

MENTORING PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Who: Cumberland County District Court with the Reclaiming futures Communicare mentoring program in partnership with the Cumberland County public school systems.

What: Mentoring program benefitting Cumberland county public middle and high school students identified as at-risk and/or involved in the department of juvenile justice court system.

Purpose: Mentoring provides youth with mentors who can develop an emotional bond with the mentee, have greater experience with the mentee by providing support, guidance, and opportunities to help youth succeed in life and meet their goals.

Benefits for youth: Mentoring is often one component of a program that involves other elements, such as tutoring or life skills training and coaching. The supportive, healthy relationships formed between mentors and mentees are both immediate and long-term and contribute to a host of benefits for mentors and mentees.

- Increased high school graduation rates
- Healthier relationships and lifestyle choices
- Higher college enrollment rates and higher educational aspirations
- Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improved behavior, both at home and at school
- Stronger relationships with parents, teachers, and peers
- Improved interpersonal skills
- Decreased likelihood of initiating drug and alcohol use (MENTOR, 2009; Cavell, DuBois, Karcher, Keller, & Rhodes, 2009)

When: Beginning 2022 – perpetual

Process: Chief District Court Judge Toni S. King assisted Sarah Hallock, Director of Cumberland County CommuniCare to revive the reclaiming futures mentoring program that had ceased being in existence for over 10 years. The revived mentoring program hosted an interest meeting and marketing campaign to the parents and kids being served by Communicare and those children involved in the juvenile delinquency courts.

The program hosted its first meeting with mentors/mentees in August 2021 and has continued to meet each month since the inception.

The program conducted criminal background checks on all mentors and hosted multiple training sessions for mentors on how to engage mentees by Ms. Alberta Lampkins, National Cares Mentoring Movement, Incorporated.

Mentors and Mentees with their parents were invited to an orientation, where we provided the attendees with a meal, as food is the universal language. In addition, the mentors and mentees were able to engage in icebreakers and had an opportunity to talk with mentors to facilitate in the matchmaking. The overall group meets once a month every 3rd Monday at 5:30pm in the Communicare building, where a dinner meal is provided and mentors receive 30 minute mentoring tips prior to the arrival of the mentees. The meeting brings together all of the mentees in efforts to allow them to connect as a community and engages everyone in teambuilding activities during the meeting.

Understanding that our children are spread throughout the county and consistent transportation can be a challenge for many of our families, the program and mentors attempt to fill-in the gaps when able to do so. However, in efforts to have a greater impact, Chief District Court Judge Toni King proposed expansion of the mentoring program into the actual schools making it easier for the children to meet with their mentors on a more regular basis. In addition, the children associated with the Reclaiming Futures mentoring program would still participate in the monthly meeting held at Communicare.

As incentives for good behavior and participation, the program has provided the mentors and mentees with experiences such as attending Woodpeckers Games, Bowling, Fayetteville State University's Stepshow, a day at the obstacle course on Ft. Bragg, a friends and family Barbeque, in addition to the other activities provided by the individual mentors.

More recently, a benefactor and philanthropist has partnered with the mentoring program. This individual has come and participated in a session and has agreed to partner by providing a travel component to the program. Each year, Judge King will meet with the mentors of each group and receive recommendations for students to be rewarded with participation in the travel component based on their performance and

successes with the mentoring program's curriculum requirements. The benefactor has agreed to take 24 children and 12 mentors on a learning adventure in its first inaugural trip. The benefactor will choose the destination and has agreed to pay for all transportation, lodging and food expenses.

On August 15, 2022, a meeting was held at the Cumberland County Public Schools' Administrative office with Toni S. King, Chief District Court Judge; Dr. Connelly, Superintendent; Dr. Chalmers, Assistant Superintendent, Attorney Sojka, School Board attorney; Jason Hunter, Chief Court Counselor and Daisie Thorne, Court mentoring program project manager, regarding the expansion of the mentoring program, as well as the travel component. Those in attendance were in agreement to establish the programs and 4 schools were identified as pilot schools for the mentoring program in conjunction with the program held at Communicare.

Mentoring programs are costly and at this time there is no funding for mentors to support any component of the mentoring programs except through their own personal finances. Chief District Court Judge Toni King met with the Honorable Mayor H. Mitch Colvin on October 10, 2022 and the details of the programs were discussed, at which time the mayor requested a proposed budget summary for the city to make an investment.

Budget Request
\$25,000.00 for the entire program

Communicare Program - \$5000 (this program serves all high school/middle school students plus those that may not be associated with the 4 pilot schools.)

Westover High School - \$5000

Terry Sanford High School - \$5000

EE Smith High School - \$5000

Pine Forest High School - \$5000.00 each

A general proposed budget would be as follows with the request for each to be able to reallocate categories, as needed:

\$1500.00 – for supplies and curriculum related needs (books, boards, etc.,)

\$1000.00 – uniforms for the mentees (ie. T-shirts, collared shirts)

\$2000.00 – towards experiences and activities (etiquette classes, trips and activities)

\$500.00 – snacks for each meeting

Holder of the grant money:

The court can request that Cumberland County Communicare, the Police Foundation, The Golden Bulls Foundation, Inc., or the respective mentor organizations that are established to maintain the accounting of the money and submit reports to the appropriate agency. In addition, the Court has the ability to request that the Clerk of Superior Court hold these funds for disbursement. The funding would be for the direct benefit of the mentoring program and is not associated with any other court programs nor is it being requested by any of the respective organizations that may seek grant funding independently.