

# Mentoring For Success



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## Americorps Volunteers Bring Service to Mentoring



Taymyr Bryant and Lucas Phillips  
AmeriCorps Volunteers

This year two AmeriCorps workers will play an essential role in the Student Mentor Program of the San Francisco Unified School District. AmeriCorps, a national service program, places interns at program sites for a year to provide service in support of communities. They will provide direct service that focuses on the education and social needs of students in mentoring relationships with

adults. Workers and mentors bring great enthusiasm and creativity to the program which in turn helps youth achieve their educational potential. The main task of the worker is to put youth development theories and methods into practice to help matches deepen their relationships and stay together. According to Taymyr Bryant, "It is up to the LSPs and students at different school sites (what activities they'll do), but we are here to help guide them in a direction where service learning becomes a part of the program. It is up to the students what they want to learn, and we want to be there to support them and encourage them to develop new skills." AmeriCorps Volunteers are helping Site Coordinators to ramp up and engage matches in purposeful leadership activities throughout the second half of the school year.

## Special thanks to our supporters!

Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools  
Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
Golden State Warriors Professional Basketball Team

## Mark Your Calendar

New Training Opportunities!!

January 23, 2010 10:00-4:00  
SF Education Fund, 727 Golden Gate

This orientation and training is targeted at community volunteers interested in mentoring. It offers volunteers an orientation to working in schools facilitated by SF Ed Fund from 10am-noon followed by a Mentoring Best Practices Training facilitated by Alex Vila and Stacey Daraio from 1-4pm. To register go to:

[http://www.sfedfund.org/programs/volunteers\\_individuals\\_applymentor.php](http://www.sfedfund.org/programs/volunteers_individuals_applymentor.php)

All attendees to the morning workshop will be offered the chance to complete the necessary background clearance to become a mentor

February 10, 2010 3:30-5:00pm  
Everett Middle School

This skill building workshop is designed for mentors to develop more satisfying relationships with student mentees.

Part I  
Strategic Sharing Workshop  
Facilitated by Honoring Emancipated Youth

Part II  
Developing Individual Agreements  
Facilitated by Alex Vila & Stacey Daraio,  
Youth Development Consultants

Stipends will be provided to SFUSD attendees who complete the registration and attend this after school training

# Mentoring For Success



## Beginning, Building, Testing the Mentor-Mentee Relationship

By Elaine Ellis, MSW, Match Support Coordinator

At this point in the year, most adult mentors have been through at least one Mentor Workshop and are building or continuing to develop their relationships with their mentees. As educators and community members who work with youth, you likely know that most relationships with young people begin with a honeymoon phase. But what happens when you move past that everything's-rosy early stage into more challenging times? Maybe your mentee is reluctant to meet on a regular basis or he/she is trying to leave early, and coming up with excuses. On the other hand, you may have a mentee who cannot get enough of you, wanting to linger after meetings or seeking you out when he or she should be in class. Like all relationships, mentor-mentee matches can encounter bumps which can be made smooth by practicing two elements of high-quality mentoring: consistency and persistence.

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Mentoring For Success is supported by  
Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools  
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## Match Spotlight

Temuge Tsagaan, a Social Work intern with Mentoring For Success, interviewed mentor Carol Lopez and her two mentees Yesenia Gomez and Lesly Dzay at Paul Revere Middle School in November. Ms. Lopez is a 3rd grade Spanish Immersion teacher while Yesenia and Lesly are both 7th graders at Paul Revere's Middle School.

### What led you to join the mentoring program? How did you meet?

**Yesenia Gomez:** Well, I had some problems at home, so they thought it was a good idea for me to have a mentor. However, I also really wanted to have a mentor, so I was really glad to join this program.

**Lesly Dzay:** They wanted me in it. Ms. Lopez and Yesenia invited me to the program.

**Ms. Lopez:** I have known them for the past 4 years because they were both in my 3rd grade class. Girls, can I be honest about what happened?... Yesenia was meeting with me alone for about half the year last year. One of the things we talked about was her relationship with Lesly. They were kind of having some middle school problems of people not wanting to be friends,

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San Francisco Unified School District  
Student Support Services Department  
1515 Quintara Street  
San Francisco, CA 94116  
(415) 242-2615  
[www.healthiersf.org](http://www.healthiersf.org)



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## Spotlight *(continued from page 1)*

so I suggested that maybe we should try to have Lesly join us and work on the relationship. They had been together since kindergarten and had drifted apart. So, we decided to invite Lesly to join us to see if they could work on their relationship a little bit.

### **How did you feel before the mentoring started and why?**

**Yesenia:** I was happy to have a mentor, especially to have Ms. Lopez as my mentor because I knew her since 3rd grade, when she was my teacher. I was sure what to expect like to talk to Ms. Lopez and have lunch together etc.

**Lesly:** I was happy and relaxed because she was my teacher too. Also, my sister was in her class and Ms. Lopez knew my parents since my 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. So, I felt comfortable.

**Ms. Lopez:** I asked to have Yesenia because I knew her and I wanted to connect with her again. I was excited to do the mentoring and have her as my mentee. I did not really know exactly what we would do immediately, but I knew we would spend time together and have lunch together.

