The National Mentoring Summit is the only national forum bringing together youth mentoring professionals, researchers, philanthropic investors, government and civic leaders, and MENTOR’s local Affiliates to build and strengthen quality relationships for young people across the nation and advance the mentoring movement.

“One of the powerful things mentoring can do is spread social capital and connect people with others, which is much needed at the moment.”

Heatherle Chambers, Director of Education at Classroom Champions
At the opening plenary, OrchKids, a program of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra designed to create social change and nurture promising futures for Baltimore City youth, jump-started the Summit with uplifting songs. From youth voices to some of the world’s most recognizable brands, this kick-off session was a dynamic combination of performance, conversation, and video that highlighted how we, collectively, are building relationships and expanding the mentoring movement at a critical moment.

The Power of Purpose session explored how mentoring can cultivate purpose in youth to help transform and shape their lives and communities. Mentors and mentees shared, in their own words, the role relationships play in youth reaching their fullest potential. Speakers demonstrated the roles mentors play in helping mentees uncover a purpose and follow a passion.

The 2018 Excellence in Mentoring Awards were held at the Library of Congress and honored individuals who have demonstrated a longstanding commitment to expanding quality mentoring for young people. This year’s award recipients were: Eddie Gale of the A.D. Henderson Foundation, Jamal Joseph of IMPACT Repertory Theatre, David Milliken of Hutton Settlement, and Mamie Lanford Singleton of Youth Initiative Mentoring Academies. MENTOR also launched the Corporate Excellence in Youth Mentoring Award, which honored Jeff Fetters of Federated Insurance Companies and recognized nine additional corporate employee finalists.

Capitol Hill Day brought Members of Congress and their staff face to face with mentoring advocates to talk about critical issues facing the country’s young people and policies they could support to expand access to quality mentoring opportunities. Nearly 350 advocates attended more than 240 meetings and represented over 40 states and Puerto Rico. Speakers included Senator Tim Kaine (VA) who kicked off Capitol Hill Day and several mentors and mentees who demonstrated the impact that advocacy can have on supporting young people.

The Summit Fellowship Program grew in its second year. With generous support from AT&T and multiple other funders, MENTOR was able to offer 15 Fellows the chance to attend this year’s Summit on a special scholarship. Fellows were selected based on their leadership potential, eagerness to build professional skills and networks, demonstrated financial need, and personal commitment to helping young people succeed.

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Trauma and the Transformative Power of Relationships explored how authentic and intentional relationships can serve as a steady undercurrent to overcoming trauma. Speakers gave real-life examples of relationships as catalysts for supporting youth through adversity, covering timely topics such as transitioning from the juvenile justice system, aging out of foster care, commercial sexual exploitation, and the opioid crisis.