National Mentoring Summit, 2014

Keeping the Flame Alive: Match Making & Retention

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Welcome

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Agenda for Today’s Presentation:

1. Introductions: How long have you been in the field of mentoring?
2. Open Conversation: questions and discussion are welcome! Parking Lot*
3. Who we are - the Buddy Program
4. Screening Mentors
5. Screening Mentees
6. Matching Mentors with Mentees
7. Monitoring & Supporting Matches
8. What else you can do to build lasting mentor/mentee relationships!

*Parking Lot- This will be used for any questions that may be beyond the scope of the presentation, but interesting to the topic.
Speaking the same language- A couple of definitions:

• Program- Community Program
• Case Manager- a staff member at the Buddy Program who works with our matches (usually they have 35-40 matches as well as a wait-list).
• Little Buddies- Mentees
• Big Buddies- Mentors
• Buddy Pairs- Matches
• Pairing- Making the Match
The Buddy Program- Celebrating 40 Years of Mentoring!

- Founded in 1973, located in the Roaring Fork Valley
- Our 5 Programs:
  - Community
  - School-based
  - Peer-to-Peer
  - Group Mentoring
  - Lemonade Day
- In 2012 the Buddy Program served 945 youth, 566 in our mentoring programs
- Average match retention in the Community Program is 5 years. Compared to BBBSA national average of 23 months.
Where we are:
More about the Buddy Program

• The Buddy Program serves youth from Aspen-Carbondale:
  • Across 3 counties-Pitkin, Eagle & Garfield
  • Across 2 school districts

• Rural Resort Economy
  • Population is often transient/seasonal
  • Volunteers are diverse in age, income level and race

• Diverse Youth Served:
  • 57% come from households that earned $50,000 or less*
  • 68% are Latino

* Self sufficiency wage for family of 4 in Pitkin County is $72,408- Colorado Center on Law and Policy
MENTORING WORKS!

Mentoring brings us together – across generation, class, and often race – in a manner that forces us to acknowledge our interdependence, to appreciate, in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s words, that “we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied to a single garment of destiny.” In this way, mentoring enables us to participate in the essential but unfinished drama of reinventing community, while reaffirming that there is an important role for each of us in it.

- Marc Freedman,
  Founder and CEO of encore.org

According to Mentor: currently, there are 18 million children in the United States who want and need a mentor, but only 3 million have one.
MENTOR is the unifying champion for expanding quality youth mentoring relationships in the United States.

MENTOR carries out this work in collaboration with its network of 28 local Mentoring Partnerships nationwide and more than 5,000 mentoring programs and volunteer centers throughout the country, serving more than three million children in all 50 states. MENTOR is headquartered in Boston, MA.

Currently, there are 18 million children in the United States who want and need a mentor, but only three million have one. MENTOR’s mission is to close that gap so that every one of those 15 million children has a caring adult in their life.

MENTOR works with the private, public and nonprofit sectors to ensure our youngest citizens have the support they need through mentoring relationships to succeed at home, school and, ultimately, in the workforce.

From Elements of Effective Practices for Mentoring, 3rd edition, 2009, Check-list for Programs, Toolkits
MENTOR: Best Practices

1. Mentor Completes **Application**
2. Mentor agrees to a **one (calendar or school) year** minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship
3. Mentor agrees to participate in **face-to-face meetings** with his or her mentee that average one time per week and one hour per meeting over the course of a calendar or school year.
4. Program conducts at least **one face-to-face** interview with mentor
5. Program conducts a **reference check** (personal and/or professional) on mentor
6. Program conducts a comprehensive **criminal background check** on adult mentor, including searching a national criminal records database along with **sex offender and child abuse registries**.
Buddy Program: Enhanced Practices

1. Mentor completes an Application
2. Mentor agrees to a 1 year commitment and has lived in the area for at least 1 year.
3. Program conducts a personal interview, which usually lasts 2 hours (see handout).
4. Program conducts at least 3 phone references.
5. Program asks for 3 letters of reference.
6. Program conducts a general internet search of the mentor (Facebook, Google).
7. Program conducts 4 different background checks, including a fingerprint check, sex-offender registry, driving record and TRAILS search (CO Department of HHS).
8. Program holds an in-depth group training for mentors.
9. On-going screening: conduct on-going assessments of every interaction your staff has had with the mentor (at the training, stopping by the office, on the phone, etc.)
10. Program conducts a Home Check where a case manager visits the mentor’s home.
11. All program staff meet to decide Final Acceptance, or not, of the mentor.
Excerpts from the Buddy Program Interview:

- What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?
- What do you feel is the biggest mistake you have ever made?
- What is the most socially unacceptable thing you have ever done?
- Growing up, who was in your family? What are the ages of your siblings? What was your relationship like with them as a child? And today?
- What is your schedule in regard to spending time with your mentee?
- Are there any values or principles you live by? What are they?
- How do you deal with conflict and crises in your life? Do you turn to someone in particular? Who is that person?
How Do You Get In-Depth Knowledge About Your Mentors In Order to Make a Successful Match?

