

WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

A Look into Youth Mentoring

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By

Jonathan Sullivan

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Abstract

The goal of this project is to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and different methodologies in which youth mentoring is done. Metrics such as drug use, alcohol abuse, and retention will be used in determining which methodologies provide the most success. Interviews will be conducted with mentors, and administrators in mentoring programs. In particular three programs will be looked at as case studies: Books and Basketball, WPI Academic Advising, and The Summer Project. Suggestions will be made as to what activities lead to the greatest success.

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1 Introduction

In the United States crime prevention is a top priority in order to assure civil stability in our towns and communities. Property values often reflect the desire of the general population to live in what are considered “safe” neighborhoods. But what makes a neighborhood safe? A study recently released by WalletPop ranks the safest states and cities by comparing the local crime rate to the national average.

Behavioral patterns are formed early in life. Behaviors begun at an early age can quickly transform into habits, and which later form addictions. Much of how we will react and act is determined in the first 14-16 years of our life. This is especially relevant to crime and crime prevention. As illustrated by Figure 1-1, the crime rate increases dramatically as a function of age demographic. The crime rate more than doubles each age group between the ages of 12 and 14.

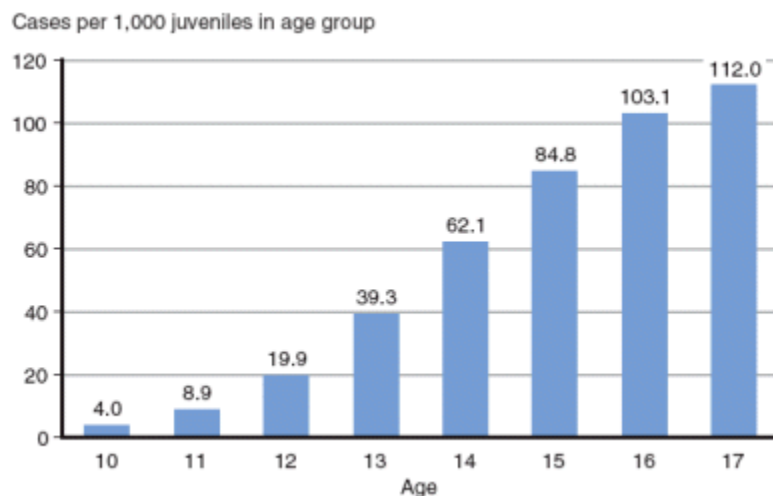


Figure 1-1: Juvenile Delinquency by Age Group in 2004

Therefore, many steps are taken to reduce the likelihood of criminal patterns in developing youth. Approximately 75% of school districts across the nation participate in the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) program, primarily for 5th grade students (roughly 10 year old). Many schools

supplement this training with a health program focusing heavily on the dangers of drug abuse throughout middle and high school.

Large programs such as D.A.R.E. and health classes, are extremely useful at reaching the masses, but lack a sense of individual focus needed to reach what are often referred to as at risk youth. At risk youth are individuals that, statistically speaking, are more likely to participate in criminal activity such as drug and alcohol abuse that would severely jeopardize their future. In such situations, a one on one relationship is often most effective. These one on one relationships are often in the form of mentoring relationships.

Many youth mentoring programs exist across the United States. Large programs such as the Big Brother Big Sister (BBBS) program stretch from coast to coast and serve thousands of individuals in all 50 states. Other programs are smaller and serve a more localized and specific need, such as Books and Basketball, which focus on elementary students in the Boston Area who are struggling academically.

Through the course of this project, the results, achievements, and limitations of both such programs are analyzed. Conclusions are drawn in regards to the effectiveness of these programs, and suggestions are made regarding how the reach and effectiveness of these programs can be expanded and applied universally.

2 Background

2.1 At Risk Youth

At-risk youth, as used in this report, refers to youth with statistically higher chances for chemical abuse, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school dropout behaviors. These behaviors often lead to juvenile delinquency, criminal activity, and, in turn, at risk offspring. According to leading researchers in

the youth-development field, several risk factors have been identified. They include: alienation and rebelliousness; early antisocial behavior; friends who use drugs; family management problems; and oppression, racism, and unemployment.

2.1.1 Risk Factors

Dr. Larry Bendtro states that youth do not become at risk as a result of their negative behavior or character, but rather as a result of influences from their environment. He goes on to identify four such negatively impacting environmental hazards for youth.

First, youth have destructive relationships. These stem primarily from the home, but can include other relationships as well. A child, young, innocent, and hungry for love has been jaded by those individuals with whom he or she interacts. Far too often the child is rejected or abused by those he or she wants to love. The child becomes “unable to trust others and expects to be hurt in relationships with others.” This includes, but is not limited to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse.

Second, the child feels a sense of hopelessness or futility. This often times is a direct result of neglect or apathy by those with whom the child interacts with. He or she can often feel as though their efforts go unrewarded or unrecognized. The lack of positive reinforcement leads the child to feel a deep sense of disappointment and loss.

Third, the youth has learned irresponsibility. This is closely related to the feeling of hopelessness discussed earlier. Often times a child may mask the feeling of hopelessness and powerlessness with other behaviors. The child may become indifferent, defiant, and rebellious in an effort to be noticed and feel empowered.

Finally, the child feels a loss of purpose. Youth, just like adults, want to be wanted. If neglected, underappreciated, or alienated, a child will often feel as if they are not important in the world, without a concrete meaning to their existence.

2.1.2 Statistics

At risk youth, statistically speaking, are at a disadvantage. They are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol, become teenage parents, drop out of school, and engage in criminal activity. The effects of at risk youth are staggering. According to a report entitled *One Third of a Nation* released by the Education Commission of the United States and the American Council on Education, in some cities as many as 7 out of every 10 students drop out of high school. Also, one out of every four teenage girls becomes pregnant, 80% of which drop out of high school. US teenagers rank number one in the world for drug abuse.

