



Moab, UT

GRAND AREA MENTORING

2025–2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Relationships that help young people grow



DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

Showing up. Growing up.

Grand Area Mentoring connects young people with caring adults who show up consistently, week after week, year after year.

During the 2025–2026 school year, 71 young people participated in one-to-one mentoring. We created a program-record 24 new matches, welcomed 21 new mentors, and continued supporting relationships that often stretch across years of a young person's life.

Compared with objectives established for Grand Area Mentoring through its founding U.S. Department of Education grant, mentored youth exceeded targets in behavior, attendance, academics, and relationship duration.

But numbers tell only part of the story.

This year, youth, parents, mentors, and school staff repeatedly described another kind of growth: greater confidence. Young people tried unfamiliar activities, spoke up more, made decisions, built friendships, asked for help, and found new learning opportunities.

That kind of change isn't inevitable. It grows through relationships built on trust, encouragement, and time.

Daniel McNeil
Program Director

GRAND AREA MENTORING

2025–2026 at a glance

24 new matches – a program record

21 new mentors

8 Advanced mentor trainings offered



Who participated in mentoring?

Grand Area Mentoring serves youth who can benefit from an additional caring adult in their lives. Most referrals come from school professionals who know the young person well.

71 youth served

83% qualified for free or reduced-price lunch

42% were youth from minority backgrounds

12 years — average age

Mentors and mentees meet one-to-one each week. Many relationships begin in elementary or middle school and continue through high school and beyond.



“Mentoring is the best thing I’ve had in life.”

—4th grade mentee

MEASURABLE PROGRESS



In 2025–2026, mentored youth exceeded every core objective established through Grand Area Mentoring’s founding U.S. Department of Education grant.

83%

improved behavior

DOE objective: 40%

65%

improved attendance

DOE objective: 35%

57%

improved grades

DOE objective: 35%

These outcomes reflect change across many different young people and circumstances. Mentoring is not tutoring, therapy, or discipline. Its central intervention is a reliable relationship with an adult who listens, cheers, and stays involved over time.

**“Mentoring is the
only reason I want
to go to school.”
—4th grade mentee**



RELATIONSHIPS NEED TIME TO GROW

A central measure of mentoring quality is whether relationships endure.

Among the 12 matches that concluded during 2025–2026, **the average relationship lasted 36 months.**

83% lasted at least one year.

50% lasted more than three years.

17% lasted 70 months—nearly six years.

*For comparison, the average school-based mentoring relationship nationally has been reported at less than six months.**

*Bernstein, Rappaport, Olsho, Hunt, & Levin, 2009

When asked what stands out about the mentoring they have witnessed, a faculty member wrote:

“The joy on their face knowing they have another trusted person that cares about them. It’s more important than many people realize.”

—GCSD Faculty Member



Long relationships give mentors and mentees time to move beyond introductions and activities. Trust develops. Young people grow older. Needs change. Conversations deepen. The relationship becomes part of the fabric of a young person’s life.



MENTORING IN ACTION



What changes when a young person has someone in their corner?

Across four different groups—mentees, parents, school staff, and mentors—the same theme emerges again and again:

confidence.

Young people see it

85% of mentees interviewed said mentoring helps them feel more confident.

84% said mentoring helps them get along with others and have friends.



98% said it helps them feel happier.

93% said it helps them feel cared about.

"I made more friends when I started mentoring. I was a better speaker. Before I would not fully smile a lot and I wouldn't really talk to people." —Mentee

Families see it

100% of parents agreed, since being matched with a mentor, their child believes in themselves more.

100% agreed their child gets along better with others.

"Connection, community and safety! A wonderful example of what safe relationships look and feel like." —Parent



School staff see it

All faculty respondents agreed that mentored students are more confident in themselves.

84% agreed that mentoring improves student behavior.

76% agreed that mentored students are more engaged in school.

