Fostering Strong Minds: Academic Mentoring Program for Foster Children in Hartford

Purpose:

The purpose of this program is to improve the academic standings of foster children at The Village for Families and Children and raise each child's potential for academic success. Foster children at The Village for Families and Children go through numerous homes, participate in support groups, and are involved in several mentoring programs with volunteers from outside of the organization. Because of the problems faced by foster children, issues of academic success often take a backseat. The Village for Families and Children is concerned with the poor academic performance exhibited by many foster children. To help mitigate this problem, we propose to establish an academic-mentoring program where foster children at the Village for Families and Children would receive academic guidance in order to facilitate their learning and hopefully encourage them to aim towards attending college.

Program Outline:

WHO: High school age foster children from The Village for Families and Children, Trinity College students, Ms. Ursala Jackson (Project Director of The Village for Families and Children)

WHERE: The Village for Families and Children
331 Wethersfield Avenue
Hartford, CT 06114

WHEN: Wednesday Afternoons, 4:30-6:00 p.m.

DURATION: there will be a one-year participation commitment by Trinity College students and foster children students.

Meetings:

Three types of meetings will occur throughout the program including weekly, monthly, and biyearly meetings. Each of these meetings are aimed at facilitating healthy relationships structured around academic tutoring.

Weekly Mentor-Mentee Meetings:

The objective of these meetings is to provide the foster children a time for focused attention on schoolwork with the help of the Trinity mentor.

- Ice breakers and snacks
- Identifying academic goals for the meeting
- Completing homework for the evening (if completed early see activities)

Monthly Mentor Meetings:
The objective of these meetings is to provide a period of time for the Trinity mentors to exchange thoughts and concerns on experiences with the program. A member from The Village for Families and Children will join these meetings to aid in any other information useful to facilitate the weekly sessions.

Biyearly Meetings:
The objective of these meetings is to provide a time for mentors and mentees to socialize outside of the academic setting.

- First semester- Holiday party
- Second semester- Pizza and Movie Night

Mentor Responsibilities:

- Participate in orientation program
- Coming to all weekly, monthly, and biyearly meetings
- Bringing a positive and helpful attitude to weekly sessions
- Understanding and using proper academic support strategies

Mentee Responsibilities:

- Coming to all weekly and biyearly meetings
- Bringing all homework and positive attitude to complete work

Activities:

- SAT hot words
- Brain teasers
- Sudoku

Doreen Jordan

331 Wethersfield Avenue

Hartford, CT 06114

Ms. Jordan,

We are Trinity College Psychology majors who have been researching foster care in Hartford, Ct as part of our Child Development class. Our research has led us to some disturbing realities; according to a 2006 report of the Casey Family Programs, a child welfare agency operating in 7 states, there are troubling statistics about foster children's academic success when compared to the general population. For instance, only 3% of 25 to 34 year old foster care alumni have a bachelor's degree, as opposed to 28% in the general population. Additionally, of the 70% of high school foster children who reported that they planned to attend college, only 30% actually do. Our research with Ms. Jackson and yourself highlighted the findings that academic shortcoming in foster children is both a national problem and a significant problem in Hartford, and specifically in The Village of Families and Children organization.

Given the overall of poor academic performance of foster children in the Hartford area, we would like to propose a new community service program for Trinity College. The overall goal of this program would be to improve the academic standings of foster children at The Village of Families and Children and raise each child's awareness of the possibility of their academic capabilities. The program would pair Trinity college students with high school foster children for weekly meetings as academic role models and figures of social support. Trinity College students would facilitate their mentees in completing homework and other academic pursuits (including college applications for seniors in high school). Thank you so much for your time, we hope you will consider instituting this program.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Fentress
Box 701615
300 Summit Street
Hartford, Ct 06106
Kathleen.Fentress@trincoll.edu

Taraneh Khosrowshahi
Box 701457
300 Summit Street
Hartford, Ct 06106
Taraneh.Khosrowshahi@trincoll.edu

Ursala Jackson

331 Wethersfield Avenue

Hartford, CT 06114

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Joe Barber
300 Summit Street
Harford, CT 06106

Mr. Barber,

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