2.2 Youth Mentoring Programs

These statistics cry for action. More and more youth become neglected by parents. In the home, they are bombarded by abuse both in person, and online. But, just as only 10% of an iceberg is visible above the surface of the water (see Figure 2-1), so it is with youth. Often times the warning signs are only the start of the problem. If a child resorts to alcohol abuse at an early age, there could very well be an underlying problem that goes beyond the drinking. The problem most likely originates from one of the

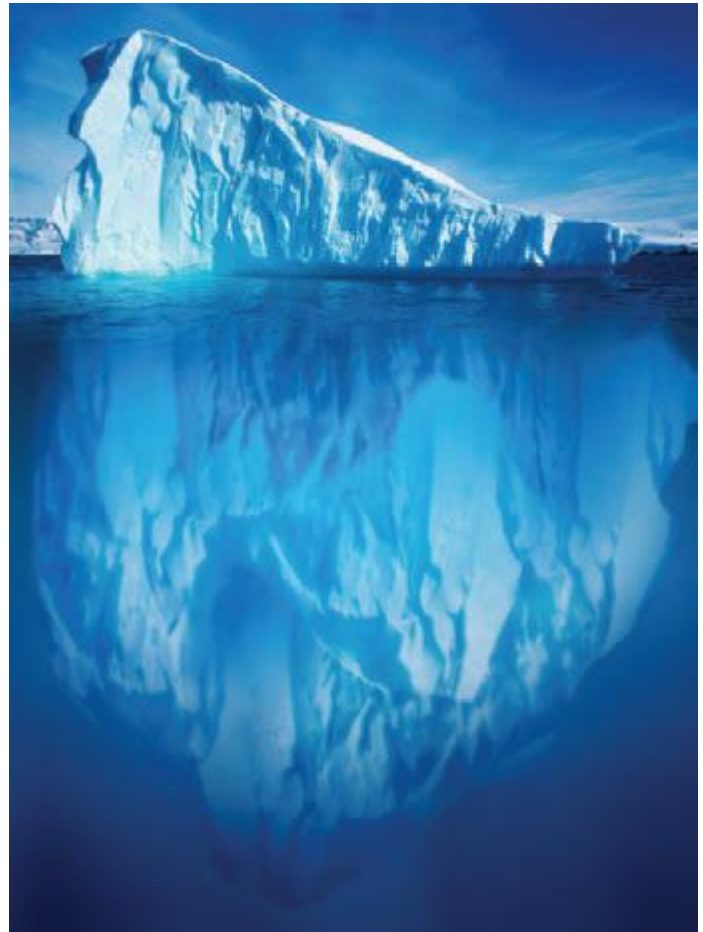


Figure 2-1: The Iceberg Phenomenon

environmental hazards as mentioned by Dr. Larry Brendtro. If we are to take that child and teach him or her about the dangers of alcohol, we may be missing the source of the problem, and it could reoccur. In such situations, the best course of action involves finding out what is at the bottom of the iceberg, and then eliminating that environmental hazard. This is most easily done on a one on one basis with the aid of youth mentoring programs.

2.2.1 Big Brother Big Sister

The most well known youth mentoring program in the nation is the Big Brother Big Sister program. Established in 1904, the Big Brother Big Sister program seeks “to help children reach their potential through professionally supported, one-to-one relationships with mentors that have a measurable impact on youth.”

The Big Brother program was first established by a young New York City court clerk named Ernest Coulter. After noticing a large increase in the amount of youth passing through his courtroom, Coulter determined that these youth could benefit from a relationship with a caring adult. He knew that this would help the youth stay out of trouble. In an effort to make a difference, he gathered 39 adult volunteers who each agreed to befriend one boy.

The movement quickly spread. In just eight short years, active Big Brother organizations could be found in 26 cities. By the organization’s 12th birthday, it had spread to over 96 cities. With its growing success, the program started to receive national recognition. Several US presidents, including Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Calvin Coolidge, and Theodore Roosevelt Jr become involved in the program. In fact, in 1958, just six years after the death of the Coulter, Big Brother became chartered by Congress.

Big Brother Big Sister currently serves in all 50 states and in 12 countries internationally. It is the largest youth mentoring program worldwide, serving 280,000 children around the globe. But this

success did not come without many trials and hardships. It was a long path of learning, growing, and optimizing the system.

With over 100 years of service, much has been learned about youth mentoring by Big Brother Big Sister. The lessons they have learned can be found incorporated into their policies and procedures. Much can be learned from what an organization with such experience does.

2.2.2 Books and Basketball

Books and Basketball is a small, local program in the Boston Area designed to help academically at risk youth gain the drive and desire needed to excel. Once a week, youth who are having trouble at school meet and study with young professionals in the Boston Area. Following which, both youth and mentors to participate together in, basketball and other activities are opened up for. Books and Basketball has been running for the past seven years.

2.2.3 The Summer Project

The Summer Project began in May 2009. Founded by Kristal Chamberlain and Heather Jepsen in the small town of Washington, UT, the Summer Project is aimed at growth through service. Matching mentors up with youth, the Summer Project aims to help both youth and mentors realize the joy and sense of self-gratification that comes through serving others.

2.2.4 WPI Academic Advising

Worcester Polytechnic Institute has established several mentoring systems in order to help at risk students receive the care they need. An at risk student, as defined by WPI, includes students struggling academically, first generation college students, and first years students. These students often have a difficult time adjusting to the pressures of college life.

Realizing that the aforementioned risks decrease the retention rate, and ultimately the revenue of the school, WPI has invested much time, money and energy into the mentoring of said students. Currently, first year students are given 3 sets of mentors to help guide them. The first, a Community Advisor, is a peer mentor that spends time with the freshmen once a week. The second, a Residential Assistant, lives with the students and acts as a counselor when sought after. Finally, an Academic Advisor is a faculty member assigned to each student in order to help them guide themselves in choosing classes and majors. Thus, by establishing three sets of mentors, WPI has assured that an incoming first year student has a mentor for academic, social, and daily needs.

3 Methodology

In order to draw conclusions and recommendation with regards to youth mentoring, a systematic approach to acquiring information is required. In this report, two major fountains of information were used. A literary review was preformed to investigate known information regarding youth mentoring. Then, several interviews were conducted in order to expand on the findings of the literary review.

3.1 Literary Review

Mentoring programs and the study thereof have existed for many years. In an effort to explore the effectiveness and challenges that come along with such programs, it is imperative to look into work that has already been done. An extensive literary review has been conducted looking at the need for youth mentoring, the theory behind youth mentoring, and the published results thereof.

3.1.1 Mentoring Theory

Many books, articles, and guides have been written with instructions about how to mentor. Over time, mentoring has evolved from an underexplored mystery to a well developed science. Many

businesses and corporations use the principles of mentoring in order to help promising young talent develop into senior leadership.

In conducting a literary review, the “do’s” and “don’ts” of mentoring will be explored. As primary objectives, we seek to know what the great pitfalls of mentoring, specifically youth mentoring, are, and what sort of precautionary measures can be taken to avoid said pitfalls. Also, we will explore the best practices of youth mentoring, specifically how to effectively and efficiently convert areas of weakness in the youth into strengths. Lastly, we seek to know how to expand the program and encourage willful participation on both the part of the youth and also the mentors.

