

THE COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION

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Warsaw Community School Corporation

A Guide for Tutors,  
Mentors, and  
Volunteers

# The WCS Handbook for Mentors, Tutors, and Volunteers

## Introduction

This school year Warsaw Community Schools has focused on the 40 Developmental Assets. These assets have been determined to be the key building blocks to ensure young people grow to be healthy, caring, and responsible members of the community. One way to build assets in young people is through mentoring and tutoring relationships. We have developed The WCS Handbook for Mentors, Tutors, and Volunteers. This handbook opens the door for community members to become involved in young peoples lives. Also presented is an example program that may be developed to encourage young women to pursue careers in engineering and science through mentoring. Some of the assets that mentoring and tutoring help develop are:

Asset Type	Asset Name	Definition
Support	Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from 3 or more nonparent adults.
Boundaries and Expectations	Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
Positive Values	Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
Social Competencies	Planning and decision making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
Positive Identity	Sense of purpose	Young person reports, "my life has a purpose".
Positive Identity	Positive view of personal future	Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.

What is mentoring? "A mentor is an adult who, along with parents, provides young people with support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive example. Mentors are good listeners, people who care, people who want to help young people bring out strengths that already there." as defined by the National Mentoring Partnership.

Mentoring and tutoring are very similar; the difference being that a tutor specifically helps a young person with schoolwork.

The benefits of mentoring and tutoring are many, according to the Saratoga Mentoring Program, they include:

- Increased confidence, self esteem and competence
- Increased personal awareness of interests and abilities
- Improved attendance in school
- Improved study habits, test scores and grades
- Increased sense of civic pride

In fact, students who had a mentor were 46% less likely to start using drugs, 27% less likely to start drinking, 52% less likely to skip school, 59% improved their grades, 86% went on to higher education. Statistics from Fairfax Mentoring Partnership, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America, Career Beginnings, and Proctor & Gamble.

It is proposed that the handbook be distributed to areas businesses and organizations. The response from the community will initiate the formation of tutoring and mentoring programs.

Dr. Jennifer Brumfield and Yvonne Otero have researched tutoring and mentoring programs. Dr. Brumfield is aware of the need for tutoring and mentoring in Warsaw schools. Yvonne personally experienced the benefits of being both a mentee and a mentor by participating in the Women In Engineering Mentors & Mentees Program at Purdue University. This program received the Presidential Award in 1997 from former U.S. president, Bill Clinton.

## **The WCS Handbook for Mentors, Tutors, and Volunteers**

The handbook is designed to be distributed to the public and make them aware of the opportunities to get involved with young people in the community. The handbook can be viewed in appendix.

The handbook describes the importance of positive adult role models in young people lives, the objectives of the three different ways to get involved, and the history of the volunteer program. Next the handbook describes in detail the three volunteer opportunities. First is tutoring: The role of the volunteer tutor is to provide assistance with current classroom assignments, strengthen basic skills, and give support to struggling students. Second is mentoring: Mentors' personal investment in the lives of young people allows students to look beyond the present to envision a future full of promise. Lastly is classroom volunteer: Classroom volunteers reinforce information that has been taught by the teacher and demonstrate good study techniques. At the end of the book there is a volunteer application for interested individuals to complete and submit.

### **Example Mentoring Program**

Along with the handbook, we also wanted to present a model of how the handbook can be used in recruiting mentors and also model a program that has been proven to be successful. The model program will be based on matching up young women in high school with women in the community that have careers in engineering or science to encourage the young girls to pursue a career in engineering or science.

Many studies and statistics demonstrate the need for positive female role models in science, engineering, or math (SEM) fields to encourage younger women to not only

pursue careers in these fields but also to encourage women that have already chosen an SEM career.

- Only 19% of the science, engineering, and technology workforce is female.  
Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology Development: "Land of Plenty", Sept. 2000
- By the eighth grade, twice as many boys as girls show an interest in science, engineering and mathematics careers." Congressional Commission on the Advancement of Women and Minorities in Science, Engineering and Technology Development: "Land of Plenty", Sept. 2000
- By the eighth grade, girls' interest in mathematics and confidence in their mathematics abilities have eroded, even though they perform as well as boys in this subject. S. Catsambis, "The path to math: Gender and racial-ethnic differences in mathematics participation from middle to high school", *Sociology of Education* 67 (1994): pp.199-215
- 9% of engineers are women. The National Science Foundation. *Women, Minorities and Persons with Disabilities in Science and Engineering: 2000*, Sept. 2000.

Many studies have shown the presence of positive female role models in the sciences as being the single most important factor in sustaining girls' interests in the sciences.

Most professional women in the sciences can point to one person whose support enabled them to pursue their careers. Girls beginning their exploration of science and math as well as women who have already achieved high career goals in the SEM fields benefit tremendously from vertical, dynamic mentoring networks – that is, from mentoring relationships involving a more experienced individual and a less experienced individual in which both profit from the insights, experiences, and enthusiasm of the other.

