

Mentor News

January 2009



Adults Involved In Mentoring Students

National Mentoring Month - 2009

January is National Mentoring Month as you may know. That is why we have our mentor celebration in January every year. We want to celebrate and thank you for your involvement with students in our area schools. Thanks so much for what you do!

President Bush signed the National Mentoring Month 2009 Proclamation which was released on December 30, 2008. Here are some of President Bush's comments in this proclamation. .

"During National Mentoring Month, we recognize the millions of individuals who dedicate themselves to making a difference in the lives of others, and we underscore our commitment to supporting these soldiers in America's armies of compassion.

Every day across our great Nation, men and women of many different backgrounds work to inspire our next generation of leaders. By sharing their time and experiences, mentors help instill important values that encourage America's youth to set high goals and achieve their dreams. Mentors demonstrate that the strength of our Nation lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens and that a positive influence in someone's life helps them secure a more hopeful future.

I appreciate our Nation's mentors and all those who contribute to their community by helping to change a child's life. We honor the many Americans who have touched the lives of others with their compassion, and we reflect on their efforts toward building a stronger and brighter future for all." George W. Bush

I recently received an e-mail from a student who had a mentor in our AIMS program for six years. Here are some of his comments. "My mentor moved away and I really didn't understand the importance of a mentor until after he was gone." He goes on to say, "I want to take on the responsibilities of a mentor. I have the strongest desire to be there for someone who may need a friend. I have the most respect for this organization and I am willing to pledge years of participation to this cause."

WOW! We now have our first mentee who will be trained and will serve as a mentor next year.

Thanks again for helping our youth.

Ken Black

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Communication with Your Student

In our mentor training, we talked about open ended questions. If you ask questions to your student that can be answered with just one word, the depth of the conversation is not very deep. The student usually can answer your questions with just one or two words like yes, no, not sure, maybe and other short answers.

One idea is to keep the conversation going until your student has expressed his ideas and feelings adequately. This can sometimes be accomplished by asking follow-up questions. Here are some examples. Tell me more about that. That's a great idea but could you explain your comment about a little more. That was a great idea! How did you come up with that great idea! The idea is not to debate a topic but to learn more.

Another way to keep the conversation going is to talk with your student about their favorite foods, television programs they watch, their hobbies, movies they like, games they like to play, etc. This may give you ideas of the type of activities your student would like to do with you. By keeping your conversations light, you build rapport with your student. Later your mentee will feel comfortable discussing more difficult issues with you.

If you have ideas and questions that work in getting your student to talk with you, please send them to Ken Black so that various ideas can be shared in future issues of the Mentor News.