3.1.2 Big Brother Big Sister

The Big Brother Big Sister program has been the central focus of many private and government studies. There is a plethora of information published about the successes and shortcomings of this organization. In this report, we will focus our literary review on the findings of a September 2000 report by Joseph P. Tierney and Jean Baldwin Grossman entitled “Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters.”

This report focuses on the objective or numerical impact, and also the subjective or emotional impact of the Big Brother Big Sister program. In conducting this literary review, the following questions were asked.

1. What are the results of the Big Brother Big Sister program?
2. What are the costs associated with running the Big Brother Big Sister program?
3. What policies and/or methodologies have impacted those results positively?
4. What policies and/or methodologies have impacted those results negatively?
5. What impedes the Big Brother Big Sister program from expanding further and reaching a greater amount of youth?

The answers to these questions help draw conclusions that are applicable not only to the Big Brother Big Sister program, but across the board.

3.2 Interviews

Information was drawn from those that have, or currently do participate in some form in youth mentoring programs.

3.2.1 Cary Chamberlain - Clinical Psychologist / Social Worker

As a psychologist, one has the opportunity and the training to observe people from many different walks of life. Such a person can provide great insight into the life of at risk youth, specifically what puts them at risk, how to best avoid those situations, and what can be done in order to reverse negative behavior.

Cary Chamberlain, a clinical psychologist and social worker was chosen to be interviewed because of his large amount of experience working with youth who have been at risk. In addition to his professional experience, Cary has also served as a Bishop for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and has much experience dealing with youth and their families on an ecclesiastical level as well.

In speaking with Cary, the following information was sought after:

1. Why is childhood development so important? What are the most formidable years?
2. What risk factors jeopardize childhood psychological development?
3. What kind of a role can mentors play in the development of a child?
4. What experience ought we to expect for the youth out of a successful youth mentoring program?

His insight to these questions will aide in making conclusions that can be applied across the board to all youth mentoring organizations and will help us understand what can be done to avoid putting a child at risk.

3.2.2 Mentors

3.2.2.1 *Christina Sullivan - Books and Basketball*

Christina Sullivan, BU graduate and non-profit worker, volunteered for a period of 30 months as a tutor / mentor with the Books and Basketball program. She voluntarily gave of her time weekly, without any obvious compensation. In interviewing Christina, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. How did you find out about the opportunity at Books and Basketball?
2. What motivated you to give away your time on a weekly basis without any obvious compensation?
3. What was the greatest strength, from your point of view, of the Books and Basketball program?
4. As a mentor, what most impeded you from succeeding?
5. What sort of changes would you suggest to be made to the Books and Basketball program?

The opinions and information received from interviewing Christina will be taken and conclusions will be drawn for application to other such programs.

3.2.2.2 Heather Jepson - The Summer Project

Heather Jepson, student at Southern Utah University, co-founded the Summer Project. In her role with the Summer Project, Heather worked as a mentor on a weekly basis for the first year of the program. In interviewing Heather, the answers to the following questions are sought:

1. What was your experience in working with the Summer Project as a mentor?
2. What, from your point of view, was the greatest strength, or drawing point, of the Summer Project?
3. What was the biggest challenge you faced as a mentor?
4. What sort of changes would you suggest for the second year of the Summer Project?

The opinions and information received from interviewing Heather will be taken and conclusions will be drawn for application to other such programs.

3.2.3 Administrators

3.2.3.1 Emily Campbell - Books and Basketball

Emily Campbell, co-leader of the Books and Basketball program, is a Spanish teacher in Hingham, MA. In addition to her career, she spends Tuesday nights with adolescents and professionals at the Books and Basketball program. Emily Campbell is a valuable resource in knowing what motivates both mentors and mentees to participate. In the interview, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What sort of youth do you pursue to be a part of the program?
2. How do you find and motivate mentors to participate in the program?
3. What sort of changes have you made to Books and Basketball and what impact have they had?

4. What difficulties do you see that impede the reach of Books and Basketball from extending?

The experience and insight that Emily shared can be applied to other programs, and most directly, programs that are run on a strictly volunteer basis. Also, as a program in a growing phase, it may be used as a model for growth for other such organizations.

3.2.3.2 Kristal Chamberlain - The Summer Project

Kristal Chamberlain, co-founder of the Summer Project, is a young and talented student attending Wellesley College. During a summer at home, she took the initiative to begin a youth mentoring program for those of her home town of St. George. As one without much experience, but sufficient drive and determination, she is an excellent case study of administration of such programs.

In speaking with Kristal Chamberlain, we primarily sought to find the difficulties and challenges of beginning a new mentorship program, as well as methodologies that aided in the development of said program. Questions asked included:

1. What motivated you to start up such an ambitious project
2. What were some of the challenges you faced as you began the Summer Project?
3. How were you able to work past these challenges?
4. From what you learned in your first year of the Summer Project, what would you change for next year?

Looking at the experience of an up-start administrator such as Kristal Chamberlain, we can determine difficulties in forming such a program. Also, we can learn of ways to avoid such difficulties and how to work through less than ideal circumstances.

3.2.3.3 Connie Peppes - WPI Academic Advising

Connie Peppes, associate director of academic advising at WPI agreed to be interviewed and share insights she has obtained from running various mentorship programs at WPI. In interviewing with Connie Peppes, an insight into mentor selection, training, and metrics was sought. Questions asked include the following:

1. What guidelines or qualifications do you use for selecting mentors?
2. How do you train and prepare mentors to best fulfill their role?
3. What sort of metrics are used to measure success?
4. To what do you attribute your success?

The WPI administration of internal peer mentoring can be used as a model for how such mentoring programs ought to be run. Information regarding successes and challenges will be invaluable for other such organizations.

4 Results

4.1 Literary Review

4.1.1 Mentoring Theory

A successful mentorship program is a combination of three complex and interdependent pieces: the mentors, the mentees, and the administrators. All three must be involved in order for the experience to be successful. When these three operate in harmony, the mentees' lives are transformed for the better. But when one of these pieces is not operating well, then little good is accomplished and in some cases, further damage can be done to the life of the mentees.

Mentoring programs aim to give youth an escape from the situations that put them at risk. If during their time with their mentor, they are exposed to similar situations, not much is done in terms of improving their ability to reach their potential. For example, if mentors are not carefully screened, and a youth is paired with a less reliable mentor, they youth may be let down by their mentor. This will develop a sense of distrust in the relationship and reinforce the belief that adults cannot be trusted.

Mentors must serve as a role model for their mentees and fill the void left by their parents. The negative influences in their life are combated by positive experience that the mentor can bring.

