

Spring 2021

Call 435-260-9646
for more information.

www.grandmentoring.org

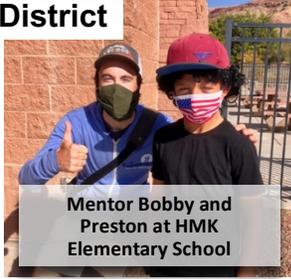
GRAND AREA MENTORING COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

“Generosity is the flower of justice.” –Nathaniel Hawthorne

Grand County School District



Kobi and Mentor Julie taking advantage of the Wabi Bucks for Mentees program



Mentor Bobby and Preston at HMK Elementary School



Mentor Liz and Ashur enjoying a special private tour at Moab Museum

Rewards for Growth

Many mentees struggle in one or more domains. For example, a teacher might recommend a child for mentoring because the student skips school twice a week, displays antisocial behavior, completes few assignments, maintains few friendships, or has weak emotional regulation strategies. These children are at risk of falling farther and farther behind as the years stack up.

With the help of veteran mentor Karen Schlom and school-based therapist Kelly Vagts, Grand Area Mentoring has begun developing an incentive program

that will directly confront these deficits. The program will leverage material and experiential rewards to aim children toward positive outcomes. In short, mentored youth will have the opportunity to earn appropriate payouts for improved behavior. Incentive plans will be scaffolded, building upon mastered concepts and habits. They will increase in both complexity and reward over the years.

Mentors will implement the program to match the needs of their unique mentees. Rewards, available in Grand

continued on reverse...

Match Spotlight: Serving Their Community

Here, Jean and Ahzure practice love, generosity, and conscientiousness through an ongoing service project where they tend animals at Our Village Community Center. Mentor Jean said, “Taking on these responsibilities, Ahzure really shines. She loves it. Her growth has been so wonderful to see. These jobs, first for the mentoring program and now for Our Village, have taught her patience and focus. She knows what it takes to meet important responsibilities, like caring for an aging horse. The animals are counting on her. More than ever, she is independent, knows what needs to get done, and really applies herself.”



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Next Mentor Orientation:

Call 435-260-9646.

About GrandAM...

This is Grand Area Mentoring's 16th year of service. The program is generously funded by Grand County School District, the George S. and Dolores Doré Eccles Foundation, Jennifer Speers, Laurie Michaels & David Bonderman, Red Cliffs Lodge, the Carl George Bjorkman Foundation, Sorenson Legacy Foundation, The Synergy Company, and many other kind organizations, partners, and donors.

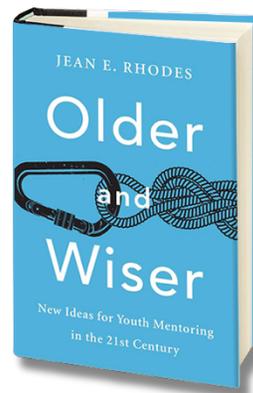
Adult mentors meet with students in one-on-one settings to encourage growth and bolster self-confidence. Their weekly sessions sometimes include board games, basketball, and computers. Other matches pursue crafts, reading, and talking about life. Under GrandAM's care, mentors and students seek activities that are mutually enjoyable and enriching.

Grand Area Mentoring creates lasting and fruitful relationships using an evidence-based approach. New volunteers are trained in mentoring best practices and always supported with regular staff contact. Volunteers offer one meeting per week and receive the satisfaction of positively impacting a life forever.

The Latest Research on Mentoring

Social scientist Jean Rhodes's 2020 book *Older and Wiser* examines the latest data on the effects of mentoring. The first point to highlight: not all interventions are equal. For example, Rhodes states, "Relationships in formal mentoring programs are relatively short-term (e.g., only around 5.8 months on average in school-based mentoring)..." Yet at Grand Area Mentoring, the average match lasts 39 months. Program quality really matters when it comes to mentee outcomes.

Rhodes suggests that positive results are not guaranteed by the mere presence of a caring adult figure. She writes: "Prevention scientists Tim Cavell and Chris Elledge have argued that the field of youth mentoring should move from the dominant 'mentoring-as-relationship' model, where the primary goal is for mentors to form bonds with their mentees, to a 'mentoring-as-context'



model, where targeted, prevention focused, goal-driven experiences take place within a helping relationship." This is why Grand Area Mentoring provides ongoing advanced training to its volunteer mentors and why it implements initiatives like community-based mentoring and the incentive program detailed in this newsletter.

Emotional regulation is a skill common to all people that can improve life, especially for mentees. Rhodes describes a program where "students who were taught to regulate their emotions showed improvements in their math and English scores, life satisfaction, and school attendance." Therefore, Grand Area Mentoring will continue to find trainers to deliver social-emotional learning skills, information on trauma, proven techniques for managing behavior and attention problems, and other topics relevant to mentee risk factors.

Rewards *(continued from front)*

... Grand Area Mentoring's incentive store (which is kindly funded by the City of Moab and by Karen Schlom), will be chosen by the mentee. Their mentor will then hold the student accountable and help them work toward a performance outcome.



Camí's attendance and time management have improved as she works toward "buying" a new backpack. Play money serves as symbolic, incremental rewards and as an object lesson in delayed gratification.

For high-risk youth, a mix of tangible rewards will be the first step. Rewards might include clothing, backpacks, books, gift cards to local establishments, and special outings with their mentors. The program aims to ultimately instill in

mentees a sense of intrinsic motivation by cultivating healthy habits and self-efficacy.

Incentivizing Graduation

With the help of a grant from Grand County, Grand Area Mentoring is also piloting a new program to extend mentoring relationships through high school. Starting with the class of 2025, *each participating youth who graduates while still matched with their mentor will earn a \$1,000 educational scholarship.*

Mentee scholarships can be used to cover a range of qualifying expenses, such as tuition, rent, books, travel, and more. The purpose of this plan is to both support teens through their challenging high school experience by way of mentoring and to partially finance their post-secondary education. 95% of mentees qualify for free or reduced lunch, so this program targets children at higher risk of dropout and who might otherwise have few resources upon graduation.