

Report of gathering of mentors held on November 18th 2006

This was held at November 18th, 2006 at Tutorial High School.

The meeting commenced with Ms Pollard welcoming members who attended the meeting, the purpose of which was to check on relationships and to give participants information on the status of the Project.

Ms Pollard also expressed the hope that new information would be gained that can be used for the development of the project.

Intentions

The main focus of this phase is to carry through with the current Mentee. It is felt that the children would have greater benefits if the relationship span was over a longer period. It is hoped that by the end of the school year, August 2007, there will be improvements academically or behaviourally or perhaps both.

E-Mentoring which was a consideration of the past term should be streamlined and made effective by December.

The participants were informed that the Mentoring Model was shared with the Headteachers of Secondary Schools within the Region 4 District. Those schools which benefited ranged from Agricola to Cummings Lodge. The meeting was informed that the Guidelines for Mentors along with the Mentee Application form were distributed so that other interested schools would have literature to guide them through the process. Also imparted was the fact that every school needed make adaptations to suit the environment in which they operate.

Sharing Experiences

Mentors brought a wealth of experiences to share with others. These were collected over time and in some cases were different and challenging.

Experiences and sentiments on mentoring were:

1. A Mentor indicating that she was fully occupied with the Mentee and the siblings to whom mentoring seemed to have extended to and so was not ready to undertake another.
2. Another mentor has indicated that handling the current Mentee was quite taxing. Concerns were raised about the economic concerns with economic status of the Mentee's family. Facilitation of better conditions was temporarily managed but the general deprivations still exist and academic achievement has been affected. The general belief of the meeting was that if general support infrastructure was unavailable, then learning must be affected.

3. A suggestion that recording the negative stimuli that impact on Mentoring and bringing them to the focus of higher authority to address may to solve the problem.

From this, relating problems such as nutritional needs and how to address them were discussed. The suggestion of perhaps a school feeding program planned with the aid of a nutritionist can be considered. Members were also reminded that the bigger issue the management of the program for success.

Another suggestion was the scientific approach to managing nutritional deficiency. This involves assessment of nutritional deficiency, development of a program and evaluation. This would entail close work with a nutritionist and can follow the **Oslo Model**. This Model is about simple effective diets. It was felt that the answer may not be in issuing hot meals but in using another diet system. Any system to implemented or considered should be based on technical advice.

Another angle of the problem some felt was that families were not planning meals properly. Maybe the problem here was that the school system is deficient in teaching basic nutrition skills. The question asked is what the curriculum should do to address matters. Another thought was that the negatives of the American eating culture have been adopted.

4. Another Mentor has been encouraging the Mentee to read. The main trust is the keep the child focused as she appears to be well adjusted. Other Mentors have mentioned that they have little work to do with their Mentee. The informed the gatherings that their role is basically to keep the child focused and deal with other issues which are secondary in nature.

Another thought was that Mentoring was considered as the broadening of horizons. Visiting new places such like Pegasus, attending tea parties, concerts were some of the newer, interesting experiences.

Some Mentors still maintain relationships with Mentees from previous programs and have found the experience a pleasure to share with others.

5. Encouraging the child to respond in conversations was discussed. The Mentor explained that responses tended to be a syllable and the child does not visit the Mentor even when encouraged.

On this subject, it was revealed that Tutorial Students seem to have problems visiting St. Joseph's High.

Suggestions were that maybe the Mentor can walk to the school with the child. Perhaps communication during the upcoming Christmas season can result in a change of attitude.

6. Home visits for a Mentor extended to the entire family. The child has improved academically; the Mentor/Mentee share thoughts and the parents are keen on mentoring. Other Mentors have endorsed that there were general improvements.

7. Experiences that were complex were shared. This was the case of a Mentee wanting to be visited or visit on demand. This child was expelled from the home due to a lack of communication and wanted to overnight at the Mentor. There was

the problem evasion of truth about the incident. Compounding the issues was the fact that the mother did not respond to the Mentor's invitation to discuss the incident. It appears that something is drastically wrong in the family. References were given about the home conditions which seem not to help the problem.

8. The concept of mentoring amongst family members was experienced by one Mentor and shared with the group. This resulted from the devastation a younger sister being ineligible to attend Bishops' High as dreamed and the older sister taking on the job of encouraging her to make adjustments in her attitude. It was about the bigger sister encouraging the little one to be positive about her new school that she was awarded.

Inclosing the discussion of Mentors' experiences, the observation was made that the experiences and needs of the children the two schools differed significantly and that the Mentor did fill a gap. Generally, the consensus was that mentors were willing to try to continue relationships with the current Mentees and maintain those with their 'old' Mentees.

Mentoring Activities.

The Students of the Mentoring Class of Tutorial High School have been invited to participate in the upcoming UNICEF Workshop on November 20th 2006 at Le Meridian Pegasus. The children have been asked to present role plays which deal with violence against and abuse of children in the community, the home and the workplace.

The children will present their thoughts on the problems by highlighting the realities of the abuse in the home – the verbal and physical abuse by the frustrated parent-, the abusive and violent conduct of the minibus conductors and drivers which result in rape and the treatment of students by teachers who seek to vent their frustrations. The children will be accompanied by their Form Mistress and the Co-ordinator to the day's activities.

Any Other Business

Material for future meetings will come from the matters raised today.

The plans for the future are;

1. Mentees fun meeting. Part of that activity would include a discussing on what is happening with them and should point the committee in some direction to get the parents onboard.
2. Plan for Mentors to meet.
3. Plan for parents to meet and discuss issues