4.1.2 Big Brother Big Sister

The Big Brother Big Sister program has been an extraordinarily successful way of reaching out to those youth who are considered at risk. As illustrated in Figure 4-1, the impact that the program had on these children is tremendous. Initial drug use dropped by nearly 46%, skipping school dropped over 50%, and the number of times these youth hit someone else dropped by over 30%. Clearly, the program is succeeding in its goal of helping children receive their potential.

These statistics are not a reflection of mentoring programs in general, but rather, a reflection on the Big Brother and Big Sister program.

A September 2000 report entitle **Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brother Big Sister** with respect to these statistics stated, *“This...does not provide evidence that any type of mentoring will work, but that mentoring programs that facilitate the specific types of relationships observed in the BBBS*

Outcome	Change
Antisocial Activities	
Initiating Drug Use	-45.8%
Initiating Alcohol Use	-27.4
Number of Times Hit Someone	-31.7
Academic Outcomes	
Grades	3.0%
Scholastic Competence	4.3
Skipped Class	-36.7
Skipped Day of School	-52.2
Family Relationships	
Summary Measure of Quality of the Parental Relationship	2.1%
Trust in the Parent	2.7
Lying to the Parent	-36.6
Peer Relationships	
Emotional Support	2.3%
Number of Youth	959

Note: All impacts in this table are statistically significant at at least a 90 percent level of confidence.

Figure 4-1: Benefits of Big Brother Big Sister Program vs Control after 18 Months of Treatment

program work. In our judgment, the positive impacts observed are unlikely to have occurred without both the relationship with the mentor and the support the program provided the match.”

Big Brother Big Sister program takes much time to ensure a positive match between mentor and mentee. Through a volunteer screening process potential mentors who are unlikely to keep their commitments or could become a safety risk to the youth they serve are weeded out. Matching procedures used by BBBS take into account the preferences of the youth, their family, and the volunteer. A professional case manager is used to analyze which volunteer would work best with which youth.

In addition to taking steps to ensure a positive match, the Big Brother Big Sister program establishes a support network to facilitate success within each match. Mentor training is provided that includes communication and limit-setting skills, tips on relationship-building and recommendations on the best way to interact with a mentee. Also, intensive supervision and support of each match is given by a case manager who has frequent contact with the parent/guardian, mentor and mentee, and provides assistance when requested or as difficulties arise.

In addition to the administrative factors that contribute to the success of such a program, there are several important qualities of the relationship between mentor and mentee. First off, there is a great deal of one-on-one time spent together. An average match meets three times a month for a period of roughly four hours each encounter. That equates to an average of 144 hours per year spent together. Additionally, some spoke via telephone, increasing the time of interaction. Furthermore, the relationship is not defined as a teacher, but as a friend. The mentor is instructed to support the mentee in his or her endeavors and to lead by example, not necessarily to change his or her behavior.

With the great amount of success that Big Brother Big Sister has had on the youth they serve, it raises the question, “what impedes the program from expanding further?” The concerns are not related

to the availability of volunteers, as indicated by Roaf et al. in his 1994 research, but rather is limited by the time managers have in order to screen and supervise volunteers. With the addition of more staff, more could be served, but that equates to a direct increase in the cost of the program.

The costs associated with the Big Brother Big Sister program are relatively large. According to an estimate by Joseph P. Tierney et al. who examined over 80 agencies, the cost per match is \$1,000. Therefore, it can be estimated that a \$1 million sum is required to for each 1,000 matches. It is very difficult for local agencies, which rely very heavily on private donations and small amounts of government funding.

4.2 Interviewing Data

4.2.1 Cary Chamberlain - Clinical Psychologist / Social Worker

According to Cary Chamberlain, the adolescent period, beginning as early as 8 years old up to the age of about 16 or 17, is extremely important in determining how a child acts. During this formidable time, youth develop a sense of self, who they think they are, and how others feel about them. When asked what puts youth at risk, Cary responded:

“From my experience, the parents create the largest risk factor, mostly when they are out of the home. For a variety of reasons parents find that they cannot be at home when the kids are out of school. In many cases, these children come from single parent homes, where the remaining parent must work a very demanding schedule to provide financially for the family.

“These parents will drop the children off at day-care, where they do not get a chance to develop those powerful and needed parent child relationships. It’s a product of the environment of a daycare. There are 20 to 30 kids and only about 3-5 staff. That makes it extraordinarily difficult for the children to receive the nurturing and supervision they need. They don’t have a mentor or a teacher to be there with

them. In these situations, when the parent does pick up the child, they, in many cases, are physically and emotionally exhausted and cannot spend time with their child. There is another missed opportunity for love and care missed.

If this pattern continues, the children look elsewhere for their role models. The role models that they have available for them are sports star, actors, musicians. It's sad to say, but they do not lead by example. We here songs filled with messages of crime, drugs, and sexual promiscuity. In many of these cases, those children follow in the footsteps of those they look to as role models and turn towards delinquency.

Also, in homes of wealth, the same risks factors arise. Children are spoiled with toys and money and left mostly unsupervised and uncared for while their parents are off at work, filling their appetite for wealth. Drug and chemical abuse in the home is also a large risk for youth.

When asked what role mentors could fill in order to combat this, Cary stated:

"Above all, a mentor can be a role model for the youth. They fill the void in many cases left by their parents. They ought to give the youth self esteem, show them a fun time through wholesome activities, lead by example, and provide a nurturing relationship with an adult..."

"I would recommend getting them Involved with sports or other activities to associate with kids that make good choices. Give them a chance to develop connections with somebody. Big Brother Big Sister does a great job at this. An association with someone that is having a "normal" life gives them an escape from the troubles and stress they face. "

4.2.2 Mentors

4.2.2.1 Christina Sullivan - Books and Basketball

Christina Sullivan was like many who volunteer with youth mentoring programs. She was passively seeking the opportunity to give back to the community. After being informed about the program through an announcement made at the church which she attends, Christina jumped at the opportunity to give back. In her own words she states:

“I was looking for opportunities to get involved in community and give back...For me, it was the love for teaching [that drew me towards Books and Basketball]. I love the opportunity to explain concepts, facts, and ideas to help them understand. It’s so rewarding when something just clicks. It’s like you “turned on the lights” for them. Also, at the time I was considering going into teaching as a profession.”

When asked about what she loved most about the Books and Basketball program, Christina cited the relationship she was able to develop with her mentee. She said:

“I worked with same student for entire time I was there. This allowed me to build relationship with my mentee. Also, it encourages accountability. I got the opportunity to follow up on home and family life, grades, report cards, etc. Not only that, but we have time for fun after. We spend 45 minutes to an hour on homework, and then we got to bond with the kids over basketball, or board games. We became more than just tutors, we became role models.”