The goals of this program are to encourage young women to continue their interest in SEM by taking more math and science courses, increase mentees' confidence levels and help them develop a positive self-image as they study math and science. Also

to introduce young women to possible careers in SEM and provide coaching in achieving their goals in math and science.

The mentoring program would consist of two parts: first, women in SEM fields in the community that express an interest in this program complete the volunteer application in The WCS Handbook for Mentors, Tutors, and Volunteers. These women would be matched up individually with young women in the high school. The selection of young women would be based on the number of people expressing an interest in the program, and then on teacher recommendations. These pairs would meet informally at least twice a month. Possible activities could be discussing the student's schoolwork, manufacturing plant tours, lunch, etc. It is during these meetings that the mentors can open the eyes of their mentees to an array of scientific fields, give them a realistic sense of the challenges and rewards of science careers and help them to understand the educational paths necessary for scientific careers.

The second part of the program would consist of all of the mentor and mentee pairs meeting together once a month for relevant speakers and presentations. Presenters may be women who want to get involved with the youth in the community but feel they cannot commit to a mentor – mentee relationship. The presenters may speak on various topics such as courses to prepare for college, how to balance work and family, challenges and rewards women face in the SEM fields, and many other topics.

Mentoring – whether formal or informal, on going or short-term – is one of the most successful tools for reversing the under-representation of women in the SEM fields.

## Conclusion

Positive role models in young peoples' lives are extremely important. Tutoring, mentoring, and classroom volunteers are all ways for adults in the community to get involved in the lives of the young people in the community. Mentoring and tutoring not only benefit the youth; mentors and tutors report a sense of pride and satisfaction through mentoring and tutoring.

The WCS Handbook for Mentors, Tutors, and Volunteers will be distributed to organizations and businesses in the community. The handbook will educate the public on the importance of positive role models for young people, and invite them to get involved. A model mentoring program has been established, this program has been proven successful at many universities. The model is also flexible, whether it is encouraging young women to pursue careers in science, engineering, or math, or matching up troubled young people with people who care and want to be a mentor.

The challenge is for our community to take the initiative, get involved – volunteer your time, encourage others to get involved, and for our schools to support these positive relationships.

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## **Appendix**

A GUIDE FOR TUTORS, MENTORS, AND VOLUNTEERS

# **The Community-Classroom Connection**

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Special appreciation is extended to the Fort Wayne Community Schools and its STUDY CONNECTION program for their generous assistance in completing this Kosciusko Leadership Academy Project, the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION Handbook. This handbook has been designed to assist community members who wish to volunteer, mentor, and volunteer in the Warsaw Community Schools

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The focus of tutors, mentors and classroom volunteers is to make a "connection" with the student to gain trust and foster mutual respect.

## HISTORY

This COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION program has been designed after the successful STUDY CONNECTION program in place for ten years in the Fort Wayne Community Schools.

STUDY CONNECTION TUTORING was the original concept of Fort Wayne's local businessman Don Wolf, an active supporter of Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Mr. Wolf saw a need for school children to receive one-to-one help with homework. Local businesses and foundations provided funding for a three-year pilot program, and FWCS loaned skilled personnel. Program services doubled each year, and evaluations showed an overwhelming success.

STUDY CONNECTION MENTORING grew from the interest of General Electric employees and the GE Elfun Society. Some volunteers preferred to work exclusively with high school students developing career plans, vocational interests, and elevating self-esteem. These mentors reached out to South Side High School and work individually with students to develop a lifelong plan.

STUDY CONNECTION CLASSROOM COACHING is the most recent addition. The idea was spearheaded by a group of professional males interested in providing their skills and positive minority role models to classrooms. Project 2000 volunteers selected target schools in which to aid classroom teachers with reading groups, drills, story hour, etc.

STUDY CONNECTION is part of the Community Programs Division of Fort Wayne Community Schools. In order to be good stewards of public monies, it is operated by a small staff and leveraged through volunteers. An advisory committee of business, community, and school persons adds focus to the program. Additional volunteers assist with paperwork, data entry, and administrative duties.

## CONCEPT

Growing up in today's world is complicated. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons—including illness, family stress, poor basic skills and others—some children are unable to thrive without extra attention or added direction.

The complexity of today's society demands that responsibility for the well being of our children extends beyond the home and school. One-to-one relationships can give students the help they need to succeed in life.

\*Good study habits

\*Basic skills

The COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION is a program for people from the Warsaw community who wish to tutor, volunteer and mentor in our schools. This handbook will assist you in making the connection.

I like the fact that my student is beginning to realize that she is bright volunteer

- \*Self-esteem
- \*Workplace skills
- \*Community information
- \*Career exposure
- \*Organization

It is estimated that 10% of our school population has a definite need for this kind of attention. By offering guidance, friendship, and a positive perspective on life, volunteers can expand students' horizons and increase their likelihood for success.

## ASSET-BUILDING

To support the positive development of young people, Lutheran Brotherhood members promote the concept of asset building, are involved in community initiatives, and have initiated asset-building activities in their families, neighborhoods, schools, and communities.

