record of achievement. In the words of a March 1995 New York Times editorial, "the adult supervisors...became not just mentors, but surrogate parents or family members, with roots in the same community."

Fortunately, there is evidence that programs focused on engaging youthworkers as mentors are becoming increasingly widespread. The Key Program In Massachusetts and Maryland's Choice initiative both follow this model. Another variation is the Friends of the Children project in Portland, Oregon. Endowed by a local financier with a longstanding interest in youth programs, and supported by Portland's Meyer Memorial Trust, Friends of the Children "employs full-time caring, loving adults who each work intensively with eight at risk young children and their families." The program's goal is for these full-time mentors to become a substantial part of the children's lives "from early childhood to young adulthood." Beginning with second graders already identified by teachers and school staff as headed for trouble, the Friends spend time in the classroom, become a bridge between school and

home, essentially becoming surrogate family. Their focus is on developing life skills, including problem solving, conflict resolution, and character.

As evidence mounts about the significant mentoring role youthworkers can play in a wide variety of settings, and new initiatives of this type continue to be launched, a number of national leaders have called for the creation of new mechanisms for supporting such efforts. David Liederman, executive director of the Child Welfare League of America, urges establishment of a corps of inner-city youth workers, "able to hit the streets and work directly with kids in their own neighborhoods." He argues that these are the role models kids really need--not famous athletes on television, but caring adults they can "see, touch, and talk to." The writer Brent Staples concurs: "That's what a role model is: someone who loves and works and encourages and lays on hands. All the rest is noise and empty air."

Liederman's vision of a "small army of trained, committed youth workers talking about and developing positive values" may be in the process of being realized through two current programs which underscore that this army might consist not only of salaried youthworkers like the staff of I Have a Dream, but stipended national service participants. These are the AmeriCorps program and the Foster Grandparent Program, both administered by the Corporation for National Service.

A significant portion of AmeriCorps' 20,000 national service participants are working in direct and intensive mentoring roles with youth. In fact, after hiring four Friends through foundation and other private sources, the Friends of the Children program was able to engage 20 more with AmeriCorps support. Taken together, AmeriCorps funding for this activity may well be on the way to producing the "small army" of youthworkers Liederman envisions.

The Foster Grandparent Program, a little-known initiative with roots in the War on Poverty, is itself a significant platoon in this developing army. Foster Grandparents worked one-on-one with 90,000 children last year, making it the biggest one-to-one program in the U.S. These Grandparents are primarily low-income women over the age of 60, half of them members of ethnic minorities, who serve every day in schools, Head Start centers, and youth organizations. Their mandate is to work directly with disadvantaged or disabled young people, for which the program's 23,000 participants receive a small, non-taxable stipend of \$9.80 per day.

Taken together, these two efforts still remain relatively small--certainly in comparison to the need--yet point out ways in which policy can contribute to bolstering this important route toward providing enhanced adult support to youth.

IV. CONCLUDING COMMENTS: TOWARDS MENTOR-RICH ENVIRONMENTS

As we seek to develop more powerful strategies for supporting kids it is essential that we combine the efforts of volunteers and staff in ways capable of transforming the two institutions where young people spend the majority of their time outside the home: schools and community youth organizations. In doing so, we should seek to move beyond trying to locate any one supermentor capable of singlehandedly meeting all the needs of a young person; rather, our goal must be to help construct a web of support, a portfolio of adults working together, as partners, to help out with the long-term, complex process of developing youth.

Ultimately, this approach dictates changing schools and community youth programs so that these become places where youth interact with an array of caring adults. In creating such mentor-rich environments, we will need to fill them not only with volunteer mentors, who constitute one link in a continuous chain of caring, but also with youthworkers, teachers, coaches, supervisor, counselors, and other adults who have the time and inclination to establish close ties with young people.

Young people exposed to mentor-rich settings are in a position to avoid many of the vicissitudes of formal, matched, volunteer mentoring. Rather than being assigned an adult and instructed to form a one-to-one bond with this person, young people in mentor-rich settings would find ample opportunities for natural connections to develop. In such settings, youth are in a position to select the right mentor at the right time, pick mentors for different reasons, and experience aspects of mentoring from a variety of sources. In fact, a significant body of research suggests that the schools and social programs with these features are most successful at reaching and developing young people.

As we go about trying to create adult-rich environments in these institutions--essentially "stocking the pond" with interested adults in a variety of capacities--we might simultaneously work to develop the capacity of youth "to fish," to develop their ability to make best use of the adults they find in their path. Doing so builds off the lesson from research that resilient youth--those young people who overcome the odds of poverty, at least in part through recruiting mentors from the surrounding community--possess a valuable ability to initiate relationships with adults. We might well strive to distill and teach these lessons to a wider spectrum of kids.

In the end, pursuing the three strategies set out above will not, in and of themselves, counteract all the social, economic, and cultural forces undermining the ability of our communities to nurture and support their young people. However, this combination of efforts should move us

dramatically past those of volunteer programs alone, and help us to begin reconstructing the social infrastructure our young people so desperately require.