For her, the biggest challenge she saw was the transportation. At one point the location was extremely convenient, but that changed with a change in jobs. Also, she noticed that the location was difficult for her mentee to get to as well. She mentioned that some weeks her mentee would not be able to come, primarily because of lack of transportation.

When asked about what she would suggest changing from her experience, she stated:

“Perhaps coordinating with dependable people could give rides on a consistent and regular basis would eliminate “lost weeks” where the mentor shows up without there being a mentee.”

4.2.2.2 Heather Jepsen - The Summer Project

Heather Jepsen, as other mentors interviewed, had a desire to serve the community and give back to others. When asked about her experience, she said:

“I loved being around kids. I enjoy being a part of their lives, becoming a friend and making a difference. I know how much of a difference it makes in someone else’s life. I remember those teachers and those teenagers that made a difference in my life while I was growing up. I wanted to give back. So this was perfect for me.”

Heather identified what she found to be the strengths of the summer project. She noted the unity that it brought between all walks of life, both mentor and mentee. She stated:

“It brought the kids together. They were from all over the city. We got to become friends. I learned how to recognize the needs of other and give back, and so did they youth. We worked as a unit. I was able to see the development of the kids as individuals and as a group. They felt like they made the community a better place.”

When asked about the biggest challenged she faced as a mentor, Heather paused. After some thought, she proceeded to share:

“The most challenging thing, for me, was to have patience. Sometimes kids are crazy and get riled up. They are kids. Breaking the ice with them was also very difficult. I struggled in the beginning to get them enthused about what we were doing. Sometimes it was hard to look at them as a person, and figure out who they are and how to help them out best.”

Jonathan: What sort of changes would you suggest for the second year of the Summer Project?

Heather: I would suggest starting earlier. Getting the word out to the students more efficiently would help. Perhaps if we could get into the schools and publicize that way, we could have found more youth to participate.

4.2.3 Administrators

4.2.3.1 Emily Campbell - Books and Basketball

Emily Campbell provided some insight into the recruitment of both youth and mentors. When asked about how the program got in contact with at risk youth, she stated:

“We recruit students directly from several congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the Boston Area. The population that makes up these congregations is primarily students of Latino background or from Haitian Creole background. We generally go to visit the congregations in August to get students to sign up for the program and then work with the Young Men’s and Young Women’s leaders within the congregations to recruit more students. We also tell the students to invite their friends.”

Emily gave the impression that finding youth was not a difficult task. Many youth, with some encouragement from parents and youth leaders, would want to participate. However, it was a little more difficult to find mentors that would last. She said:

“Finding and motivating mentors really falls on the volunteer spirit in the Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints]. Each fall, we have a sacrament meeting dedicated to the Books and Basketball program, and we talk about it. We then have a tutoring sign up / training meeting after church in each of the single adult congregations in Cambridge to try to get more tutors. I also send out regular e-mails with testimonials and requests for more tutors.”

Given the success that the program has had, the question was raised about increasing the reach of the program in order to reach more youth. With regards to the difficulties of doing so, Emily noted:

“The problems that we have are encouraging consistency in attendance from the students and communication between the students and their tutors. We have a lot of students that do not show up on a given night and do not tell their tutors. Also, the other problem is that amount of time that is required of the tutors. There is a high level of “burn out” among the tutors especially through the winter months. It is a huge commitment to go to Boston (usually 30-45 minute trip one way) every Tuesday to work with a student for one and a half hours and then turn around and go back home. It is very tiring. I wish there were a way to ease the burden on the tutors.”

4.2.3.2 Kristal Chamberlain - The Summer Project

Kristal Chamberlain, in her interview, provided excellent insight into the work and challenges that go into starting up a youth mentoring program. When asked about her motivation, she stated:

“When I was a teenager I didn’t have very good self esteem. One summer I attended a summer camp entitled “Be the Best You” in Salt Lake City. It was focused on being your best self, and featured many motivational speakers. Mostly, the program was aimed to help us develop self esteem through service. That experience changed my whole life. It changed the view I had on myself. I might not be the prettiest or the most popular, but I could help others- even adults. I could make a difference. That was amazing to me. I thought that if I could provide that same experience for others, then perhaps they might have the same turn around I did...I thought to myself, ‘how can I reach youth? By doing service.’ I could provide opportunities for service to establish a lifelong pattern of service. I could show them that, despite their age, they can make a difference in the world.”

In making her ambition a reality, Kristal encountered some difficulties. According to her, the largest challenge the Summer Project faced was:

“Commitment. No one seemed to be as committed as me. Trying to get mentors to commit was difficult. They are just college aged kids and some felt like that they had better things to do with their time during the summer. Getting them to volunteer time was difficult. With the Summer Project, we didn’t have the name recognition that the Big Brother Big Sister organization has. It’s not as obvious to some that this experience, in addition to being extremely rewarding, looks great on a resume. There was a great deal of uncertainty about who would come from week to week.”

Kristal also shed some light on how she was able to work past the difficulty of commitment. She said that she was able to help the mentors with their commitment issues:

“by giving incentives. I would remind them that it would look good on a resume. People, in general, are self serving. And being so, we need to be reminded of how an experience benefits us. I would also establish constant contact with the mentors, both by more traditional methods, such as calling, emailing, and also through social media such as sending out Facebook invites. As time progressed, people caught the vision. They found out it was fun and rewarding to serve. Then, they made it a priority.”

Through her experience, Kristal learned much about starting an organization and some of the pitfalls of youth mentoring work specifically. When asked about what she would change for next year, she responded:

“One of the biggest challenges was having a split presidency. I would change that. No more co-presidents. Also, I would try to get others involved in the administration, and avoid making it a “one man show”. I would give mentors more responsibilities by delegating the planning of the service projects to them. People seem to be more committed to projects they help plan. Also, I would modify slightly how we use the mentors. I would assign specific mentors to specific mentees. I believe we could

emphasize more why we were serving, and ensure that the experience was that of service learning not just service.”

Kristal also had some closing remarks about mentoring and service in general. She noted:

“Sometimes we don't look within our community to be able to help. We often times look outward to other countries, other cities, other families, and forget those right next to us. We think that because we don't have the means to help those far away or distant from us, we can't make much of a difference, and so we don't try. To that I would say, don't ignore the people in your neighborhood. In many situations, opportunities for service are right under our noses, and often is ignored. .”

