

December 11, 2006

Dear Mr. Barber

We are psychology majors at Trinity College conducting a project on public policy. Over the course of the semester we have investigated the public school system in the Hartford region concerning the effects of mainstream education for hearing-impaired children. We decided to focus our research on designing ways to benefit hearing-impaired children in the Hartford area.

There are two different tracks for teaching deaf students: oral and sign language. Each of these philosophies is driven by method. Individual variation among students' causes them to be differently effected by each method. Research suggests that one method does not work better than the other. Instead, specialists agree that the most beneficial way to teach children is to devise an individually tailored program for each child designed to help them achieve their full academic potential.

Because hearing impaired children are placed in different academic settings to encourage academic growth, students' social interactions differ greatly. Research has shown that hearing impaired children may be physically integrated in a mainstream setting, but still remain emotionally isolated. While some hearing impaired students thrive academically in the mainstreamed atmosphere, they could be suffering emotionally, lacking relationships with other children who share the same disability. As a minority group, it is important for deaf children to have some interaction with peers who can relate to their feeling of isolation. For students not attending a specific institution for deaf education, peer seclusion is a significant problem. One specific hindrance for children who do not interact with many other individuals is that they are unable to establish significant relationships with mentors to whom they can relate on a meaningful level. Having a successful deaf role model enables children to have a motivating goal for which to strive.

In our interviews with a number of educators and auditory specialists on auditory, a great general need was expressed for a program that would allow hearing impaired students to interact with other deaf children in the community. Children are placed into public school systems based on where they live, so some schools contain only one deaf child. Our research suggests that there is a lack of interaction between deaf children in several public school districts. We believe that a program bringing deaf students together would be very beneficial in Hartford and surrounding school districts.

Our proposal is for the creation of a mentoring program for hearing impaired students in the local community. This program is designed to foster relationships among hearing impaired students. We are titling this program "Mentor Magic". The goal of this program is to provide a fully beneficial and enriching program for children dedicated to establishing friendships and bonds within the hearing-impaired community in the Hartford area. The mentoring program would draw from the Hartford and West Hartford

public school systems, as well as, The American School for the Deaf. Mentor Magic would bring hearing-impaired children of the same district together and would also allow children to branch out even further, interacting with hearing-impaired students from the surrounding areas.

This program will meet one Saturday per month at Trinity College for two hours. Some activities will be broken down by age level so as to target age-appropriate behaviors, but there will be several all-group activities that will include everyone. The older children will be encouraged to interact with and help the younger children as mentoring is found to be a meaningful experience on both the giving and receiving end. Attached is a sample lesson plan, outlining potential activities. Also attached is an informational flyer, which we hope appropriate community members will impart to students who would benefit from this mentoring program.

We are hoping that this program can somehow function in accordance with Trinity College, but we are unsure to what extent the school would be interested in helping get this program on its feet. We hope you can aid us in making this vision a reality through the help of the community service office, as we believe the institution of this program to be of great benefit to the community. Any help or direction you could give us would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Amanda Kopman
Trinity College Box #702164
300 Summit St
Hartford, CT 06106
(865) 207-6428

Anne De La Mothe Karoubi
Trinity College Box #
300 Summit St
Hartford, CT 06106
(917) 226-2320

Proposal for Mentor Magic

PURPOSE

The goal of this program is to provide an enriching program for children, dedicated to creating friendships and bonds within the hearing-impaired community in the Hartford area. The program will bring hearing-impaired children of the same district together and will also allow children to branch out even further, interacting with hearing-impaired students from the surrounding areas. The program will also allow college students to interact with hearing-impaired children, planning and supervising the monthly activities, as it is through Trinity College that this program shall take place. This program is designed to foster relationships among hearing impaired students.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Who

An active member is one that attends monthly meetings and activities. Obligations of a participant include regular attendance to scheduled activities and compliance with rules and directions as set forth by the director(s). Participation in the program may be terminated if the member's conduct is deemed inappropriate, putting the safety of other members at risk. This is to be determined at the discretion of the director(s) and faculty advisor(s). The following groups shall be considered for membership into the organization:

1. Hearing-impaired students enrolled in the public school systems in the following districts: West Hartford, Hartford.
2. Students enrolled at The American School for the Deaf
3. Students enrolled at Trinity College

Where

Program will take place one Saturday per month at Trinity College

When

Program will take place one Saturday per month from 10am-12pm and parents will be responsible for making plans to drop off and pick up their own children.

Meetings

- Will consist of:
 - Age Specific activities
 - By placing children with their age group, we hope to foster meaningful peer relationships
 - Large group activities

- Expected that the older children will assist the younger children in group activities
- Establish relationships with mentors

Responsibilities

Director(s):

- Communication between members, advisor, group leaders, etc.
- Organize and propose activities

Treasurer(s):

- Oversea allocation of funding
- Work with Trinity College to assure grant
- Continuously look for possible outside funding agencies
- Keep records of all costs and expenditures

Faculty Advisor(s): A faculty member or school official from any of the participating venues will be appointed this position.

- Oversee other officers
- Advocate for the program in their respective school or venue

Group leaders: Any member of Mentor Magic that is also a member of the Trinity College Student body.

- Assure the safety of the children participating in the program
- Interact with the children using fun and creative games
- Provide a mentor relationship when applicable
- Maintain moral conduct congruent with that set forth by Trinity College

Mentor: Any high school student or older who participates in the program will be referred to as a mentor

- Aid the younger children in activities and tasks presented.

Suggested activities

Groups will be divided according to age for some age-specific activities but all students will come together for other large group activities.

1. Lower School sample activities (ages 4-8)
 - Duck Duck Goose (have them use sign language for "duck" and "goose")
 - Red Light Green Light, One, Two, Three: (can use posters with green stop light "go", red stop light "stop", and numbers 1, 2, 3 or sign language)
 - Reading and acting out stories and nursery rhymes
 - Musical chairs consisting of turning a light off instead of having music stop
2. Middle School sample activities (ages 9-13)
 - Soccer game

- View a movie that has been subtitled for the hearing impaired and follow with a group discussion (signed if necessary) after event
3. High School sample activities (14-18)
- Would largely be assisting the younger children with their activities
 - View a movie that has been subtitled for the hearing impaired and follow with a group discussion (signed if necessary) after event
 - Tag football
 - Sign language debate
 - Bowling
 - Guest Speaker
4. Large group sample activities
- Ice breaker (name game)
 - Holiday/Season-focused sample activities
 - Decorate Easter eggs and Easter egg hunt
 - Make gingerbread houses out of milk cartons during December
 - Cut out different-shaped snowflakes in January
 - Make Valentine's for parents in February
 - Plant flowers in May
 - Water activities (slip and slide, sprinkler) in June
 - Paint an American flag on a white bandana in July