Assets are the 40 positive building blocks that young people need to grow up to be healthy, principled, and caring adults. The more assets young people have, the more likely they are to engage in positive behaviors, such as volunteering and doing well in school. In addition, they are less likely to be engaged in at-risk behaviors.

The eight categories of assets are support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. The COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION program of mentoring, tutoring, and volunteering will provide the following assets:

Children deserve our care and guidance to become future citizens of our Community.

Asset Type	Asset Name	Definition
Support	Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from 3 or more nonparent adults.
Boundaries and Expectations	Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
Positive Values	Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
Social Competencies	Planning and decision making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
Positive Identity	Sense of purpose	Young person reports, "my life has a purpose".
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*Twenty-five years ago each student had seven significant adults in their lives. Today, surveys across the country indicate that each student has only one significant adult. Relationships are key in the success of young people!*

The Search Institute, supported by the Lutheran Brotherhood, launched *Healthy Communities-Healthy Youth* initiative in 1996. Many communities throughout the United States for several reasons are supporting the institute:

- The concept of asset building provides a positive vision for children and adolescents in the community.
- The needs of the whole child are addressed rather than focusing on one problem.
- The initiative activates the capacity of people to build both formal and informal relationships with young people.

As a nation, we are not doing enough to nurture the developmental assets of our children and youth. In fact, most young people surveyed by the Search Institute experience only 18 of the 40 assets. Thus, a commitment to asset building should become a top priority for every community across the nation. The Search Institute has identified six principles that can help shape our asset-building efforts:

- All children and youth need assets.
- Relationships are key.
- Everyone can build assets.
- Building assets is an ongoing process.
- Asset building requires consistent messages.
- Duplication and repetition are good and important.

Everyone can build assets. It doesn't necessarily take a lot of money. But it can make a tremendous difference in raising confident, caring young people. What it takes is building relationships, spending time together, and being intentional about nurturing positive values and commitments.

© Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN.

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The focus of tutors, mentors, and classroom volunteers is to make a "connection" with the student to gain trust and foster mutual respect.

# OBJECTIVES

COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION provides three avenues of one-to-one assistance for students. Each is designed to help students in a different way. Community members may select the program most suitable to their interests, skills, and schedules.

TUTORS are matched with a student in grades K-12 to meet weekly for homework assistance and skill building. This is an after-school activity. Study sites are located in each of the WCS Schools.

MENTORS are matched with a student to provide guidance and assistance in developing academic skills, career preparation, college selection, and to provide encouragement. Mentoring is arranged on a flexible schedule to accommodate both parties.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS are assigned to school classrooms to assist the professional staff with routine duties. The weekly assignment may vary according classroom need and volunteer interest.

There are a thousand ways to express encouragement. Whether time is spent on multiplication tables or a science report or glancing through college brochures, the message is the same.

It takes a village to raise a child  
—Ancient African proverb

Evaluations consistently show that students benefit from individual attention.

“Are these programs really successful?”

Yes. Administrators and teachers see positive change in participating students. Volunteers feel that the contribution extends beyond the classroom and into the child’s everyday activities. Parents appreciate the extra attention given to their children.

Students really enjoy the extra help with spelling and learning how to work a calculator, or just having a friend with whom to talk.

“Is something substantial being contributed?”

Yes. Studies show that the cost of private tutors is \$11-13 per hour. Often, the students who can derive the greatest benefit from private tutoring cannot afford it. Certainly, all volunteers do not have the same credentials as private tutors. But most

successful adults can give great assistance with classroom work and in developing study and organizational skills, which help, prepare future citizens for successful living.

“Is the program targeted to certain students?”

All WCS students are eligible for the programs. School administrators select students after volunteers have been assigned to their building. Cooperative students are selected according to the greatest academic need.

## ORGANIZATION

The CIMC, Central Instructional Materials Center, is the first contact for the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION for Warsaw Community Schools. The interested community member or business can contact the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office by calling 267-3238 for information or by sending the completed application found at the back of this handbook.

Each of the three one-to-one programs is organized according to site. The community can participate in one of three ways: volunteering, tutoring, and mentoring.

Businesses can elect to become a site for training volunteers, tutors or mentors who travel to the selected schools. Study times are usually at the end of the school day. Most businesses provide flextime for their employees. Businesses are asked to appoint one person as a liaison for the program to serve as the Volunteer Site Coordinator to aid in communication.

Groups often wish to volunteer together—sororities, fraternities, church groups, senior groups, etc. Groups are asked to appoint an individual as Volunteer Site Coordinator.

Individuals are encouraged to volunteer by submitting an application for any of the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION sites. There are many sites that operate cohesively with individual tutors from all walks of life. Within a short time, volunteers become friends with a common bond. One person is requested each year to serve as the Volunteer Site Coordinator.

The role of the volunteer tutor is to provide assistance with current classroom assignments, strengthen basic skills, and give support to struggling students.