4.2.3.3 Connie Peppes - WPI Academic Advising

Connie Peppes oversees three major mentoring programs at WPI, namely: Resident Advisors, Community Advisors, and Academic Advisors. Community Advisors most closely resemble a standard youth mentoring program, so that received the bulk of the attention during the interview. According to Connie, community advisors are:

“Upperclassmen that spend time with new incoming freshmen during their first semester. They focus on social issues that new students might face...Freshmen, especially those that are first generation college students, are at risk for not succeeding in a new environment such as college. What we do is to ensure that they have a positive experience here so that they will stick with the program.”

Connie takes great care in selecting potential mentors to serve as community advisors because they are the success of the program. She states:

“Any potential community advisor must submit an application. They must be in good standing academically, they must be a leader, and be recommended by a faculty member. After their applications

are received, we interview them to ensure that only the most qualified advisors are chosen. It is a very competitive program as around 60 apply for only 38 spots.”

After selected, community advisors are not left to their own devices. Great care is taken in assuring that they have the tools they need to succeed. According to Connie:

“Each community advisor is required to attend a summer training session, and a training session on leadership. They are instructed what to do in certain situations and how to react. They are given a list of suggested activities to do with their group. They are required to spend five hours a week with their group, and at some point during the first semester, have an alcohol awareness session and a time management session with the students.”

In recent years, the community advising program has had a great impact on the incoming freshman. This past academic year, student retention was up to an all time high of 95%. When asked what the rise in retention could be attributed to, Connie responded:

“Recently, we have been requiring the community advisors to submit time sheets with the activities that they do each week with their students. We feel that the accountability which this brings helps ensure that meaningful activities are performed each week.”

5 Analysis

5.1 Impact of Youth Mentoring Programs

It is clear that youth mentoring programs can have a great deal of positive impact on the life of the youth that they serve. With proper execution, a youth mentoring program will influence youth in most all aspects of their lives. As illustrated in Figure 4-1, a properly executed youth mentoring program will influence a youth academically, socially, and in their family relationships.

Youth who benefit from such mentoring programs are much more likely to “pay it forward.” That is to say, a youth who sees the benefit and influence such a program can have in his or her life, is much more likely to want to help others escape what they were able to escape. Kristal Chamberlain was the beneficiary of a service learning program, and because of it, founded a service learning organization in which she can make an impact in the lives of others. Thus, a upwards spiral of giving begins.

6 Recommendations

Many conclusions have been drawn as a direct result of the study that has gone into the making of this report. The information and lessons learned from this analysis is of much use to existing youth mentoring programs, as well as programs that are yet to be formed.

6.1 Existing Programs

In this study, a variety of programs at different stages were examined including Big Brother Big Sister, Books and Basketball, the Summer Project, and WPI Academic Advising. Each organization had its own strengths and weaknesses. Lessons learned from one group can be applied to others across the board. The following are recommendations based on conclusions drawn from this study.

6.1.1 Common Pitfalls

There are several common pitfalls that slow down the progress of youth in various mentorship programs. These pitfalls adversely affect the programs in two distinct ways: the effectiveness, and the reach.

6.1.1.1 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the program is directly related to the quality of the relationship that exists between mentor and mentee. Although many of the programs observed in this study had quite

effective mentoring relationships, the following recommendations are made in order to improve upon them.

Mentors ought to be screened before they are paired with mentees. Failure to do so, as in the case of the Summer Project, can result in having less committed mentors. Also, in more extreme situations, it can lead toward a negative experience for the youth participating in the program.

For programs such as Books and Basketball, where the mentor and mentee meet at a neutral location, a great deal of administration is needed to ensure that the mentees have transportation. A lack of communication results in wasted time for the mentors, which leads to an increased risk of “burn out” as termed by Emily Campbell.

6.1.1.2 Reach

The reach of a program is, simply put, how many people are affected by it. In order to maximize the effect of a program, in addition to maximizing the quality of the relationships, the quantity can also be maximized. Most of the programs examined in this study are not growing at an appreciable rate. Recommendations are made on what to avoid in order to expand the reach of a program.

In many cases, the administration is often left to paid staff, which ensures a professional execution of the program. But often, it is because of money that the paid staff cannot increase in size, and thus creating a bottle neck. While it is important to ensure that specific tasks are carried out professionally, the growth of an organization will be stunted prematurely if the paid staff does not delegate some responsibilities to trusted volunteers.

6.1.2 Best Practices

Throughout the course of this study, some innovative practices were discovered that have proven to be valuable for some organizations. The application of these “best practices” across the board would improve both effectiveness and reach of each organization

6.1.2.1 Effectiveness

A particularly notable innovation put into practice by the Summer Project is the principle of service learning. This service learning combats three out of the four major factors, as defined by Dr Larry Bendtro that put youth at risk, namely a sense of hopelessness or futility, learned irresponsibility, a loss of purpose. Now youth and mentors can bond together while helping others gain hope, learning responsibility, and feeling a sense of purpose.

Also, requiring mentors to report results and activities weekly, as done by WPI Academic Advising, greatly improves their accountability. According to President Thomas S Monson, “When performance is measured, performance improves. When performance is measured and reported, the rate of improvement accelerates.” This will ensure that time spent with mentees is quality time, and is not wasted away, or not performed all together.

6.1.2.2 Expanding Reach

A direct result of implementing a service learning model, as done in the Summer Project, is increased funding. As more time is spent performing service, less funding is needed in to carry out meaningful activities. This lowers the budget needed to be allocated to each match. With less of the funding going towards providing activities, more can be spent on performing background checks and filtering through potential mentors. Not only that, but countless others are affected by the good works which are performed by the mentor/mentee group.

6.2 WPI Community Outreach

In light of the discoveries and conclusions drawn from this report, a recommendation is made in favor of beginning a WPI Community Outreach program, based on youth mentorship and service learning.

6.2.1 Goal

The goal of the organization is three-fold. First and foremost, to increase the likelihood that children in the city of Worcester, reach their fullest potential. Second, to give WPI students opportunities to serve the community and impact the lives of individuals. Third, to engage in service that improves the life of all citizens of Worcester.

6.2.2 Administrative Structure

In order to ensure a successful program, a proper administrative structure must be in place. The organization ought to become a registered WPI club overseen by a faculty advisor. This would allow for the program to be run by students with some faculty supervision.

6.2.3 Methods

The process would begin in The president-elect of the WPI Outreach club would contact school leaders of the Worcester Public Schools near the beginning of April each year. They would encourage school officials to identify students who could benefit from a mentor / service learning relationship.

Beginning with New Student Orientation in August, students of WPI sign up to be a part of the organization, committing a few hours each week. The president and vice president of the WPI Outreach Club meet together during the thirds week of A-Term in order to pair up mentors with mentees. If needed mentors may be assigned more than one mentee. The officers of the WPI Outreach club work with community leaders to identify service projects to be performed on a weekly basis. Members of the

Community Outreach club meet with their mentees weekly to perform service. Contact outside of service time is encouraged.