Wanted! Ideas

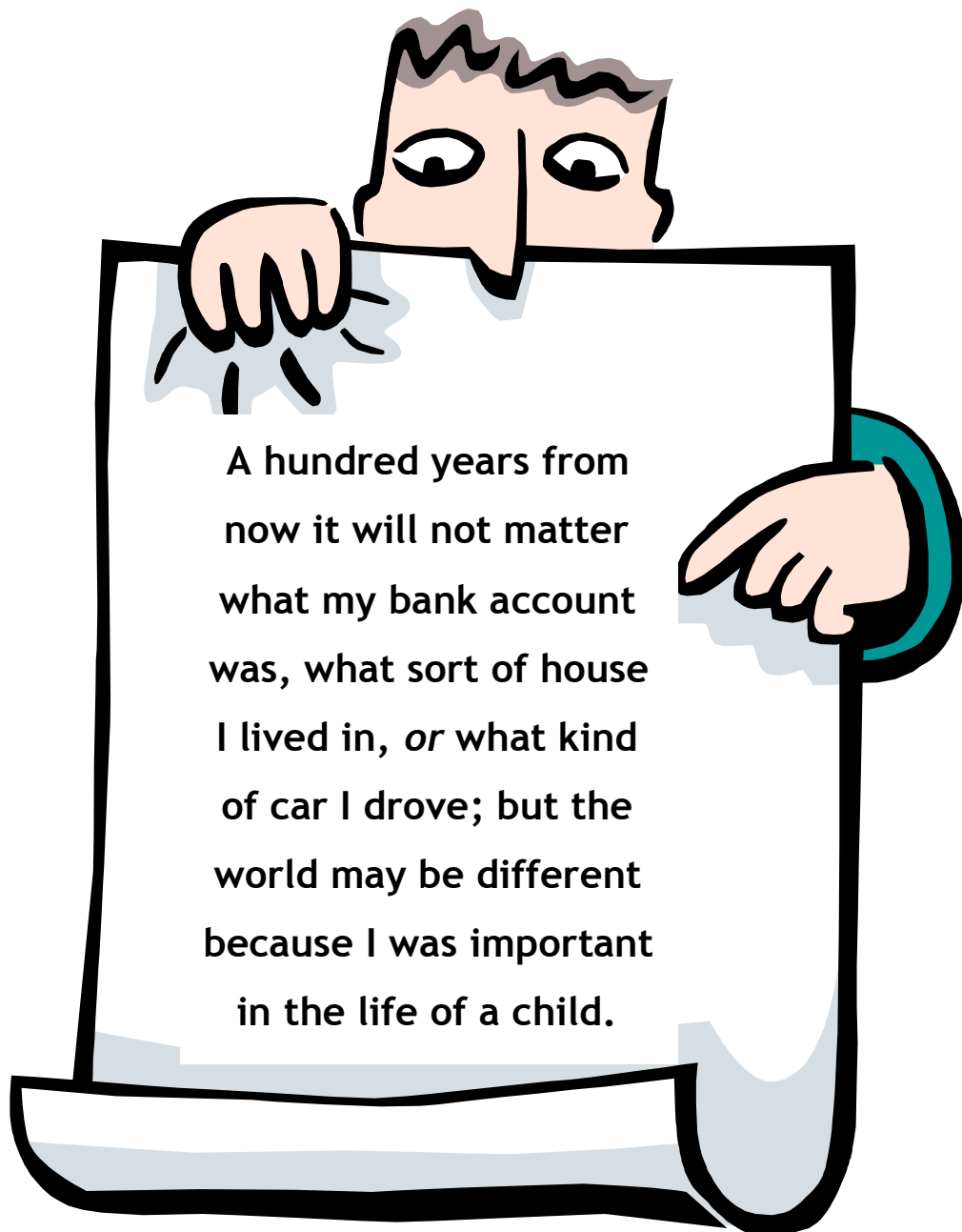
What is working well for you and your student? What activities are you enjoying with your mentee? We want to make the Mentor News a place for sharing ideas and experiences. We can learn much from the experiences of others.

If you have an activity that works with your student, please send it to Ken Black. Please state the age level of your student and explain the activity thoroughly. Thanks!

Pictures Are Needed

We are beginning a major upgrade of our AIMS website. We want to add more pictures that show mentor-student activities. Do you have any to share? When pictures are used, we need written permission from the parents of the students as well as your permission to use those pictures in our publicity. Please send them to Ken Black and identify the names of those in the pictures so that permission slips can be filed. Pictures may be sent by computer as well. Thanks for your help.

If you look at our AIMS website (aimsnews.org) and want to make suggestions for changes and additions, we welcome your suggestions.



A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, what sort of house I lived in, or what kind of car I drove; but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

I Couldn't Say It Any Better

The AIMS mentor program is modeled after the mentor program in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. The Chippewa Area Mentor Program has a bi-monthly newsletter. Their staff wrote the following paragraph to their mentors and I could not say it any better.

Thank you !!

“We want to thank our wonderful mentors for all their support, guidance, and encouragement aimed at their students. You are a friend, counselor, good listener, and a caring person who helps bring out the strengths of your mentees. The students whose lives are impacted by your advice, reinforcement, and constructive examples are becoming individuals who have the potential to succeed in life and positively contribute to society. As a mentor, you are improving children’s attitudes towards their parents, peers, and teachers. By sharing your knowledge and experiences, you are bringing new hope to lives of children through the power of mentoring. Thank you for making a positive impact!”

Mentor Celebration

A special thanks is in order for Dawn Turner, principal of Benson School in Itasca, who has been the chairperson and co-chairperson for our mentor celebration the past few years. We then count on site-coordinators and some board member for AIMS to round out the committee. The planning group expands as individuals are asked to be in charge of invitations, program, food, set up, clean up, etc. Congratulations on a job well done! If any mentors have ideas for future celebration events and want to participate in the planning, please talk to Dawn.

We also appreciate the support of Harris Bank, Roselle. The bank has provided funds for food, decorations, and program each year since celebrations have been held. Maureen Bell, the president of Harris Bank, Roselle also serves as the treasurer on our AIMS board of directors and is a mentor.

Mentor Training

If you know someone who is still interested in mentoring, please contact Mark Dwyer, principal of Du Jardin School in Bloomingdale. Mark does most of our mentor training. He will meet with the prospective mentors at a time that is suitable for Mark and the interested person. Please call Mark at 630-894-9200 or Ken at 639-259-8415 for information.

Start planting the seed for future mentors next year. Let your friends know the values of mentoring a student and the need for more mentors in our schools. Send names to Ken Black so that they can be contacted in August. Thanks!