



# AIMS Newsletter

November—December  
2008

Mentor News

## A Message From Ken

Thanks so much for giving your time to mentor a child this year. I hope you feel the satisfaction of making a difference in the life of your student. By your caring attitude and your undivided attention during your mentoring session each week, your student will know that he/she is someone special in your life. Thanks again for what you do!

During the 2008-2009 school year, we hope to increase the number

of mentors to one hundred. Do you know someone who would be a great mentor and has the time to devote one hour each week mentoring a child? Many of the site-coordinators in our fourteen schools are still looking for more mentors. We will provide mentor training classes as needed. Have any prospects call me if they have questions or want to attend a mentor training class. Thanks for your help! You are our best recruiters because you



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can share information about the meaningful experiences you have had.

## Holidays

at Lake Park High School ( East Campus). You have received or will soon receive information on this annual event. This is a time when mentors, students, parents, and school personnel come together to celebrate National Mentor Month.

I hope you will also be able to

attend. Please come even if you know your student is not able to come. You will have a chance to talk with other mentors, share ideas, enjoy a great meal, and be a part of a great celebration event. This will be our fourth annual get together.

“You All Come”

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Be dependable! If you cannot meet, Notify your site coordinator as soon as possible

Meet only at the school during the school day.

Talk with the site-coordinator if you have questions dealing with your student.

Confidentiality is essential

**Holiday Gift Giving Guidelines are on**

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**Mentor Celebration**

We ask you to encourage your student and their parents to attend our annual Mentor Celebration on Saturday, January 31st

## GIFT GIVING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season is a time of giving. We give and receive gifts from our friends and family as we express our appreciation for those special people in our life.

We believe you are already giving the most valuable gift you can give to your student—YOUR TIME. Students look forward to seeing you each week and having someone who is a special friend and role model in their lives.

As the holiday season comes near, some of you may be wondering about giving a gift to your student. *Gift giving is not necessary.* However, if you would like to give a gift to your student, please follow our AIMS mentor program guidelines:

1. Do not buy a gift over \$10 in value.
2. Give your gift to your student privately during your scheduled mentoring session. This prevents other students from feeling they need a gift and other mentors from feeling obligated to give a gift.

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## SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING YOUR STUDENT EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF GIVING

1. Make something together that is special to give away such as an ornament for their teacher's desk, cards for residents at a local nursing home, or work on other projects suggested by your student.
2. Grandparents love to receive anything from their grandchildren. How about a special Christmas card? If the student likes to sing (and you do too), perhaps you can learn a new song that your student can sing for their grandparents, even over the telephone if their grandparents live in another part of the country.
3. Thank you notes are always appropriate. How about writing notes to their daycare providers, bus drivers, parents, maintenance person at your

school, lunchroom supervisors, etc.

4. Be creative and let your student suggest other activities. Have fun as you work together!
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## AIMS WEBSITE

Did you know we have a website? You can find it at [www.aimsnews.org](http://www.aimsnews.org). It is a good place to direct your friends for information about AIMS. We hope to add more information in the coming days.

What additional information would you like to have on our website? We would like to start a page of activities that are working for your student. Share your ideas with Ken.

Mentor training dates will be posted when they are scheduled. We will not have another training session until January. Let me know about any prospective mentors you have.

## Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

The model we used for our AIMS program was the one used in the Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Their program has over three hundred mentors serving in all the public and parochial schools in that community. You can find information about their program by accessing:

[www.cfsd.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/mentor](http://www.cfsd.chipfalls.k12.wi.us/mentor)

We are grateful to them for providing us guidance and materials as we began our AIMS program seven years ago. Check it out!



## MY MENTOR & ME

Do you have a copy of this booklet for the grade level for your student? They are available to each of you.

There are three booklets in this series. One is for the elementary school years. Another is for the middle school years, and the third is for the high school years.