## OTHER VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

Site Coordinators commit to one year of service as study site managers and communicate information to and from volunteers. They meet new tutors and acclimate them to the study area and procedures. They serve as a link between the school, the volunteer, and the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office. They collect and send in weekly reports and distribute communication as necessary. Site Coordinators meet occasionally as a group to offer suggestions and discuss common problems. They are indispensable in a well-run operation.

Office clerks assist with filing, collating, labeling, and assembling. Generally, the work is done during office hours and early evenings. There is always a friendly staff person to give direction.

Loaned executives are professionals lending their expertise for specific jobs. These may include: public speaking engagements, volunteer recruitment, interviewing, program evaluation, or planning/forecasting. Businesses may offer their assistance by providing personnel for a day during intense recruitment periods for special events, such as Bloodmobiles, Career Days, Freshman Orientation, Ed-Com, or school registration. Loaned professionals can also lend their expertise about specific careers. Job specific duties can be explained as well as post-secondary education or training that is required.

It takes many volunteers to keep the programs operating smoothly and on schedule.

## I. TUTORING

“What does a tutor do?”

Typical activities might include: practicing spelling words, drilling math tables, working on a book report together, and reading, reading, reading. The parent and student sign contracts of support and know that it is the student's responsibility to arrive for tutoring each week with supplies and assignments. Often, classroom teachers will send along helpful notes and practice pages if asked to do so.

The role of the tutor is to provide assistance with current classroom assignments, strengthen basic skills, and give support to struggling students.

“Is special training provided for tutors?”

Regularly scheduled orientation sessions are available for new volunteers. Tutors will be provided with information about the student, his/her particular needs, teacher observations and communication guidelines before the first tutoring session. Tutors are encouraged to be proactive regarding students and may feel free to contact the school at any time with questions. It is important to remember that students, too, have a need for confidentiality. School information should remain private.

Most tutors find that specific training is not necessary. With one or two study sessions, they find a comfortable pace and routine. However additional training is available through a library of videotapes at the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office and at the quarterly workshops presented throughout the year.

“How long must I commit to this program?”

COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION tutors agree to be matched with a student during one school year. Tutors may select the school site, day of the week, grade level, and gender of the student. Students are recruited only after volunteers have been screened and assigned to a particular school. Some volunteers opt to work with the same student year after year.

“Where and when do tutors work with students?”

Study sites for tutoring are located in all of the WCS Schools.

Tutoring is an after-school activity and will occur after 2:45 p.m. for middle and high school students and after 3:30 p.m. for elementary school students. Every WCS School is equipped to handle tutoring for one hour following school dismissal. Some schools prefer to have all tutors come on one particular day of the week. Others welcome tutors on any day that is convenient. An up-to-date listing of study sites is available in the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office (267-3238).

“Do tutors transport students to other schools or libraries?”

NO! Tutors should not transport students in their vehicles. Occasionally, emergency situations arise. Handle them with extreme caution and always communicate with the school site office and the building administrator.

Many study sites are located at neighborhood schools so children can walk home one hour after regular dismissal. These students walk home every day and are familiar with their neighborhoods. They are encouraged to walk with friends when possible. Parents and guardians expect them home at a particular time and watch that they arrive safely.

Transportation is not provided for students who ride buses. Students and parents are to provide their own transportation.

“How is attendance at all of these sites monitored?”

Attendance is one of the most important aspects of tutoring. Tutors and students at each site are requested to sign in on an attendance form. The Volunteer Site Coordinator is asked to mail these forms to the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office. Excessive absences of either students or tutors will be noted and acted upon.

The Community Classroom Connection staff monitors each tutor/student match.

Communication between classroom teachers and tutors is greatly encouraged.

“How do tutors communicate with teachers and other staff?”

Communication is vital. Tutors are asked to complete a weekly checklist that tracks activities and student progress. A copy is sent to the classroom teacher and may be used to forward questions or to make comments. Another copy is sent to the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office. Volunteers may make comments or ask questions on these forms. The staff will respond as soon as possible.

Newsletters are regularly mailed to COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION volunteers to keep them informed of important school and COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION events.

“Can I find out how my student is achieving in school?”

Yes. Tutors are permitted to receive a copy of the tutee’s grade card with the permission of the parent/guardian.

“Do students and tutors ever do anything but study?”

Tutors and students are encouraged to attend a year-end celebration in May as a reward for a year of hard work. This event is sponsored by area businesses.

Often, tutors and tutees develop friendships. Any other meetings that may take place outside the realm of COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION require permission from the parent or guardian.

“Why should some students get extra help with their homework?”

**Homework does pay off.** Most students who complete homework assignments far outdistance those who had no homework. It is common sense. “Practice makes perfect.”

**Homework is valuable.** It teaches students self-discipline and self-direction. It cultivates good study habits and fosters initiative. Homework can be the great equalizer. A student can catch up to or surpass contemporaries simply by studying more at home.

**Homework habits promote positive self-esteem.** Students like to know what is expected of them. Though the work may be hard, they will enjoy knowing that they can participate in the classroom and can expect success. One success builds upon another.

“What should I do during that study hour?”

