



# Welcome to the Stepping Stones Mentoring Program

**“Stepping Stones Mentoring Program  
— Where just being you makes all the  
difference”**



# My mentoring story

My mentor provided me with:

- Support
- Compassion
- Values
- Time

Who was *your* mentor?



## *Definition:*

**A mentor is a wise and trusted guide and advisor**

### A mentor is:

- **A friend**
- **A coach**
- **An advocate**
- **A role model**
- **A resource**
- **A supporter**

### A mentor is not:

- **A substitute parent**
- **A childcare provider**
- **A social worker**
- **An ATM**
- **A miracle worker**



## Who needs mentors? *All children.*

Among the 40 Developmental Assets:

- Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.
- Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
- Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
- Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Source: Search Institute, *40 Developmental Assets*, 2006. <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/forty.html>



## Who does Stepping Stones serve?

- Middle school youth at Jefferson and Russell middle schools
- Youth are referred for many reasons by parents, teachers, and counselors
- 45% of our youth come from single parent homes
- 68% are on free and reduced lunch status



## What happens when mentoring is absent?

- One in 15 youth in Cook County Schools drops out
- 52% of CCS students don't go on to college (national average is 63%)
- 2005: 356 citations for underage drinking, 120 juvenile arrests (36 for violent crimes)
- 25% increase in local gang activity
- Unemployment rate for 18–24 year olds in the state is 19%.



## **Stepping Stones Mentoring is meeting these challenges:**

- We work with youth before they become those statistics
- Our mentors develop the whole child, not just one area
- Our mentors bring fun, opportunity, and caring

**So, how are we doing so far?**



## Stepping Stones Mentoring is meeting these challenges:

- In the classroom...
  - 75% of our mentees improved their grades in key subjects
  - Unexcused absences from school declined by 40% for mentored youth
  - 85% of mentees reported feeling more confident about school
  - 88 of 145 former Stepping Stones mentees have gone on to pursue higher education (52 of those were the first in their family to do so)



## Stepping Stones Mentoring is meeting these challenges:

- In the community...
  - 65% of mentees reported improved relations with their family, 55% said they had improved peer relationships
  - 83% of the parents of participating youth felt that the program had improved their child's self-esteem, attitudes, and relationships
  - Alcohol and substance use decreased by 30% in mentored youth



## **In spite of this success, we can do more:**

- We are currently serving only 130 youth in the entire county
- We have 66 youth on a waiting list
- Our program could handle over 100 new matches
- We believe that every child in Cook County deserves access to a mentor



## Mentoring benefits *everyone* involved!

- For mentors...
  - An opportunity to share knowledge, experiences, and values
  - Giving back to the community
  - A better understanding of today's youth (including their own children)
  - Explore different cultures and engage in new activities
  - **FUN!!!**



- For employers...
  - One survey of a prominent national insurance company in which employees served as mentors found that 75% of the employees reported that the activity improved their attitude at work\*
  - Increased productivity, improved community relations and public image, and recruitment and retention of employees.\*\*
  - Improved employee teamwork and enhanced skills in coaching, communication, and teamwork.\*\*\*

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\* S. Weinberger, *The Allstate work-based mentoring project*. Norwalk, CT: Mentor Consulting Group.

\*\* The Conference Board, "Corporate Volunteer Programs: Benefits to Business." Report 1029 (The Points of Light Foundation, 1993).

\*\*\* K. E. Kram, *Mentoring at work: Developmental relationships in organizational life*. Lanham, MD: University Press, 1988.



## So what's it like to be a Stepping Stones mentor?

- Meet weekly for one hour
- Alternate between school and community
- Activities are up to you and your youth
- Friendship, not “fixing”
- Full training and support from program staff
- Fun group outings and community projects

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## Who can serve as mentors?

- Adults 21 and over
- One year commitment
- Pass screening and interview process
- Access to transportation
- Anyone with an open heart and mind (no special skills required)



## Other ways you can help:

- Donate goods and services (we need help with our Web site!)
- Become an advocate for the program
- Recruit others
- Sponsor group outings and activities
- Help with office tasks



# WE NEED YOU!

You don't have to be special, perfect, or a know-it-all. You just need to be there. We'll make it easy; the kids will make it fun. Please volunteer with Stepping Stones and help us make a difference for Cook County.

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## For more information:

- Your Name – (123) 456–7890,  
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- [www.steppingstonementors.org](http://www.steppingstonementors.org)