



# MINNEAPOLIS Community Justice Mentor Connection

Fall 2010

*Thank you for your faithfulness as a volunteer mentor for the Community Justice program. Sometimes you may feel alone out there in your work, so we want to keep you informed, updated, encouraged and supported.*

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## Mentor Training Dates

September 11, 1010  
November 13, 2010

**Our volunteer mentors are the backbone of the Community Justice program!**

**The Mentor Connection is a publication of the Minneapolis Police Department and the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches.**

## Reminder from the Community Justice Project

Do you like receiving information about news, events, and mentor-mentee resources from the Community Justice Project? Have you been enjoying the Community Justice Project weekly e-lert emails? If you haven't been receiving them it's probably because we don't have your current contact information! We updating our records and have found that not all our mentor contact information is up-to-date. In order to receive Community Justice information about mentor events, resources, and other important information please remember to update us when your phone number, email, or mailing address changes. We want to keep you in the loop and in order to do so we need your up-to-date information! Thanks!

## Mentor/Mentee Submissions

### Some Thoughts on Joy

By: Terry Kelly (CJP Mentor)

I remember a Father's day several years ago. My kids were very young but sensed somehow that their dad needed a toy. They bought me a set of professional paper airplanes that came pre-cut in a box. I made all the right noises upon opening it, but probably wondered what I was going to do with them. I put together two of the simplest designs and took them outside to fly. I clearly remember feeling like a five year old again when I launched that first plane and saw it soar for two blocks. I can't imagine what my neighbors thought as they watched a 35 year old man running back and forth in their cul-de-sac tossing paper airplanes all afternoon. I hope it brought them some joy.

I have been working with a man for a couple of years through the Community Justice Project. Upon release from the workhouse he moved into an apartment. He was happy with his freedom, but had no transportation. He talked about getting a bike when he had a few bucks saved up. I had a bike hanging in my garage that was rarely used. One Saturday morning I brought it to him. He practically tore it from my hands as we lifted it out of my car. Before I could get the hatch closed he was out in the middle of the street riding around in circles laughing like a child. His joy was contagious. What I thought was going to be a simple transaction, became a moment of catching God at work. More surprising, God acted through my new friend to work upon me. Joy can be imparted or received. It can even ricochet off someone else and return to you. But it can't be manufactured for personal consumption. It is a gift from God.

## Future Events

### Mentor Dinner

The next mentor support dinner will be on Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Edina Community Lutheran Church. The topic will be women's housing and we will be having a guest speaker from Healing House, a woman's housing program. The church is located at 4113 West 54<sup>th</sup> Street in Edina. Parking is available in the lot on the west and south sides of the church.



Please RSVP as soon as possible, even if you are unable to attend. Also let us know if you plan to bring a guest. To RSVP contact Jennifer Edel by email at [jedel@gmcc.org](mailto:jedel@gmcc.org) or by phone at 612-721-8687, ext 318.

### Mentor Support Group

The next mentor support group meeting will be on Tuesday, October 19<sup>th</sup> from 7-8:30 pm at the Edina Community Lutheran Church in room 100 (on the lower level). The church is located at 4113 West 54<sup>th</sup> Street in Edina. Parking is available in the lot on the west and south sides of the church. To RSVP please contact Carol Mork by email [cmork@gmcc.org](mailto:cmork@gmcc.org) or leave a voicemail at 612-721-8687, ext 301.

## Community Outreach

If you are a part of an organization, faith-based or otherwise, that is interested in giving back to your community by mentoring adult offenders please contact Hillary Freeman by email at [hfreeman@gmcc.org](mailto:hfreeman@gmcc.org) or by phone at 612-721-8687, ext. 332.