6.2.4 Potential Benefits

The possible benefits for such a program are large. First and foremost, there will be a dramatic impact in the lives of those mentees who participate in the program. This will decrease the probability of crime and drug use by those involved. This will increase the public perception of the quality of life in Worcester.

Secondly, WPI students will have constant opportunities to participate in giving back to their community. The perception of WPI by those affected by the service of WPI will increase. WPI students will feel a sense of accomplishment that goes along with serving others. This will increase the probability that they will be service oriented and giving back throughout their lives.

6.2.5 Estimated Cost

The cost associated with this organization is quite small. The budget would be as shown in Figure 6-1. The total cost of the program is \$540 plus the time of the faculty advisor. With the benefits of such a program in mind, the cost of the WPI Outreach club is quite small.

Item	Cost
Recruitment	\$ 100.00
Travel	\$ 140.00
Service Supplies	\$ 150.00
Thank You Banquet	\$ 150.00
Total	\$ 540.00

Figure 6-1: WPI Outreach Club Annual Budget

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8 Appendix

8.1 Interview Transcripts

8.1.1 Cary Chamberlain – Clinical Psychologist / Social Worker

Jonathan: From your experience, why is childhood development so important? What are the most formidable years?

Cary: Youth start to develop a sense of self, who they think they are, and how others feel about them. Their self confidence and conversely, their self consciousness begin to take shape. This is largely based on their role models. The middle school to high school age for our youth is such a significant period for us. We are very impressionable. In these years, we determine who we are and how we fit-in to society. Many times the label's we receive as an adolescent follow us throughout our lives, both in word and in thought.

Jonathan: What risk factors jeopardize childhood psychological development?

Cary: From my experience, the parents create the largest risk factor, mostly when they are out of the home. For a variety of reasons parents find that they are cannot be at home when the kids are out of school. In many cases, these children come from single family homes, where the remaining parent must work a very demanding schedule to provide financially for their family. These parents will drop the children off at day-care. There they do not get a chance to develop those powerful and needed parent child relationships. It's a product of the environment of a daycare. There are 20 to 30 kids and only about 3-5 staff. That makes it extraordinarily difficult for the children to receive the nurturing and supervision they need. They don't have a mentor or a teacher to be there with them. In these situations, when the parent does pick up the child, they, in many cases, are physically and emotionally exhausted and cannot spend time with their child. There is another missed opportunity for love and

care missed. If this pattern continues, the children look elsewhere for their role models. The role models that they have available for them are sports star, actors, musicians. It's sad to say, but they do not lead by example. We here songs filled with messages of crime, drugs, and sexual promiscuity. In many of these cases, those children follow in the footsteps of those they look to as role models and turn towards delinquency. Also, in homes of wealth, the same risks factors arise. Children are spoiled with toys and money and left mostly unsupervised and uncared for while their parents are off at work, filling their appetite for wealth. Drug and chemical abuse in the home is also a large risk for youth.

Jonathan: What kind of a role can mentors play in the development of a child?

Cary: Above all, a mentor can be a role model for the youth. They fill the void in many cases left by their parents. They ought to give the youth self esteemed, show them a fun time through wholesome activities, lead by example, and provide a nurturing relationship with an adult.

Jonathan: What experience ought we to expect for the youth out of a successful Youth mentoring program?

Cary: Some of the youth you would be helping have been sexually abused or abused in some other manner. In many situations, their siblings are not fulfilling a mentoring role. They are not taking interest in their bother or sister's life. I would recommend getting them Involved with sports or other activities to associate with kids that make good choices. Give them a chance to develop connections with somebody. Big Brother Big Sister does a great job at this. An association with someone that is having a "normal" life gives them an escape from the troubles and stress they face.

8.1.2 Christina Sullivan – Books and Basketball

Jonathan: How did you find out about the opportunity at Books and Basketball?

Christina: I was looking for opportunities to get involved in community and give back. An announcement was made at church about the program, which stated that volunteers were needed.

Jonathan: What motivated you to give away your time on a weekly basis without any obvious compensation?

Christina: For me, it was the love for teaching. I love the opportunity to explain concepts, facts, and ideas to help them understand. It's so rewarding when something just clicks. It's like you "turned on the lights" for them. Also, at the time I was considering going into teaching as a profession.

Jonathan: What was the greatest strength, from your point of view, of the books and basketball program?

Christina: They really made the effort to make sure kids came through carpooling, phone calls, etc. It seemed a lot like Big Brother Big Sister. I worked with same student for entire time I was there. This allowed me to build relationship with my mentee. Also, it encourages accountability. I got the opportunity to follow up on home and family life, grades, report cards, etc. Not only that, but we have time for fun after. We spend 45 minutes to an hour on homework, and then we got to bond with the kids over basketball, or board games. We became more than just tutors, we became role models.

Jonathan: As a mentor, what most impeded you from succeeding?

Christina: When I began mentoring, I worked really close by, so I could come straight from work and it would take about 15 minutes. But then I changed jobs, and my commute jumped to about 45 minutes. Also, the location was difficult for my mentee as well. Her family was somewhat unreliable with giving her a ride.

Jonathan: What sort of changes would you suggest to be made to the Books and Basketball program?

Christina: Exchange phone numbers and make calls the day before or day of to ensure that everyone will be there. Perhaps coordinating with dependable people could give rides on a consistent and regular basis would eliminate “lost weeks” where the mentor shows up without there being a mentee.

8.1.3 Heather Jepsen – The Summer Project

Jonathan: What was your experience in working with the Summer Project as a mentor?

Heather: I loved being around kids. I enjoy being a part of their lives, becoming a friend and making a difference. I know how much of a difference it makes in someone else’s life. I remember those teachers and those teenagers that made a difference in my life while I was growing up. I wanted to give back. So this was perfect for me.

Jonathan: What, from your point of view, was the greatest strength, or drawing point, of the Summer Project?

Heather: It brought the kids together. They were from all over the city. We got to become friends. I learned how to recognize the needs of other and give back, and so did they youth. We worked as a unit. I was able to see the development of the kids as individuals and as a group. They felt like the community a better place.

Jonathan: What was the biggest challenge you faced as a mentor?

Heather: The most challenging thing, for me, was to have patience. Sometimes kids are crazy and get riled up. They are kids. Breaking the ice with them was also very difficult. I struggled in the beginning to get them enthused about what we were doing. Sometimes it was hard to look at them as a person, and figure out who they are and how to help them out best.