Excerpts from the Buddy Program Interview, continued:

- **What type of characteristics do you envision having in your mentee?**

- **What activities would you like to do with your mentee?**

- **Do you speak any other languages?**

- **Is there any situation in which your mentee might be with which you would not feel comfortable?**
How Do You Get *In-Depth Knowledge* About Your Mentors In Order to Make a Successful Match?

Excerpts from the Buddy Program’s Telephone Reference Check:

- Describe the applicant’s *judgment*.
- How well does the applicant *finish projects and activities* he/she begins?
- Can you tell me of an area where the applicant *may need extra support*?
- What type of child do you think the applicant would *best relate to*?
- Why do you think the applicant is interested *in being a mentor*?
- How would you describe the applicant’s *friendships and support system*?
1. Parents/guardians complete an application and provide informed consent for their child to participate.

2. Parents/guardians and mentee agree to one year (calendar or school) minimum commitment for the mentoring relationship.

3. Parents/guardians and mentee agree that the mentee will participate in face-to-face meetings with his or her mentor a minimum of one time per week, on average, for a minimum of one hour per meeting.
Buddy Program: Enhanced Practices

1. **In-depth interview with a parent or guardian *without the child present***:
   - Get a sense of family life and culture
   - Describing the child’s personality
   - Asking about other parent and siblings/custody issues
   - Physical or psychological concerns
   - Exposure to abuse of any kind
   - How the child is doing in school
   - Permission to discuss safe touch
   - Invite parents to a training
   - What is the youth’s availability

2. **Interview of child *without the parent present***
   - Energy level
   - Personality
   - Interests
   - Detect evidence of abuse, though that is not the focus of the interview
   - Assessment of family & mentee- are they ready to be in the program

3. **Case Manager: Regular Contact**
   - Parent
   - Child
   - Develop Trust & Form a Relationship
Buddy Program: Enhanced Practices

Excerpts from the Family Intake Questionnaire:

• What qualities would you like to see in a mentor?

• Are there any limitations, based on religion or familial philosophies, as to what the child can do?
1. Program considers its aims, as well as the characteristics of the mentor and mentee (e.g. interests, proximity, availability, age, gender, race, ethnicity, personality and expressed preferences of mentor and mentee) when making match.

2. Program arranges and documents initial meeting between the mentor and mentee.

3. Program staff member should be on site during the initial meeting of the mentor and mentee.
1. Before the Match:
   • Case Manager involves parents, school counselor and/or referring agency to identify a child who has mutual interests and who would benefit
   • Entire case management team conducts a “round table” meeting to discuss compatibility of mentors and mentees
   • Rubric of specific interests and traits is used to help provide a visual of compatibility
   • Not first come, first served- match decision based on compatibility

2. Discuss potential mentees with the mentor.
Buddy Program: Enhanced Practices

Matching Rubric

Compare Mentor & Mentee for following traits:

• Quiet/Introverted vs. Outgoing/Extroverted
• Prefers Outdoor Activities vs. Indoor Activities
• Adventurous vs. Cautious
• Behavior of Mentee & Mentor’s Ability to Manage Behavior
• Parent Communication & Mentor’s Ability to Communicate
Buddy Program: Making the Match!

1. Case Manager
   • Organizes date and time with the mentor and the parent
   • The match takes place at the home of the mentee

2. Topics:
   • Introductions
   • Personal interests/activity ideas
   • Schedules
   • Expectations
     • Money- Who pays? How much?
     • Time- How much and how often?
     • Types of activities
   • Communication
   • Any limitations of the mentee

3. Sign an agreement that makes them official members of the Buddy Program

4. Plan their first activity

5. Take their photo

Anticipate that the following issues may require further support from a Case Manager:

- Money
- Communication
- Expectations

Discussion:

- How do you guide your Mentors and Mentees regarding paying when they are together?
- What are some of the most common communication problems for your matches?
- How do you address and resolve communication problems in general?
MENTOR: 8 Best Practices

1. Program contacts the mentor and mentee at a minimum frequency of **twice per month for the first month** of the match and monthly thereafter.
2. Program documents information about each mentor-mentee contact, including, at minimum, date, length and nature of contact.
3. Program provides mentors with **access to at least two types of resources** (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others; publications; web-based resources; experienced mentors; available social service referrals) to help mentors negotiate challenges in the mentoring relationships as they arise.
4. Program follows **evidenced-based protocol** to elicit more in-depth assessment from the mentor and mentee about the relationship and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools.
5. Program provides one or more opportunities per year for **post-match mentor training**.