1. **Get reacquainted.** Share information about your week—and ask the students about their week’s activities.

Tutors make learning a challenge within the student's grasp.

The greatest support a tutor can give is to show him/her that learning is an important ongoing process.

2. **Assess progress.** Review what you did in the last session. Discuss how the results of study translated into the classroom.
3. **Review for reinforcement.** Begin with a review of a task you know the student can do. Increase the student's confidence and review to the point where the student begins to need assistance.
4. **Introduce a new skill or objective.** Explain the new objective or assignment. Explain precisely what the student is to do. Demonstrate how skills build one upon another.
5. **Introduce a new learning strategy.** Work in short, meaningful units with attainable goals. Try to have a new hint for study. Write it down so the student can refer to it later.
6. **Create closure.** Record progress and set goals for the week.

## TUTORING TIPS:

1. **Relate learning to everyday life.** In the absence of homework, practice basic skills, create a "grade chart," read a newspaper, start a journal, demonstrate organization skills, write letters. Use the valuable study time to practice. Show that learning does not stop at the school/house door. Education is a lifelong process—and you are its model.
2. **Don't worry about a perfect place to study.** All study sites are monitored to be certain that they are adequate. What takes place during that one hour a week has more to do with the people involved than with the environment. Teach your student to "screen out" noise and distraction. Focus on the task at hand.
3. **Follow a regular schedule.** A pattern of study should develop within the first few weeks of tutoring. Perhaps, the first five minutes may be used to "catch up"—on baseball, entertainment, or what is happening at school. The student needs to develop a trust in you and know that you see him/her as a whole person. But then study should begin in earnest! In just 45 minutes, you should touch on major school subjects: math, reading, spelling, and science. The hour will pass quickly. As a routine develops, your student will be better prepared week after week.
4. **Tutor, don't teach.** When a student faces a tough problem or reaches an incorrect answer, resist the urge to give the right answer. An important

A tutor's presence and interest are more important than having all the answers.

objective of homework is for the teacher to discover whether the child is keeping up with classroom instruction. "Helping" sabotages the goal of encouraging independence. However, you should guide, explain, and make sure the student understands the assignment. You may assist in drill, memorization, or recitation.

5. **Keep a homework log.** Have your student record each day's assignments in a notebook during the week and review it with you. It torpedoes such excuses as "I left the assignment at school"
6. **Set a good example.** Be ready and waiting for your student each week. It is easy to get sidetracked at home or the office, but the student is depending on you to set the pace. Be prompt and interested.
7. **Remember, you don't have to know everything.** If you don't feel qualified to solve algebra problems or discuss Shakespeare's plays, that is **OK**. Your assignment is to provide support and emphasize the value of homework. In that way, you will help your student to a responsible and self-reliant future.

## II. MENTORING

"What are mentors? Are they different from tutors?"

COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION mentors are adults who take the time to participate in the lives of students. A mentor relationship calls for sustained personal commitment to a young person needing the guidance, moral support, and approval of a warm-hearted adult. Mentoring volunteers come from every conceivable background, representing every socioeconomic level. These volunteers have the ability to work with a diverse population of students. What good mentors share is the ability to reach out to those who need support and guidance and to provide them with one-to-one attention for a sustained period of time.

The role of mentors is less structured than that of tutors. Tutors focus primarily on academic skills. Mentors encourage the young person to focus on the future and on becoming a successful adult.

"Why do students need mentors?"

In our city, there are young people who need additional support and assistance making important decisions. Some will drop out of school. Others will graduate, but may leave deficient in basic reading, writing, and math skills. This situation translates into a lifetime of low paying, low-status, dead-end jobs. These young people desperately need the help of caring and kind adults to change their direction from failure to success.

He helped  
me to see  
that my  
life has  
value and  
my future  
can be  
anything I  
want it to  
be —  
student

“What do mentors do?”

The primary goals of mentoring are to keep young people in school and to help them find a successful path to adulthood. Objectives to support these goals include the following:

- To provide young people at risk of dropping out of school with good role models who will increase the students' motivation to finish school.
- To enrich disadvantaged students' educational experience by giving them one-to-one tutoring.
- To provide encouragement and training in career selection and development.
- To give encouragement to young people facing difficult problems such as parenthood, neglect, and poverty.

Commitment to the role of giving the student support, guidance, and friendship is essential.

“How does a mentor go about this?”

For a relationship to grow, the mentor must win the trust and respect of the young person. The mentor's dedication, patience, understanding, and empathy have to be apparent for a bond to form. And as is true of any friendship, time is required for two persons to get to know, trust, and like each other.

Forming these bonds is not always easy. Many mentors who work with troubled youth endure meetings characterized by hostility and mistrust. Mentoring is not a job for the faint of spirit!

“Where should a mentor start?”

One of the key objectives is to provide youth with an opportunity to develop friendship with a caring adult. Longer term, the mentor can act as a positive role model—but this will happen only if the relationship has a solid friendship.

