

Grand Area Mentoring Community-Based Mentoring Report

To encourage long-term mentoring attachment and improve mentee achievement, graduation rates, and emotional stability, the program established a community-based component in 2018/2019.

THE PROBLEM

By grade seven, leaving the program by choice became the reason nine out of ten matches closed, meaning 90% of mentees opted out of weekly meetings with their longtime mentors. This wouldn't be a problem if graduating from mentoring reflected these adolescents' readiness to succeed at middle school and beyond. Unfortunately, many mentees were terminating their relationships early, even as they embarked on one of life's greatest challenges: the teen years.

THE HYPOTHESIS

Grand Area Mentoring hypothesized that many mentees opted out during adolescence because of the program design, not due to aversion for mentoring as a practice. Place matters, especially to hyper-socially aware adolescent youth who may feel as though they don't have a secure place amongst their peers. At this age, to be seen with adult mentors at school can be awkward. Additionally, these teens arrived at a developmental stage where greater autonomy and responsibility are both natural and healthy. School-based mentoring was no longer the perfect intervention.

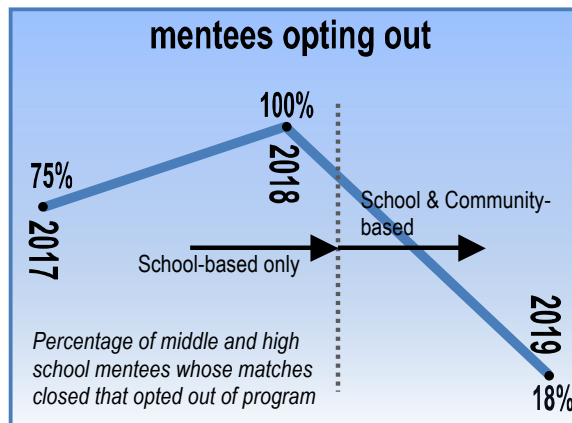
OUR SOLUTION

The program designed a community-based mentoring model for youth in grades seven and above, based on Utah's Seventh District Court's mentoring program, *The Village Project*. This initiative allowed experienced mentors to meet one-on-one with their mentees in the community at approved sites, places like the public library, restaurants, and National Parks. Extending these relationships by adjusting the program design would provide many more opportunities to guide, advocate for, and support our promising, vulnerable youth.

FINDINGS

After one school year, the results are promising. Faculty, mentees, and mentors experienced and observed the value of the new program design.

- **100%** of surveyed faculty agreed that community-based mentoring is developmentally appropriate for middle school and high school students.
- **100%** of participating community-based mentees said they like meeting off campus more than at school.
- **100%** of sixth graders want to continue mentoring in middle school next year, 33% more than last year.
- **100%** of middle and high school students opted in for next year!

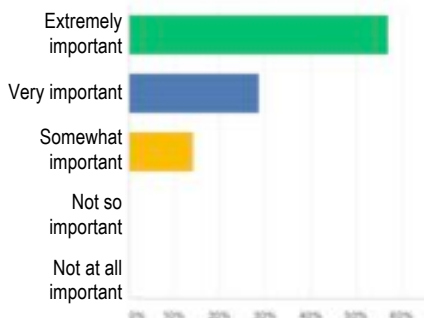


Mentor Sock & mentee Jonathan taking advantage of community-based mentoring in Arches National Park.

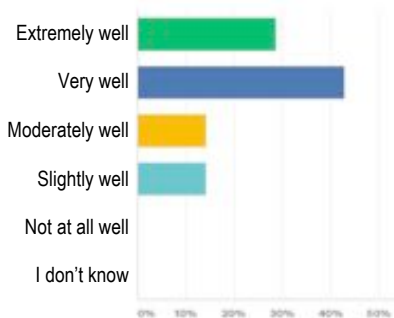
In 2018/2019, matches explored businesses, ate ice cream, visited mentor workplaces, rode bikes, hiked, shopped at Moonflower Community Cooperative for healthy snacks and ingredients, and much more.

mentor surveys

Compared to school-based mentoring, how important is community-based mentoring to your mentee?



How well does community-based mentoring meet the needs of your mentee?



Director's note: mentees at the middle and high school outperformed their younger peers in all three key measures: 80% earned fewer office referrals, 75% improved their grades, and 70% missed fewer days of school. Over the coming years, Grand Area Mentoring intends to boost adolescent participation and improve upon this new component. For more, email: grandareamentoring@gmail.com

"We can go off-campus by ourselves now. We can take our time and nobody has to rush us. We don't stay at school. People want their own privacy with their mentors." –7th grade student

"This year we rode the bikes a lot. Most of the time we left school. Community based mentoring means you can go a lot more places rather than staying in one area. It's fun and more exciting than staying at school." –10th grade student

"I like community based mentoring better because we can just go, just me and her. We don't need a whole group. It's just better. It kind of gets boring to stay in the same building all the time. We went to the Moab Diner, City Market, Back of Beyond Books, the Spoke. My favorite trip was when we took her dog for a walk and went to her workplace." –7th grade student