



MINNEAPOLIS Community Justice Mentor Connection

Winter 2011

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

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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.

Mentor/Mentee Submissions

Building a Foundation

By: Victoria Balko (CJP Mentor)

The decision to assist another, whether brought forth through desire, passion, calling or feeling of need to help is unique and personal but the impact is powerful. Building a positive relationship with another person is key, especially in mentoring relationships. Laying a foundation of trust and respect is essential and one that unfolds in its one unique way. Learning from each other to gain real understanding is fundamental and this is how one can learn to see someone else from a holistic point of view which is needed when developing positive relationships. As mentors we will meet beautiful people that we may have not come into contact with without this program.

From my experience as a mentor, building that relationship prior to release proved to be very important. No matter the content of the conversations, thoughts or decisions made prior to release, being released changes things. It is a change that affects everyone differently. Returning home to family, friends, environments, personal habits, and etc all pose unique challenges for all involved and as a mentor it is important to keep this in mind while supporting our mentee.

My personal relationship with my mentee changed in terms of consistency of communication once released but the bond has grown. We have an open, honest and non-judgmental relationship and I am thankful for that. I know the key was laying the foundation in the beginning prior to release. I am excited and hopeful for her future and happy to be a participant. Building strong relationships with others is important and being able to model successful life techniques while building on the positive life skills one already possesses and challenging destructive ones while being open to receive, are all components to strengthening the relationship and helping another reach personal success.

Future Events

February Mentor Dinner



Community Justice Project will be having its next mentor dinner on Friday, February 11th from 6:30 – 8:00 pm at the Edina Community Lutheran Church. There will be door prizes and free food! Rebecca Bedner from Good Will Easter Seals will be there to talk about the partnership between Good Will Easter Seals and CJP, employment opportunities for mentees, and more! Greek food will be catered from the fabulous restaurant Gardens of Salonica. All mentors are welcome, whether you are currently matched with a mentee or not. For directions please see March mentor support group article. To RSVP please contact at jedel@gmcc.org or 612-721-8687, ext 318 by February 4th.

March Mentor Support Group

The next meeting of the mentor support group will be on Tuesday, March 15th from 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. at the Edina Community Lutheran Church in room 100 (on the lower level). The church is located at 4113 West 54th 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 or leave a voicemail at 612-721-8687, ext 301.

Past Mentor Events

Mentor Trainings

On Saturday, September 11th the Community Justice Project held training for new mentors at the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility. A total of about 20 potential mentors attended this training. This was the first training run by Rachel Campbell and Jennifer Edel. The training included information on boundaries, tips on how to mentor, and paradigms. Jim McAllister, corrections supervisor at the ACF, talked about probation and motivational interviewing.



Saturday, November 13th was the last training of the year for the Community Justice Project. Almost 20 potential mentors braved the cold and snow storm to attend the training at the work release building of the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility. The training included a panel of mentors and

mentees sharing their experiences and a tour of the women's facility. Each year the Community Justice Project must recruit a minimum of 100 active mentors.

Saturday, January 22nd was the first training of the New Year. Ten mentors braved the cold to attend the training at the men's facility and to hear a great panel made up of 8 mentors and mentees. They also heard a presentation by Probation Officer Pamela Bensen who talked about how mentors should approach probation officers when working with them.



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 or by phone at 612-721-8687, ext 318.

Mentor/Mentee Resources

T.E.E.T.C.H. With Compassion

T.E.E.T.C.H. stands for touching economical emotions through Christ healing. It is a 30 week community based program in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties. The program works with both ex-offenders and family members of people that are incarcerated. The program includes mentors, men's classes and fellowship, GED classes, and Genesis recovery program. They also provide a family night with activities for children and youth, adult workshops, and a phase life empowerment program.

Sessions are held 6 - 8 pm the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month at 1201 West Broadway Avenue in Minneapolis and 285 North Dale Street in St. Paul. For more information please contact Arnetta Phillips at 612-302-1463 ext 120 for the Minneapolis location and Pastor Gregory Oats at 651-332-3324 for the St. Paul location.

September Mentor Dinner

On Friday, September 17th the Community Justice Project held a dinner for mentors at the Edina Community Lutheran Church. Dinner included meat and veggie lasagna, veggies, and cookies catered by Marion's Deli. Ron Klick and Brian Larson came to speak about Healing House, a chemical recovery woman's housing program.



Healing House is unique in that not only can single women be in the program, women with children can be in the program and have their children live with them. For more information on Healing House please visit: <http://www.metrohope.org/index.php?id=11>

October Support Group Meeting

The last mentor support group meeting was on October at the Edina Community Lutheran Church. Larry Olson, one of our mentors, spoke about his Compass 180 program. Compass 180 is a program for teaching male and female ex-offenders entrepreneurial skills. Participants in the program attend 4-5 workshops to teach them skills such as how to write a business plan, marketing, technology and online resources, business start up guidelines and budgeting. Each participant receives a \$1000 scholarship to put a business plan into action or to attend school.

To learn more please see the Compass 180 article!

Sounds of Blackness

On Monday December 13th about 70 mentors attended the Sounds of Blackness at the Guthrie Theater. Each year the Community Justice Project thanks mentors for their service by inviting them to a holiday performance. The performance was free for mentors and each mentor was allowed to bring a guest at a reduced price.

The performance "The Night Before Christmas: A Musical Fantasy" was based on the classic Clement Moore story but was told from an African-American perspective. Songs performed ranged from classic Christmas songs to modern day rap and hip-hop. Characters included dancing chitlin's, rappin' Rudolph, and some scantily dressed "reindeer". The performance was great and everyone had a great time.

Mentor/Mentee Resources (cont.)

Dress for Success

Dress for Success is a non-profit that provides help women get and maintain employment. They provide women with a business suit when they have a job interview. They will also provide professional pieces of clothing to mix and match once a woman gets a job. Dress for Success also works with women to help them find a job and to maintain employment. Professional Women's Group (PWG) is a program that provides women support as they transition into the workforce. Their Career Center is a place where women receive career guidance, training in technology skills, and job search help.

Dress for Success is located at 1549 University Avenue, Suite A in St. Paul. To learn more about their organization please call them at 651-646-6000 or visit the Dress for Success website at: <http://www.dressforsuccess.org/>

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 or by phone at 612-721-8687, ext. 332.

Compass 180

The first class of Compass 180 recently graduated. This group included 6 participants, 5 of which were CJP mentees. Of the five CJP mentees 4 were male and one was female. The participants attended two workshops which included topics such as soft skills, business planning, and goal setting.



Each participant received a \$1000 scholarship to put a business or education plan into action. One of the participants, Tina, used her money to go back to school at MCTC and received her first "A" ever in a math course. Michael W. is going

to Hennepin Technical College for Diesel Mechanics and used his money to buy a car and reinstate his license so that he can do an internship for school. Michael J. is working on redemption art and is using his money to get a computer and a professional wardrobe. Another mentee Gary said that he's "going to take my time to make sure of my decisions. I have made bad ones in the past."

Larry is accepting applications for the next group until Feb. 25th 2011. Interviews for the program will be in March. The group will attend workshops between March 19th and April 2nd. Another group will be selected for this summer. Prospective candidates must be outside of the correctional facility and can contact Larry Olson at (612) 396-7178 for more information on how to apply!

Newsletter Submissions

If you are a mentor or mentee with the Community Justice Project 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 or 612-721-8687 ext 318.