Academics provide a good initial focus. Often mentors can provide encouragement and offer good study tips. The mentor can be helpful by showing the student how to set a goal and break it down into small achievable tasks.

Teaching students to set clear goals with measurable objectives is the primary task for volunteer mentors. First objectives should be designed to be within the grasp of the young person. Success builds upon itself.

Mentors often find that the job evolves naturally.

The very attention and concern, which these young folks need, must also be offered consistently. Mentors need to be accountable for the help they promise. This means

that when they make a commitment to meet the student for an activity or any kind of appointment, it should be a first priority, barring an emergency.

“How are students and mentors selected for the program?”

The trained guidance staff of the school carefully screens student matches for volunteer mentors. Students volunteer and are required to sign a contract of participation, ensuring that they recognize their responsibility in this volunteer endeavor.

The COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION carefully screens mentors. Each mentor applicant is asked to provide two personal references and consent to a back ground check. This is to safeguard the students in the program.

Training will be provided for new volunteers. Other training opportunities will be available throughout the school year. Periodically, mentors and students will be contacted by the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION staff to assess progress and offer assistance as needed.

While there are few volunteer jobs more challenging than mentoring, there are few volunteer opportunities that can be as rewarding.

#### GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A GOOD MENTOR/STUDENT PARTNERSHIP:

1. Establish a warm, genuine, and open relationship.
2. Keep in frequent contact with your mentee. Take the initiative rather than waiting for your mentee to call you.
3. Monitor your mentee's progress toward educational goals.
4. Encourage your mentee to consider and develop career alternatives when appropriate.
5. Encourage your mentee to talk by asking him/her open-ended questions.
6. Do not make decisions for your mentee; help the student make his/her own.
7. Focus on your mentee's strengths and potential, rather than on his/her limitations.
8. Provide accurate information. When in doubt, ask your mentoring coordinator for help or additional resources.
9. Be a good *listener*, and do not feel that you have to give advice to be helpful.

Be yourself. Your student will trust you more.  
COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION participant

It will take time and effort to develop a meaningful mentor/student relationship.

## MENTORING TIPS:

1. **Act dependably and consistently.** Mentees need to know that they can count on you. Do not commit unless you feel that you will be able to follow through. This means fitting the student into your busy schedule. The minimum suggested commitment for participation in mentoring is one year, with some kind of contact—a phone call, note, or visit—once a week at a minimum.
2. **Establish realistic expectations about the relationship and what you can accomplish.** Do not enter the relationship thinking that you are going to immediately “save” the student. Much has happened to your mentee up to this point in his/her life. Realize that it will take weeks or even months to understand your mentee and to establish firm ground for your relationship. Once this occurs, then you can begin working on any problems that your mentee may have.
3. **Be sensitive to cultural differences.** Recognize that the mentee probably comes from a different cultural, socioeconomic, or racial background, and try to be sensitive to that fact. Take advantage of these differences—use them to enhance the relationship, rather than make it more difficult. Share stories with your mentee about your own family customs, and encourage him/her to share family customs with you. Over time, learn more and more about what things make each other’s backgrounds unique and special.
4. **Remember the academic focus of mentoring.** Keep informed about your mentee’s school attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Work through the mentoring coordinator to contact your student’s teacher, and establish a working relationship with them. Do not be afraid to ask them where your mentee needs most help.
5. **Be cautious not to replace the parent(s); instead, supplement them.** Although at times it is easy to slip into the parental role, especially if you don’t agree with the way your mentee’s parent(s) are raising him/her, always be respectful of the parent(s).  
  
Never put yourself between your mentee and his/her parent(s). Recognize that your mentee probably has a strong allegiance to his/her parent(s), which is important to his/her self-esteem and self-identity.
6. **Base the relationship on time spent together, not on money spent.** Money can be a difficult issue in any relationship—that of mentor/mentee

I can imagine that when my student graduates from college, I'll be standing right there—volunteer

Mentors take the initiative to help their students stay in school and achieve academically.



being no exception. It is up to you, the mentor, to establish from the beginning what role money will play. One consideration is that if you begin the relationship by frequently taking your mentee on expensive outings, you will probably be perceived by the mentee as a source of entertainment first and foremost, rather than as a friend and guide.

7. **Refer serious personal problems.** You may become aware of personal problems your student is having. These should be referred directly to the school mentoring coordinator, administrator or counselor. Some of these situations can involve problems related to drugs/alcohol, running away, pregnancy, suicide, physical abuse, etc. Do not feel that you have to solve every problem—you may not be qualified to do so—but instead call your school contacts for help and/or referral.
8. **Be aware that changes can be made for inappropriate matches.** If you believe that your match is not working out, before giving up, please make an effort to work through your problems. Sometimes your student may simply be shy, and therefore may need more time before trusting you enough to open up. Remember that often it is difficult for these youth to develop trust in someone because they have experienced years of inconsistent behavior and empty promises in their lives. The mentoring coordinator may be able to counsel you through issues such as this. However, there are also times when the chemistry just is not right. Discuss these kinds of situations with the mentoring coordinator—it is possible to request a change and be matched with another student.