**Enhancements to Monitoring & Support**

6. Program has **quarterly contact with a key person in the mentee’s life** (Parent, guardian, or teacher) for the duration of the match.
7. Program hosts **one or more group activities** for mentors and their mentees, and/or offers information about activities that mentors and mentees might wish to participate in together.
8. Program **thanks mentors** and recognizes their contributions at some point during each year of the relationship, prior to match closure.
MENTOR: Best Practices

1. Program contacts the mentor and mentee at a minimum frequency of **twice per month for the first month** of the match and monthly thereafter.

Buddy Program

1. Case Manager contact with match-first 6 months:
   - Within one week of the first planned activity
   - Twice per month - alternating contact with each party
   - One individual visit in person with mentee
2. Case Manager contact with match- after first 6 months:
   - Mentor one month, Mentee/Parent or Guardian next month
3. Matches are required to attend three Buddy Program activities within the first year
MENTOR: Best Practices

2. Program documents information about each mentor-mentee contact, including, at minimum, date, length and nature of contact.

Buddy Program

2. Anyone who interacts with a mentor or mentee documents each instance of contact or attempt at making contact in a database that is confidential and to which all staff have access.
MENTOR: Best Practices

3. Program provides mentors with access to at least two types of resources (e.g., expert advice from program staff or others; publications; web-based resources; experienced mentors; available social service referrals) to help mentors negotiate challenges in the mentoring relationships as they arise.

Buddy Program

3. Buddy Program provides mentors with access to:
   - Case Managers
     - Counseling
     - Social services referrals
     - Enhanced Case Management
   - Qualified, experienced professionals in the field of youth and family services- advisory capacity
     - Offers knowledge, support, and expertise to staff when necessary
   - Web-based resources
   - On-going training opportunities
Enhanced Case Management:

When a Buddy Pair is struggling, we refer them to our Enhanced Case Management team:

- Struggles as simple as communication and as complex as families in crises
- Case managers meet bi-monthly to problem solve together around these cases
- Enhanced Case Management can be on-going or have a definitive end
MENTOR: Best Practices

4. Program follows evidenced-based protocol to elicit more in-depth assessment from the mentor and mentee about the relationship and uses scientifically-tested relationship assessment tools.

Buddy Program

4. The Buddy Program assesses relationships by:
   • Case Management and match support
   • Big Brothers Big Sisters Youth Outcome Survey
MENTOR: Best Practices

5. Program provides one or more opportunities per year for post-match mentor training.

Buddy Program

5. The Buddy Program provides:
   • Optional *Big Buddy Forums*
   • Take place after the first year of the match.
   • Mentors receive support, resources, and encouragement from one another and Buddy Program staff.
MENTOR: Best Practices

6. Program has quarterly contact with a key person in the mentee’s life (parent, guardian, or teacher) for the duration of the match.

Buddy Program

6. The Case Manager makes consistent contact with:
   • The parent or guardian
   • School counselors and administrators
MENTOR: Best Practices

7. Program hosts one or more group activities for mentors and their mentees, and/or offers information about activities that mentors and mentees might wish to participate in together.

Buddy Program

7. The Buddy Program provides:
   • 15-20 FREE activities per year
   • Discount Program
   • Programming in partnership with other agencies
   • Community Service
MENTOR: Best Practices

8. Program thanks mentors and recognizes their contributions at some point during each year of the relationship, prior to match closure.

Buddy Program

8. The Buddy Program staff shows appreciation to mentors by:
   • Hand-writing a thank-you note on the anniversary of that mentor’s involvement in the program
   • Recognizing mentors during annual banquet with Summit Award
   • Nominates mentors for community awards
Building a Lasting Match: Beyond Best Practices

1. **More than a phone call:** the importance of building relationships over time and building trust with the family
2. **Educating Mentors and Families:** creating the routine and expectation of good communication, honesty, and respect
3. **Counseling:** supporting youth and families in improving relationships
4. **Empowerment Scholarships:**
   - supporting the dreams of the mentees in the program
   - getting mentees active and inspired
5. **Continuing Education Scholarships:** Ensuring the transition to the next phase in their life
7. **Parent Workshops:**
   - Mandatory
   - Focus on: how to make the most of the Program and support their child’s relationship with his or her mentor
8. **Referrals to outside programs:** Case managers refer families to parenting classes, sexual abuse prevention workshops and holiday basket programs.
Quick Assessment: What did you Learn?

What new strategies have you learned to help matches last and thrive:

• In mentor screening?
• In mentee screening?
• In making the match?
• In match support?
• In implementing a **broader base** of support?
IN CONCLUSION: GO DO IT!