

Increase Mentoring Throughout the State

Youth Voice



Why is this an Important Issue for Minnesota Children and Young People?

GradMinnesota believes in the power of young people to create their own bright futures. By listening to their voices, we can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and choices they face. Thus it is important to empower and mobilize youth to share their experiences, bring their perspectives, and give recommendations on issues that affect them. When young people are actively engaged in the decision-making process, programs are more likely to meet their needs, create the changes they desire and foster success. The seven priority recommendations of GradMinnesota were influenced by the voices of young people and incorporated their input.

The following information and quotes from young people on mentors and mentoring were compiled from several sources.

Need for Mentors

“My mom was always working, so every time I got home, she wasn’t there.”— Trevor¹

“You can blame someone else, because no one was there to steer you in the right way.”— James¹

Mentors Never Gave Up on Me

“I called her my second mother. She never gave up on me. Even though I called out her name, later we saw each other and she invited me back. I've been going ever since then because of her.”— Rudy¹

“There’s two people, like the men [Kyle] and [Jorge]...They’ve been there for me for a long time. They’ve been pushing, helping me. Even through all my flaws, they still help me get through it...they’ll stay here with me and make sure I complete my school work. They’ll come check with me on the weekend, take me out to go play basketball, check daily basis status to see if everything’s okay, if I’m doing alright. Make sure I get to school on time. Pick me up if I need to.”
- Terrence²

“They would accept my phone calls. I would call once a week. And they’ll accept my call and they’ll talk to me. And then they would try to go visit me at least once a month where they try to go constantly. So it was good...But just a phone call. Nobody else would accept my phone calls...I would call the people and like, “No.” They couldn’t accept it. And I would call here and they’ll accept it. And right away, “Hey. How are you? How’s it going? Do you need anything? What can we do for you? Do you need money? Or whatever it is we will, we’ll help you. Is your mom okay? Do you want us to stop by your house and go check on them?” So, it was really good...They went beyond what they’re supposed to and really made me feel safe....Made me feel important, ‘cause somebody cared. ‘Cause these people didn’t even know me. They weren’t even related to me. They weren’t blood or nothing, but they cared. So it felt good.”
- Alex²

The Power of a Caring Adult

“They’re like the family I didn’t have. I consider that a second home because they’re caring and they’re willing to reach out to us. They’re not scared to tell me, ‘Oh you’re falling off, you’re acting this kind of way, you’re not doing the best that you can.’”- Tyrell²

When I was in eighth grade I had met, he's like my brother, I call him Chief, when I was skipping school and stuff, he just kept telling me, 'This not you, you got a bright future but you just need to stop doing what you doing.' And since I wasn't humbled at the time, I was like, 'No that's not me, I don't got a bright future.' And by the time I had came to [program] and I was going good, he's like see I told you. If it wasn't for him believing in me when I didn't believe in myself, I don't think I would be where I am at."-Tyrell²

"I connect with everybody. My relationships are different with everybody here, but I connect with all of them like family, especially the staff...they all have played their part and been fundamental in my change..." - Justin²

Additional Research With Youth³

Young adults value mentoring relationships. They believe mentoring provides them with the support and guidance they need to lead productive lives. They offer that their mentors help them stay on track in school, make good choices, and provide consistent support. Youth also reported informal and structured mentoring relationships can provide complementary benefits. Structured mentoring relationships tend to provide more academic support. Informal mentoring relationships tend to support personal development. In addition, 86% of all youth who were mentored are interested in becoming mentors. Research shows that mentoring is linked with higher rates of leadership and volunteering and creates a pool of future mentors to be activated.

References

1. America's Promise Alliance and Center for Promise (2014). Don't Call Them Dropouts- Understanding The Experiences of Young People Who Leave High School Before Graduation. http://www.gradnation.org/sites/default/files/DCTD%20Final%20Full_0.pdf
2. America's Promise Alliance and Center for Promise (2015). Don't Quit on Me: A Follow-up Report to Don't Call Them Dropouts: What Young People Who Left School Say about the Power of Relationships. http://www.gradnation.org/sites/default/files/FullReport%20DontQuit_2.pdf
3. Civic Enterprises. (2014). The Mentoring Effect: Young People's perspectives on the outcomes and availability of mentoring. A report for MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership. http://www.mentoring.org/mentoringeffect/the_mentoring_effect_full_report