## Why I Chose to Become a Mentor

By: Dr. Titus I. Jideofor (CJP Mentor)

I was raised in what Americans call Africa (it is a continent by the way, not a country). My father was not wealthy, but not poor. He died before I could even walk. In the culture I came from my mom could have been sent home to "her people". But what I witnessed growing up was someone who would fight for me. She held firm. She claimed my fathers land and inheritance for me. She stood against culture, men of greater status and even in the 1950's she was a woman born out of her time. When others went off to college and had greater investors, I was learning how to succeed... alone. I sought out successful people, I knew my father was a success, and I looked for others to show me what he was supposed to. This took me internationally and gave me an education beyond my peers. Today I am not waiting for another young man to find me. I want to show them what my father taught me. Yes he may be absent, but absence is only a space to fill. I want to be found by a hungry man-child, so I decided to just position myself right in front of his face. I can only hope that he can see who I really am. I am a mentor. I am his success in a void.

## My Mentee

By: Ken Stone (CJP Mentor)

I started mentoring my mentee in October 2009. Hillary Freeman and his parole officer hooked us up. We hit it off well. He is receptive to seeing me and he confides in me. We work on strategies for finding work. Sometimes I take him to dinner. If you want a young man to open up feed him. I regularly (almost) report to Rachel Campbell on the status of my mentee and she tells me I'm doing a good job.

My mentee has faced many obstacles and challenges since his release. I will call this success because my mentor now realizes he has a team behind him; people on his side, not against him. Most importantly, I believe my mentee has at last learned he must once and for all motivate himself and commit himself down deep to doing the right thing. Although he has faced challenges he has now has found housing, has been accepted into the Network program, is getting counseling, and attended a job fair. I hope we can sustain this success.

## My Success Story

By: Tamara Vandermoon (CJP Mentee)

My name is Tamara Vandermoon. I have been off the streets and clean for over a year now and am going to try to sum up my story for you today. I started selling my body for money at the age of 18 on the streets of Minneapolis. I had a pimp that beat me and an addiction to crack. I was trapped in the life style, in and out of jail and treatment centers. I thought that was what my life was for. I was meant to make money and get high. Then one day sitting in my cell at the work house, I woke up and realized that there has to be more to life. I got out and moved home to Mankato. Leaving it all behind. Was it easy?? NOT at all! But I know that was what needed to be done. I am now clean and off the streets and life still has its up and downs but I just keep going. For all those are reading this please know that there is a life other than the streets and never give up.

## Mentor/Mentee Resources

### Kinship of Greater Minneapolis

By: Nancy Torrison  
(Director of Community Relationships)

Kinship of Greater Minneapolis has been matching youth, ages 5 to 15, in need of additional adult support with caring individuals, couples and families for over 50 years in Hennepin and Anoka counties. Through meaningful and professionally supported friendships with caring volunteers, young people realize their God-given potential as they grow in self-confidence, become more likely to avoid violence and illegal activities, perform better in school and develop stronger relationships with adults and peers.

Kinship's MCP Program (Mentoring Children of Prisoners) works with children who have a parent in jail by providing them with a positive adult friend who can become part of a support system that helps them overcome the negative effects of their parent's incarceration.

As American society demands more accountability and stiffer penalties for crimes, the prison population has dramatically increased. Not only has this increase affected those in jail, but it is producing a generation of children who are trying to cope with the consequences of having an incarcerated parent.

Research shows that the effects of parental criminal behavior and incarceration on children are significant. Children of offenders suffer a tragic disruption in childhood with periods of instability and uncertainty.

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## Past Mentor Events

### May Mentor Training

On May 15<sup>th</sup> the Community Justice Project held a training for new mentors at the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility. A total of about 20 potential mentors and observers attended this training. The training included information about boundaries, tips on how to mentor, and how to work with probation. Eleven mentors and mentees attended and spoke in a panel about their experiences being in the program and answered questions asked by the training participants.



If you or someone you know would be interesting in attending one of these trainings, as either a potential mentor or as an observer, please contact Jennifer Edel by email at [jedel@gmcc.org](mailto:jedel@gmcc.org) or by phone at 612-721-8687, ext 318.