“Mentored youth are happier. They feel more connected to a trusted adult. That continuity over the years is so important to helping students feel a sense of belonging, acceptance, and optimism.” —GCSD Faculty Member

Mentors see it in everyday behavior

Mentors report that youth:

- try unfamiliar activities
- speak more openly
- show greater independence
- take initiative and persist through frustration
- become more socially comfortable
- regulate emotions more successfully

Confidence starts small, with support

For mentees, it meant:

- Ordering their own lunch
- Trying the climbing gym
- Asking a teacher for help
- **Learning to ride a bike**
- Making a new friend
- Speaking in front of other people
- Discovering they are good at football
- Hosting a show on public radio
- Launching a rocket

ABOUT THESE DATA

Spring 2026 feedback included interviews with 55 year-end mentees and survey responses from 29 mentors, 13 parents/guardians, and 13 GCSD faculty/staff. Percentages reflect responses to individual questions and are rounded to the nearest whole percent. These measures describe reported and observed changes and do not establish that mentoring alone caused them.



“Mentoring has helped me get out of my comfort zone.”

—9th grade mentee

"A male figure to look up to and that believes in him."
—Parent

The People Who Show Up

Every outcome in this report begins with someone who chooses to show up for a young person. Grand Area Mentoring's volunteer mentors bring time, attention, patience, humor, encouragement, and consistency—week after week.

Thank you, mentors of 2025–2026!

- | | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| • Diana Adams | • Mary Langworthy | • Patty Weicht |
| • Lucina Albert | • Abigail Lawrence | • Michele Widera |
| • Liz Ballenger | • Karson Leonard | • Debbie Willet |
| • Zach Bastian | • Laura Long | • Innes Wright |
| • Sock Beachum | • Joyce Marienfeld | • Melanie Wright |
| • Johanna Blanco | • Kris Marsh | |
| • Kayley Boddy | • DeForrest McCleary | |
| • Susan Carter | • Jim McGann | |
| • Christopher Cleveland | • Megan McGee | |
| • Seth Davis | • Kelley McInerney | |
| • Samantha Derbyshire | • Melissa McKimmey | |
| • Karen Downey | • Daniel McNeil | |
| • Natalia Dutt | • Hillary Mead | |
| • Jean Eardley | • Kate Niederehe | |
| • Mary Frothingham | • Xandra Odland | |
| • Candice Gary | • Joanna Onarato | |
| • Cheree Geiser | • Michele Onderko | |
| • Joan Gough | • Beth Roberts | |
| • Lauralee Green | • Steven Rouzer | |
| • Diane Greene | • Melissa Roy | |
| • Maggie Gruszka | • Karen Schlom | |
| • Sandy Hinck | • Alyssa Sherman | |
| • Bradia Holmes | • Sue Shrewsbury | |
| • Angela Houghton | • Jerry Shue | |
| • Danette Johnson | • Abi Taylor | |
| • Eric Jones | • Mimi Trudeau | |
| • Linda Kunze | • Erin Vick | |

"She has someone to look forward to seeing every week."
—Parent



100%

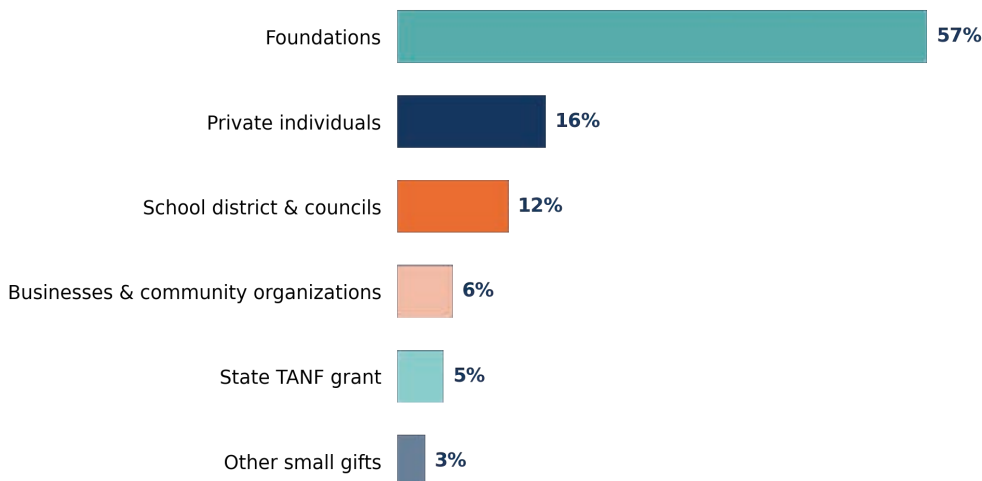
of faculty respondents agree: Mentors provide support students may not otherwise receive at school.