Jonathan: What sort of changes would you suggest for the second year of the Summer Project?

Heather: I would suggest starting earlier. Getting the word out to the students more efficiently would help. Perhaps if we could get into the schools and publicize that way, we could have found more youth to participate.

8.1.4 Emily Campbell – Books and Basketball

Jonathan: What sort of youth do you pursue to be a part of the program?

Emily: We recruit students directly from several congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in the Boston area. The population that makes up these congregations is primarily students of Latino background or from Haitian Creole background. We generally go to visit the congregations in August to get students to sign up for the program and then work with the Young Men's and Young Women's leaders within the congregations to recruit more students. We also tell the students to invite their friends.

Jonathan: How do you find and motivate mentors to participate in the program?

Emily: Finding and motivating mentors really falls on the volunteer spirit in the Church. Each fall, we have a sacrament meeting dedicated to the Books and Basketball program, and we talk about it. We then have a tutoring sign up / training meeting after church in each of the single adult congregations in Cambridge to try to get more tutors. I also send out regular e-mails with testimonials and requests for more tutors.

Jonathan: What sort of changes have you made to Books and Basketball and what impact have they had?

Emily: I really have not made that many changes to the program. The program was really set up quite well when I got there. I have mainly worked on increasing communication between the tutors and their students so that the responsibility does not fall so much on the coordinators.

Jonathan: What difficulties do you see that impede the reach of Books and Basketball from extending?

Emily: The problems that we have are encouraging consistency in attendance from the students and communication between the students and their tutors. We have a lot of students that do not show up on a given night and do not tell their tutors. Also, the other problem is that amount of time that is required of the tutors. There is a high level of "burn out" among the tutors especially through the winter months. It is a huge commitment to go to Boston (usually 30-45 minute trip one way) every Tuesday to work with a student for one and a half hours and then turn around and go back home. It is very tiring. I wish there were a way to ease the burden on the tutors.

8.1.5 Kristal Chamberlain – The Summer Project

Jonathan: What motivated you to start up such an ambitious project?

Kristal: When I was, a teenage I didn't have very good self esteem. One summer I attended a summer camp entitled "Be the Best You" in Salt Lake City. It was focused on being your best self, and featured many motivational speakers. Mostly, the program was aimed to help us develop self esteem through service. That experience changed my whole life. It changed the view I had on myself. I might not be the prettiest or the most popular, but I could help an adult. I could make a difference. That was amazing to me. I thought that if I could provide that same experience for others, then perhaps they might have the same turn around I did. I didn't have the means nor time and education, nor money, nor people to do something large and dramatic, so I started small. I thought to myself, 'how can I reach youth? By doing service.' I could provide opportunities for service to establish a lifelong pattern of service. I could show them that, despite their age, they can make a difference in the world.

Jonathan: What were some of the challenges you faced as you began the Summer Project?

Kristal: Commitment. No one was as committed as me. Trying to get kids to commit was difficult. They are just college aged kids and some felt like that they had better things to do with their time during the summer. Getting them to volunteer time was difficult. With the Summer Project, we didn't have the name recognition that the Big Brother Big Sister organization has. It's not as obvious to some that this

experience, in addition to being extremely rewarding, looks great on a resume. Also, there was a great deal of uncertainty about who would come from week to week. In the beginning, we had no idea that we needed to perform background checks, or carry liability insurance for that matter. Fortunately the volunteer center gave us liability insurance and gave us other support we needed.

Jonathan: How were you able to work past these challenges?

Kristal: By giving incentives. I would remind them that it would look good on a resume. People, in general, are self serving. And being so, we need to be reminded of how an experience benefits us. I would also establish constant contact with the mentors, both by more traditional methods, such as calling, emailing, and also through social media such as sending out Facebook invites. As time progressed, people caught the vision. They found out it was fun and rewarding to serve. Then, they made it a priority.

Jonathan: From what you learned in your first year of the Summer Project, what would you change for next year?

Kristal: One of the biggest challenges was having a split presidency. I would change that. No more co-presidents. Also, I would try to get others involved in the administration, and avoid making it a "one man show". I would give mentors more responsibilities by delegating the planning of the service projects to them. People are more committed to projects they help plan. Also, I would modify slightly how we use the mentors. I would assign specific mentors to specific mentees. I believe we could emphasize more why we were serving, and ensure that the experience was that of service learning not just service.

Jonathan: Any other thoughts about mentoring?

Kristal: Sometimes we don't look within to be able to help. We, often times, look outward to other countries, other cities, other families, and forget those right next to us. We think that because we don't have the means to help those far away or distant from us, we can't make much of a difference, and so we don't try. To that I would say, don't ignore the people in your neighborhood. In many situations, opportunities for service are right under our noses, and our own familiarity blinds us to them.

8.1.6 Connie Peppes – Associate Director of Academic Advising

Jonathan: Tell me about the mentoring programs that you, as the office of academic advising, oversee.

Connie: Here at WPI we run three major mentoring programs for our students: Resident Advisors, Community Advisors, and Academic Advisors. Each of these three programs focuses on a slightly different challenge that new students at WPI might face. Community advisors, formerly known as Orientation Leaders, are upperclassmen that spend time with new incoming freshmen during their first semester. They focus on social issues that new students might face. They are meant to be there for them and be a reachable, trustworthy guide that students can ask for help and advice. Resident Advisors are meant to help students with their daily issues, dealing with living on their own for the first time. Finally, Academic Advisors are faculty who look after the academic success of each student.

Freshmen, especially those that are first generation college students, are at risk for not succeeding in a new environment such as college. What we do is to ensure that they have a positive experience here so that they will stick with the program.

Jonathan: What guidelines or qualifications do you use for selecting mentors such as the community advisors?

Connie: Any potential community advisor must submit an application. They must be in good standing academically, they must be a leader, and be recommended by a faculty member. After their

applications are received, we interview them to ensure that only the most qualified advisors are chosen. It is a very competitive program as around 60 apply for only 38 spots.

Jonathan: How do you train and prepare community advisors to best fulfill their role?

Connie: Each community advisor is required to attend a summer training session, and a training session on leadership. They are instructed what to do in certain situations and how to react. They are given a list of suggested activities to do with their group. They are required to spend five hours a week with their group, and at some point during the first semester, have an alcohol awareness session and a time management session with the students.

Jonathan: What sort of metrics are used to measure success?

Connie: Student retention. This past year, we had a 95% retention rate, which is the highest to date.

Jonathan: What do you attribute that to?

Connie: Recently, we have been requiring the community advisors to submit time sheets with the activities that they do each week with their students. We feel that the accountability which this brings helps ensure that meaningful activities are performed each week.