

March 29, 2019

The Honorable José Serrano  
Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Moran  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Appropriators:

**We write to thank you for your ongoing support of our nation's most at-risk and vulnerable young people through the Part G Youth Mentoring Program.** This important program supports youth serving organizations throughout the country as they provide our nation's young people with caring adult mentors during some of the most challenging times in their lives. Mentoring supports positive outcomes, including social development, academic achievement and improved self-confidence among at-risk young people.<sup>1</sup> **We respectfully ask that you invest in the future of our young people by funding the program at the House-passed level of \$120 million in the Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) bill.**

Mentoring can be an effective prevention and intervention-based strategy for young people that decreases chronic absenteeism and youth violence, and increases critical-thinking, problem solving and other skills that support academic and workforce achievement, as well as life goal attainment. Unfortunately, the available funding fails to address the needs of communities and organizations that support the healthy, positive development of our young people. The bipartisan leadership on the Commerce, Justice and Science Subcommittees have always demonstrated strong support for the needs of our young people and for quality practices in youth mentoring. We hope that we can count on you to continue this support in FY20.

Mentoring has a positive effect on students who are at-risk of falling off track. Those young people who meet regularly with their mentors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and youth with recurring behavioral problems who have a

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<sup>1</sup> David DuBois, Jean Grossman and Carla Herrera. *The Role of Risk: Mentoring Experiences and Outcomes for Youth with Varying Risk Profiles*. Public/Private Ventures distributed by MDRC, 2013.

mentor maintain better attitudes towards school.<sup>2</sup> Evaluations of mentoring programs report significant increases among youth in self-confidence, self-efficacy and a positive attitude about their futures. Unfortunately, 1 in 3 young people in the United States reaches the age of 19 without having a mentor of any kind. This number includes 9 million at-risk youth who are missing out on the critical support and connections that mentoring can provide.<sup>3</sup>

Increasingly, mentoring is being utilized as a means of addressing national challenges. As communities across the country struggle with the effects of opioid misuse and abuse, mentoring programs have responded accordingly. When strategically integrated into initiatives, mentoring strengthens efforts to prevent drug and other substance abuse, supports young people experiencing opioid addiction in their families, and promotes healthy decision-making, positive behaviors, resiliency and strong futures.

Research on youth mentoring demonstrates that, at a minimum, for every dollar invested in quality mentoring programs there is a return of at least three dollars.<sup>4</sup> This positive return on investment reflects projected increases in lifetime earnings gained by leading at-risk youth down the path towards becoming productive adults. It also derives from dollars saved through reduced juvenile delinquency and crime, improved school attendance, increased high school graduation rates, and lowered risk of youth involvement in unsafe and costly behaviors such as drug and alcohol use. Congress should be confident that mentoring represents a sound investment grounded in quality and evidence-based practices.

As a diverse group of organizations we recognize the importance of the Youth Mentoring Grant and the impact that it has on creating safe and strong communities. **We respectfully urge you to support these critical efforts by approving \$120 million for the program in the FY20 funding bill.**

We appreciate your attention to a critical issue that affects all our nation's young people. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A World Fit For Kids!  
Afterschool Alliance  
America SCORES  
American Camp Association  
BEST Kids, Inc.  
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Catholic Charities USA  
Center for Supportive Schools (CSS)

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<sup>2</sup> Mary Bruce and John Bridgeland. *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*. Civic Enterprises with Hart Research Associates for MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce and Bridgeland, *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Anton and Judy Temple. *Analyzing the Social Return on Investments in Youth Intervention Programs: A framework for Minnesota*. Wilder Research, 2007.

College Mentors for Kids, Inc.  
Communities In Schools, National Office  
Cornell University's Yang-Tan Institute on Employment and Disability  
Disability Rights, Education, Activism, and Mentoring (DREAM)  
First Focus Campaign for Children  
Friends of the Children  
Girl Scouts of the USA  
Girls Inc.  
iMentor  
MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership  
National Network for Youth  
National 4-H Council  
National Association of Police Athletic/Activities Leagues, Inc.  
National Disability Mentoring Coalition  
National Recreation and Park Association  
Philadelphia Leadership Foundation  
Silver Lining Mentoring  
Sisters Circle  
Spark Program  
U.S. Soccer Foundation  
Year Up  
YMCA of the USA  
Youth Collaboratory  
YouthBuild USA, Inc

CC: Chairwoman Nita Lowey, House Appropriations Committee  
Chairman Richard Shelby, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Ranking Member Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee  
Ranking Member Patrick Leahy, Senate Appropriations Committee  
Members of the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies  
Subcommittees