Resources & Sustainability

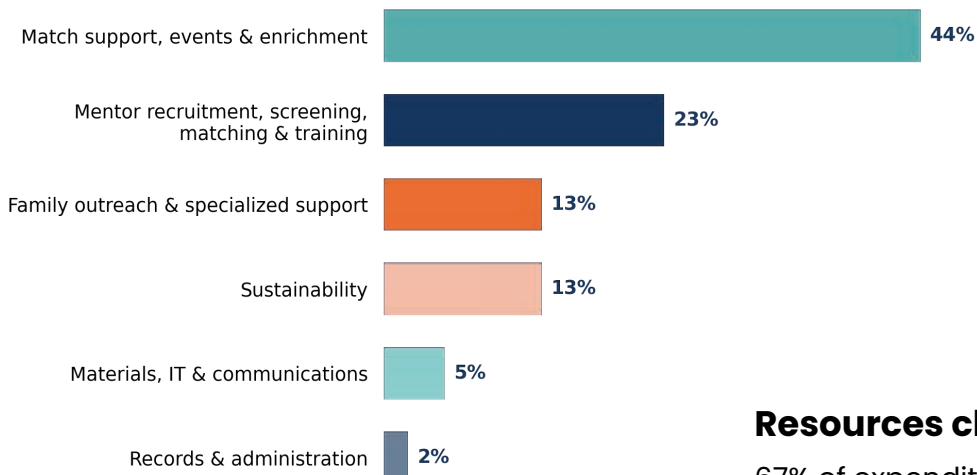
A strong fundraising year allowed Grand Area Mentoring to meet current needs while strengthening reserves for future stability. Grand Area Mentoring raised \$261,598 in 2025–2026 and invested \$223,933 in mentoring services and program operations. Because most funding must be renewed or raised again each year, reserves help protect long-term mentoring relationships through changes in revenue.

Continued annual support makes that stability possible.

WHERE SUPPORT CAME FROM



WHERE RESOURCES WENT



Behind Every Match

Each mentoring relationship is supported by professional staff who recruit, screen, train, match, supervise, troubleshoot, document, and evaluate the program throughout the year.

State TANF Grant Successfully Completed

All \$13,450 in TANF funding was invested in program services, bringing the grant to a successful close and helping establish Grand Area Mentoring's outreach specialist position.

A Diversified Base

No single funding source provided more than 14% of annual revenue.

Resources close to the work

67% of expenditures supported matches or the mentor recruitment and preparation that makes mentoring possible.

MAJOR SUPPORTERS

Grand Area Mentoring is sustained by a broad network of foundations, public partners, businesses, and individual donors. We are grateful to the following major supporters of 2025–2026.

\$20,000+

- Carl George Bjorkman Foundation
- Colin Fryer Foundation
- Grand County School District
- George S. & Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation
- Ray and Tye Noorda Foundation
- Sorenson Legacy Foundation
- Anonymous

\$10,000–\$19,999

- Utah TANF / Dept. of Workforce Services
- Geoffrey Smart

\$5,000–\$9,999

- 100 Women Who Care Moab
- Grand County Education Foundation
- Marriner S. Eccles Foundation
- Sandy Hinck

\$1,000–\$4,999

- Liz & Sam Lightner
- Moab Cares
- Moab Regional Hospital
- Grand Co. High School Community Council
- HMK Elementary School Community Council
- Moab Gear Trader 
- The Krandella Fund
- Moab Rotary Club
- Sarah Heffron & David Svendsen
- May Family Foundation / The Synergy Company
- Rocky Mountain Power Foundation
- Margaret Hopkin Middle School Community Council



Thank you for investing in relationships that last.