### Support Group Meeting

By: Rick Chilton (CJP Mentor/Mentor Support Group Facilitator)

The last mentor support group meeting on May 12<sup>th</sup> focused on a lot of answering the unknown, "what's next", "so tell me how this really works" type questions. We went through the four stages of mentoring answering questions in truly understanding the mentoring process, stakeholder's roles, responsibilities, expectations, and its application with our clients. The dialogue that ensued removed a lot of mystic of being a mentor, knowing that mentorship has been around a long time applied towards many well established applications yielding excellent results. Simply being oneself, no super powers, being a faithful volunteer.

The by-product of seeking is sharing. Mentors really want to connect to someone they trust, to have someone listen and relate in their excitement of mentoring. As if for many years one has wondered, seeking to uncover that key missing element in the purpose of life when the pursuit is finally discovered in mentoring. A treasure full of many rewards and benefits are revealed, and mentors want to tell the world about this good news. Mentors want to tell about their experiences, to express their joy in serving and continue to pursue in their efforts to become a better Mentor.

Not unlike professional tennis players who constantly seek out better players so that they can improve their game. Mentors come to the CJP bi-monthly support group meetings to improve their skills and to share. It's their racket too. We would like to hear your story, share what's working for you and perhaps help you in return. Mentors like you have such a precious gift that we can begin to express our gratitude. We sincerely thank you.

## **Kinship of Greater Minneapolis** from page 3

They face a significantly greater risk of:

- Living in poverty because of the loss of one or more parents' earning ability while in prison and once released;
- Developing symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Seventy-five percent of the five to 16 year olds surveyed reported symptoms such as depression, difficulty sleeping or concentrating or flashbacks to their parent's crimes or arrests (Jose-Kampfner, C. University of Michigan, 1985);
- Developing attachment disorder resulting from separation from the parent that can generate a set of adverse emotional reactions from sadness to anger, which, in turn, will interfere with optimal development of the child (Sroufe, A. 1988); and
- Delinquency, pregnancy and chemical dependency (Ramstad Hvass, Sheryl, Commissioner of Minnesota Department of Corrections, 2000 St. Paul, Minnesota).

Kinship is a quality youth mentoring program dedicated to carefully recruiting, screening, matching and supporting individuals, couples and families that are matched with our children. Matches are made based on interests, location, gender and a thorough interview of both children and prospective mentors by Kinship staff. Free and low-cost activities and ticket opportunities are provided throughout the year as a means of additional support, including an annual Adopt-a-Family program with Christmas gifts for Kinship families.

For more information about enrolling a child with Kinship of Greater Minneapolis, please call 612-588-4655, Email us at [mail@kinship.org](mailto:mail@kinship.org), or visit [www.kinship.org](http://www.kinship.org).

## **Picnic**

On Saturday June, 19<sup>th</sup> the Community Justice Project held its third annual mentor-mentee family picnic at Boom Island. Food served included grilled hamburgers, potato salad, potato chips, and cookies. About 45 mentors, mentees, and family members came to socialize with each other and enjoy their time outside.



Balls, Frisbees, and tug of war entertained the children and a police K-9 dog was brought from the Minneapolis Police Department. Picnic attendees got to pet and learn about the K-9. Although the weather was not as sunny as we had hoped the turn out was great and everyone had a wonderful time!

## **Girls Night Out**

On Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup> twelve potential mentees and mentors met for first ever girl's night out dinner at the Gardens of Salonica. The girl's night was put together by Hillary Freeman and Career Probation Officer for Hennepin County PJ Bensen.



The event was funded by a grant the Community Justice Project received from the mission committee of Edina Community Lutheran Church. PJ brought together some of her female clients, that are outside of the correctional facility, with women that were interested in being matched with a mentee. A current

mentor and mentee pair also attended and spoke about their mentoring relationship and what to expect. The women got to meet and chat with each other while enjoying a delicious Greek meal. The mentors and mentees will be matched together based on who clicked with whom.

## **Newsletter Submissions**

If you are a mentor or mentee with Community Justice that has written a piece about mentoring that you would like to have included in an issue of Mentor Connection please contact editor/writer Jennifer Edel at [jedel@gmcc.org](mailto:jedel@gmcc.org) or 612-721-8687 ext 318.