

## Youth Served

Since 1998, Stepping Stones has served 275 youth through one-to-one mentoring relationships. Currently, 130 active matches are spread across the two program sites. Stepping Stones is open to all students at the two schools, although most youth are referred to the program by teachers, counselors, parents, and other youth development staff from Cook County Youth Services.



## Mentor Demographics

Stepping Stones mentors come from every corner of the Anytown community. We actively recruit volunteers from local businesses, religious institutions, colleges, retirement centers, and civic organizations. Stepping Stones also uses volunteers to assist with recruiting mentors, coordinating community outings, organizing group events, and staffing the program offices. All volunteers must go through criminal background checks, reference checks, and an in-person interview.

## Contact Us

To find out more about Stepping Stones Mentoring Program, how to volunteer your services, how to contribute financially or in-kind to our program, call us at 555-456-7890 or e-mail [steppingstones@AOL.com](mailto:steppingstones@AOL.com).

## Stepping Stones Youth Mentoring Program

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# Stepping Stones Mentoring Program



“Enhancing the lives of our  
community’s youth through  
mentoring”

**Stepping  
Stones**  
youth mentoring program

Providing educational, recreational, and  
developmental support since 1998

## Mission

The Stepping Stones Mentoring Program enhances the lives of our community's youth by providing adult mentors to engage them in meaningful educational, recreational, and developmental activities.

## History

The Stepping Stones Mentoring Program is a collaboration between Cook County Youth Services, Inc., and the Cook County School District. The program was founded in 1998 through the work of two AmeriCorps members who added the mentoring component to the after school services at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. A 2004 U.S. Department of Education grant provided funding to increase services at Jefferson while also expanding the program to Bertrand Russell Middle School.

## Services

Stepping Stones mentors are safe, successful volunteer adults from the community who meet weekly with their mentee. The location of mentoring meetings alternates between the school sites, where mentors assist with academic and educational activities, and trips into the community, where matches can explore additional recreational and youth developmental activities. All Stepping Stones matches go on additional group outings once a quarter.

All matches are one adult to one youth and are required to last for a full calendar year, with community-based meetings during the summer months when the school facilities are closed. Youth participating in the program also are

Mentoring has proven to be a successful strategy for addressing a number of youth problems. A landmark study of Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies found that mentored youth:

- were 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs
- were 27% less likely to initiate alcohol use
- were 38% less likely to engage in violence
- skipped school 52% less
- decreased lying to their parents by 37%

The Stepping Stones Mentoring Program has also shown tremendous results

- 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
- 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.

provided with dedicated tutoring through the schools' 21st Century Learning Centers as well as extended hours in the schools' libraries and computer labs.

Stepping Stones also has formal partnerships with Techmo Systems, Inc., to provide substantial numbers of mentors, and with Frontier Bank to provide office equipment and financial support for group events. Stepping Stones is also a member of Cook County YouthLink, a consortium of youth-serving agencies in the area that collaborate for community events and joint funding opportunities.

## Goals

Stepping Stones takes a broad developmental approach to mentoring that focuses on helping youth build their own capacity to succeed in education and in life. By empowering youth to make good decisions and set positive goals, Stepping Stones strives to impact:

- Academic achievement and attitudes towards school and education
- Alcohol and substance abuse
- Gang involvement and delinquency
- Family and peer relations
- Youth self-esteem and confidence