\$500–\$999

- Moonflower Community Cooperative
- Alison Ling 
- Catherine Bosher & Sarah Perez-Sanz
- Rob Walker 
- Dale Weiss
- Eastern Utah Community Credit Union
- Jen Sadoff
- Kelly & Thatcher Vagts
- Steve Rouzer
- Susan Roche & Bill Rau
- Marcy Till 

It Takes *This* Village

Grassroots donors, community partners, and in-kind supporters help keep the program running strong.

Grassroots Donors

- Andrew Mirrington
- NaaNue Gowan
- Kris Marsh
- Linda Bynum
- Debby Barton
- Susan Carter
- Andrew Hall
- Lauralee Green
- Desert West Office Supply
- Charlie Appelstein
- Knowles Home Furnishings
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- Michele Widera
- Kathy Ordway 🤝
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- Janie Tuft
- Melissa Nerone
- Pem Fowler
- Simon & Sarah Hall
- Tamara Freida
- Alpha Rho Sorority
- Andrea Brand
- Anne Clare Erickson
- Innes & Melanie Wright
- Karen Henker
- Katherine Niederehe
- Nations Towing
- Rani Derasary
- Sue Shrewsbury
- Lindsay Trudeau 🤝
- Heather McGee
- Jim & Vicki Webster 🤝
- Mimi Trudeau 🤝
- Janet Williams
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- Cassie Paup
- Konnie Pacheco
- Rhiana Medina
- Lisa Carter 🤝
- Steve Kennedy
- Hillary Mead
- Bradia Holmes
- Daniel McNeil 🤝
- Martha Lamb
- Brittany Warden
- Holly Lammert
- Drew Roots



MENTORING HEROES



Special thanks to our monthly donors! Monthly gifts provide Grand Area Mentoring something valuable: dependable support all year long. Recurring donors help sustain mentor recruitment, match support, activities, training, and the day-to-day work that keeps relationships strong. Thank you for showing up month after month.

In-Kind Supporters & Partners

Raven's Rim Adventure Tours — \$2,000+ in donated experiences!
Back of Beyond Books — \$1,500+ in donated books for mentees!
Moab Valley Multicultural Center — donated translation services!

Matt LaJeunesse, AWebStudio, BEACON Afterschool, Best Western Plus Canyonlands Inn, Big Horn Mountain Biking, Big Iron Tours, BLM, Climb Moab Gym, Dept. of Workforce Services, Desert Highlights, Four Corners, Friends of Arches and Canyonlands, Grand County Public Library, Gravel Pit Lanes, Karen Henker, Highpoint Hummer, Kelly Vagts, KZMU, Linda Kunze, Love Muffin, Magician Rick Boretti, Maverik Store 238, Moab Ad-Vertiser, Moab Area Real Estate Magazine, Moab Arts & Recreation Center, Moab Coffee Roasters, Moab Giants, Moab Golf Course, Moab Happenings, Moab Museum, Moab Recreation and Aquatic Center, Moab Regional Hospital, Moab Solutions, Moab Sun News, Moab Teen Center, Moab Times-Independent, Moonflower, Nan Marquardt, NAVTEC Expeditions, OARS Moab, Our Village, Paddle Moab, Sand and Stars Touring, Sand Flats, Seekhaven, Sweet Cravings, Tandem BASE Moab, Underdog Animal Rescue, The Spoke, Tom Till, WabiSabi, Wellness Collective, Whole Enchilada Shuttle, Youth Garden Project

MENTORING IN MOAB

Grand Area Mentoring

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CONNECTIONS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



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**Become a mentor.
Support the program.
Help spread the word.**