**Ensure parental approval.** All mentoring relationships must have parental approval on file at the school. It is also important for you to introduce yourself to the parents, and to state what you hope to provide for their child. In part, your relationship with your mentee depends on your relationship with the parent(s) and the level of cooperation you establish with them.

The mentoring programs that are saving so many young people from lives beneath their potential, jobs too small for their spirits, are the centerpiece, in my view, of employee volunteerism.—Jack Welch, GE chairman

### III. CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERING

“What are classroom volunteers?”

The purpose of classroom volunteers is two-fold. Volunteers provide strong role models for children and offer assistance within the classroom during the school day.

Watching successful adults in action is one way that children learn about the possibilities of adult life.

“What kind of role models are you seeking?”

The weekly contact with the same group of students was seen as a way to share their expertise while providing role models who were dependable, consistent, and interested in getting to know them. Exposure to a variety of skills, interests, and cultures provides a student with knowledge needed to make important life decisions.

It is important for children to see people of all colors, all ages, all sizes, and all socioeconomic levels demonstrating the important skills of patience, determination, and hard work. Grandparents, college students, stay-at-home moms, and retired individuals are among those volunteers recruited.

“Do all teachers want a volunteer in the classroom?”

No. Some teachers prefer to interact with the students and operate the classroom alone. Other teachers welcome another set of eyes, ears, and hands to help with classroom duties. Classroom volunteers are assigned to teachers who have requested a volunteer assistant for their classroom. The purpose of the volunteer is to work one-to-one with students supplementing the lessons taught by the teacher. This program will succeed only if you and your teacher work together as partners in a cooperative effort. It is essential that an open channel of communication exists between you. Both teacher and volunteer must feel free to discuss any concerns or problem that arises.

“What are the duties of classroom volunteers?”

The teacher sets the agenda based on the curriculum and student progress. Volunteers may work with small groups to review important information already presented in class. They may read to students or listen to students read. Math drills and spelling practice are important assignments.

“How do I get started?”

After your application has been accepted and you have been cleared for assignment, information about you will be sent to the school of your choice. The principal or guidance counselor will match you with an individual teacher.

Activities of classroom volunteers vary. The purpose of being a role model and offering classroom assistance is constant.

The school will schedule an appointment for you to meet the principal and the teacher with whom you will be working. It is important that you become familiar with the facility, safety procedures, conduct rules, dress code, etc. The initial conference with the teacher will allow you an opportunity to ask questions relating to classroom procedures, materials, volunteer form to sign, and directions on how to carry out planned objectives.

Your first day in the classroom may not seem productive. You are certain to be a distraction until students get to know you and trust you. But soon you will be indispensable!

“How important is it that I show up every week?”

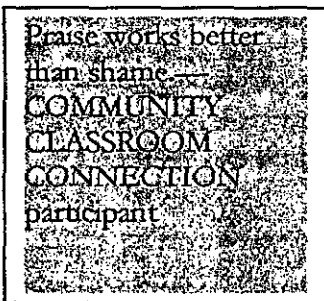
Very important! The classroom teacher will depend on your presence to complete important duties in the room. Children will rely on you for help, support, and friendship. Your volunteer commitment is for one year. Occasionally, everyone needs to be absent—illness, out-of-town company, vacation. That is expected. Be certain to let the classroom teacher know of your absence in advance, if possible. Communication is the key.

“How should I communicate with the office?”

Ask that you complete an easy feedback form every 9 weeks. This tells us how you are contributing in the classroom and ways the program can be strengthened. The form will be included in your initial packet and should be sent to our office through school mail.

## **CLASSROOM VOLUNTEER TIPS:**

1. **Stay informed of your duties.** Arrange to meet regularly with the classroom teacher to review your duties. Student needs may change as the year progresses. You need to know ways that the teacher can best use your time and skills.
2. **Be open to new ideas.** Schools are certainly different from the days when you sat in the desk and took tests. Ask questions; talk with other volunteers and teachers to learn about the school environment and objectives.
3. **Be an active listener.** Focus on the student when she/he is talking. Good listening requires a lot of work! Be aware of the feelings of the student and attempt to understand the whole message that is being communicated. Avoid judging the speaker and concentrate on hearing what she/he is saying.
4. **Be positive and optimistic.** Have a steady supply of praising comments on the tip of your tongue. Remember to praise honestly.



Example is not the main thing in influencing others. It is the only thing.—Albert Schweitzer

5. **Create lessons that are meaningful.** Interact with the students in terms of their interests. Relate skills to the real world in ways they can understand.
6. **Acknowledge effort and reward participation.** Even if the students have not mastered a skill, let them know that you are proud of their efforts. Continue to encourage students and praise the small success, especially in front of peers, teachers, and parents.
7. **Never criticize or demean the teacher.** Sometimes you may not agree with the methods chosen by the classroom teacher. It is important that you always show support and demonstrate a positive attitude toward him/her. Students will watch you carefully and will often imitate your behavior.
8. **Keep information about school confidential.** You will learn a great deal about teaching, the professional staff, student performance, and the students' lives. It is important that all information remain private. You have become a trusted member of the support staff. Please respect the confidentiality of others.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

"I can't make a weekly commitment. Can I still volunteer?"