Each booklet list thirty-six activities and strategies for mentors and mentees to do together. Not all the activities are possible because some cannot be done away from your school or may take too much time. You can pick and choose those that seem most appropriate for your student.

In “Elementary School Years,” there are suggestions for Reading a Good Book Together—A School Interest Inventory—A Scrapbook of Memories—Create a Time Capsule, and many others.

In the booklet for middle school years, there are topics such as Getting to Know Each Other —Take a Mentoring Quiz—Capture Your Session with Photos—Ingredients for Success, etc. Lesson 26 in this booklet deals with facts about bullying.

The high school years edition includes such topics as The Open Road—Appreciating Differences—Mr. and Mrs. Manners— Decisions! Decisions!, and What Kind of a Job Do I Want?

If you are using any of these book and have found an activity that worked well, send an e-mail to Ken sharing information on successes or difficulties of using that topic. We can all learn from one another.

As you move from the elementary school level to

the middle school level, be sure to ask for the next booklet in the series that meets your needs. If you use other materials that work well, let us know about them.

If you would like one of these books in the “My Mentor & Me” series, please contact Ken and he will drop off a copy of the book at your school or will send it to you. We have several of these book available. If we run out, we will order more.

You may call Ken at 630-259-8415 or e-mail your request to: [ken.black@aimsnews.org](mailto:ken.black@aimsnews.org)

If you have one of these booklets that you are no longer using, please give your copy (even if it is marked up) to your site coordinator.

The “Mentor and Me” booklets are written by Dr. Susan Weinberger, the president of Mentor Consulting group. Permission has been granted to share information from these publication for reprint in our Mentor News.

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### AIMS Board of Directors

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## THE VALUE OF MENTORING

*These are some comments taken from the book "Mentoring—A Movement" by Dr. Susan Weinberger. She is writing about a mentor program she designed for the schools in Norwalk, Connecticut. She has been a leader in the "mentor movement" in schools for many years.*

"I really believe that youth who lack support will find the idea of a friend coming to spend time with them a tremendous self-esteem builder. Input from school staff helped to shape the program's goals. Youth were matched with mentors to improve their behaviors at school and relationships with their peers. Improvement of academic performance was not one of the goals of this new initiative at the time. Even today, I am not sure that school-based mentoring should focus on that area. When dedicated and determined mentors alter the attitudes of youth toward school, I believe that improving grades will be a natural outcome."

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"I began visiting schools in Norwalk and talking to teachers and principals as I had never done before. I wanted to know what the professionals viewed as the major issues facing their students at that time. I shared the notion of mentoring. No matter where I traveled and what conversations I engaged in, I asked teachers the same questions: "Why are so many youth today sitting in classrooms unmotivated and unchallenged? Why are they not performing well academically and often acting out?" The answer among my Norwalk colleagues was almost universal. For many students, it seemed that no one cared about them. Support and consistency were lacking in their lives. Many youth had parents working more than one job, unfortunately leaving little quality time for their children. These same colleagues, when asked their opinion, embraced the notion of providing support for their students with non-judgmental adult volunteers. With this information in hand, the Norwalk

Mentor program was launched."

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"There was a myth that needed to be dispelled in those days about which kids really needed mentoring the most. Some professionals identified the children as those who were poor, minorities, from one parent homes, or all of the above. I do not buy that myth. Although programs today often have a specific target audience, I believed and still do that **all** children can benefit from at least one caring adult in their lives."

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I hope all of you understand the importance of what you are doing. I watch students meet their mentors at school and can instantly see that there is a positive connection being developed. Your caring attitude **does** make a difference. Thanks for being a mentor. Ken

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### Did You Know?

The AIMS board has been working on guidelines for providing two five hundred dollar scholarships for students who graduate from high school, plan to attend college, and have been in the AIMS mentor program at least two years. What a nice incentive this will be for mentored students to be recognized for their achievements! More information will be provided in coming issues of the Mentor News.

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