### **How long has your mentoring relationship been occurring? What activities have you done together?**

**Yesenia:** We started our mentoring relationship last year in September 2008, when I was in 6th grade. We usually have lunch together, and we sometimes have fieldtrips together. I really enjoyed when Ms. Lopez took a bus with me downtown to Union Square to see the trees last year during my Christmas break. We also saw the decorated windows and had lunch. It was a great time of the year, and I really enjoyed the downtown with Ms. Lopez.

**Lesly:** Another trip we took was in spring. Me, my little sister who was in Ms. Lopez' class at the time, Yesenia, and Ms. Lopez four went to a big glass house called Conservatory of Flowers. I really enjoyed the trip because we explored a nice place together.

**Ms. Lopez:** One thing I enjoyed doing with the girls was that we baked cookies together. But, they each came separately to bake cookies with me in my house on their separate days. Would you like to talk about what cookies we made together Lesley?

**Lesly:** Yes. We made chocolate chip cookies together. What Ms. Lopez made me do was read the recipe, measure the ingredients, and mix them together. We put it in the oven and had to wait, which was fun. Then Ms. Lopez gave me the cookies to take home with me.

**Yesenia:** Yes, It was fun to bake the cookies and bring them home to my family.

### **Has anything surprised you about the mentoring relationship?**

**Yesenia:** We were happy to spend time with each other, and it has been easy. I let my feelings out. Oh, one thing surprised me was that it was nice to see Ms Lopez 's house and her cats.

**Lesly:** I think it has gone well. We (me and Yesenia) had minor problems, but we could settle them and could solve them.

**Ms. Lopez:** What surprised me is how open they have been talking to me about their feelings whether good or bad. They shared their feelings, ups and downs of their relationship very openly until they reached the point where they get along with each other nicely.

### **What are you looking forward to doing together in the future?**

**Ms. Lopez:** Maybe cooking together again some time in the future and also going on hike together. Maybe hiking around the Stowe Lake and going up to the little mountain on top just to do something active for all of us and to have some exercise together in nature.

**Lesly:** That sounds really fun! Yes, I want to go hiking.

### **Ms. Lopez, did you have any sort of mentor experience when you were a youngster?**

My cousins were good mentors, and my auntie was a good mentor too. They were good positive role models to me. However, I never had a mentor in this kind of setting like at school. I myself did not have a sister, and I craved having sisters. Therefore, it was nice to play with my cousins and learn from them in a family setting. We visited each other often and stayed together often as a family.

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## Spotlight *(continued from page 2)*

### **Any advice you would like to give to mentors or mentees who have just begun their relationship?**

I think it is very important to spend time talking with children in order to support them even if it is just having lunch together or any other meaningful small activity. It is huge to them. I try to meet with my mentees at least once a week. It is also important that if you have more than one mentee to make time to give them each separate time alone.

### **Match Support:** *(continued from page 1)*

**Consistency**—can be a challenge to an already packed schedule when working in a school or in an off-site workplace. Missed meetings, however, can result in setbacks to the building of your relationship. As the adult, offering reminders of upcoming meetings and sticking to a regular routine models responsibility and dependability to your mentee. Similarly, consistent meetings may lead to the building of the relationship, in some cases leading to clinginess. In these situations, it is important to model boundary-setting. Reaffirm your boundaries of meeting times, the duration and regularity, with both students and parents, and stick to them. You may want to use phrases like, “I care about you, but I would like to stick to our set times, when I can just focus on our time together.”

**Persistence**—is very important since positive results of mentoring are directly related to duration of the relationship. In fact, early-terminations can limit or in some cases have harmful effects on student achievement, self-efficacy and engagement! Sometimes it takes time to gain momentum, which can lead to feeling less interested in persisting with the relationship, especially when the student pulls away and starts to test your willingness to stand by them. **Remember:** 1. **Don't expect too much too soon.** Building trust takes time. 2. **Stick with the relationship** even when your mentee's enthusiasm wanes. 3. **Be flexible, creative and open** to sharing resources. While you may be a consistent and persistent adult in their lives, you are not the only adult in this child's life. So utilizing your own supports and building theirs is an important part of your role as a mentor. Hang in there. You are doing very important work. For ideas or support please talk to the Mentor Program Site Coordinator at your school, or contact Erin Farrell or Elaine Ellis from Mentoring For Success at 415-242-2615.



### **Participating Schools**

- AP Giannini Middle School
- Aptos Middle School
- Bessie Carmichael
- Bret Harte Elementary School
- Civic Center Secondary School
- Claire Lilienthal
- Everett Middle School
- Francisco Middle School
- Herbert Hoover Middle School
- Hilltop High School
- Horace Mann Middle School
- International Studies Academy
- James Denman Middle School
- James Lick Middle School
- Marina Middle School
- Mission High School
- MLK Middle School
- Paul Revere
- Presidio Middle School
- Rooftop Alternative School
- Roosevelt Middle School
- Rosa Parks Elementary School
- Thurgood Marshall High School
- Visitacion Valley Middle School
- Willie Brown College Preparatory Academy