Yes. You may find a friend or co-worker who would be interested in volunteering on the "buddy plan." You could work as a team with one student. You may alternate weeks or months or work on a flexible schedule. Another option is to become a substitute tutor for a particular site meeting at times convenient for your schedule.

"What should I do if I cannot attend?"

Everyone has an occasional absence. You may call upon a substitute tutor if one is available at your site. Otherwise, it is important to call the school and tell them when you will be absent. It is difficult—and sometimes dangerous—for students to arrive at the study site without supervision. It is unfair to burden fellow volunteers with additional responsibility. A thoughtful gesture is to inform students personally or by phone or postcard when you are absent. That way, students can be assured they are not at fault and they will know that you are still thinking of them.

"What if my student doesn't like me or I don't like her?"

Fortunately, this situation rarely occurs. However, if you are uncomfortable with the student assigned, contact the office immediately. A new student may be a better match.

Volunteers can share an assignment or serve as a substitute.

"I am afraid of the background check. There was that time in college when..."

The background check and personal/work reference checks are merely precautions to safeguard the children. All information is confidential. Traffic tickets and college escapades are not a concern to this program. It is the responsibility of WCS to ensure that all volunteers have been screened and are good role models for children.

"What should I do if the student divulges a secret?"

If you suspect—or have knowledge of—something seriously amiss in the student's life, you should contact the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office immediately. Appropriate action will be taken with the school. NEVER promise a child that you will keep his/her secret. Instead, assure him/her that you will link the child to someone who can help.

"Can I get textbooks from the school?"

Sometimes, a refresher course is needed to brush up on math skills or science terms. Please contact the school office regarding the availability of texts.

"My student never brings homework. Says he has none."

You can be sure that your student needs academic help! Contact the student's teacher to find out what subjects need to be studied. Enlist the teacher's help in sending assignments or practice papers. A good tip is to always bring along a newspaper—you can use it for any subject!

"Can I give my student after-school treats and gifts?"

This is a tricky one! After a long school day, students are often hungry. And in today's economy, lack of food is too often a reality. Your study site may wish to provide a small healthy snack for all of the students. Students need to know that learning and achievement bring a gift of their own. A thoughtful holiday or birthday remembrance may be nice, but consider the feelings of other students at the study site.

"What should the student call me?"

It is up to you. Children are used to calling teachers by Mr. or Mrs. or Miss. On the other hand, your first name is fine and denotes a special bond of friendship. You be the judge as to whatever is most comfortable for you.

"I am having difficulty initiating my first contact with my mentee. Is this normal?"

Yes. Typically, mentors need to be very persistent in their efforts to set up the initial meeting. Some mentors find they have to make as many as 10-15 phone calls before the meeting actually occurs. This is a new experience for the mentee. Imagine how

Help and  
resources are  
always available to  
the  
COMMUNITY-  
CLASSROOM  
CONNECTION  
volunteer.

nervous you would have been in this situation as a high school student! Second, a common reaction to meeting a new adult is for young people to be extremely concerned that they will not be well liked or that their lifestyle will be judged in a negative way. In addition, young people are in the habit of expecting adults to take the lead. Try to arrange an activity or meeting place that you can both enjoy and will help you both feel comfortable.

“My student asks very personal questions. Do I have to answer them?”

Young people are very curious. You must decide for yourself how you want to respond and how much you are comfortable divulging about yourself. Think about this ahead of time. Remember that the student may be asking these questions quite innocently to get a better picture of what life is really like as an adult in this society.

“What if my student does something inappropriate?”

Young people sometimes test our limits. If the student does something inappropriate, you should confront it directly, but with sensitivity. Let the child know specifically what she/he did that you thought was unacceptable. If the behavior made you angry or hurt your feelings, be honest and let the student know this. While confrontation can be frightening, it is your opportunity to model respectful confrontation. It is your responsibility to set reasonable limits.

“What can help me adjust to the dress, actions, and talk of today’s students?”

Remember that different does not mean better or worse. Making a value judgment based on outward appearances or different styles is probably the most detrimental thing an adult can do. Talk to the students and find out what their life is like and why they prefer a particular style.

There are many marvelous “teachable moments” when I am with my student—volunteer

Learning about the youth culture from my student has been enriching—and interesting—volunteer

“May I contact the student’s teacher or counselor?”

Yes. There are many reasons why a tutor/mentor may wish to contact the professional staff at the school. These people deal with your student on a daily basis and can offer great insight into their academic needs. Please remember that teachers are very busy, often dealing with 25-150 students a day. Additionally, most teachers do not have access to a telephone during school hours. So they can be difficult to reach. Consider writing out your questions and sending them directly to the teacher at school. This provides the flexibility of writing a note back, telephoning you at home or work, or

scheduling an appointment. If you have difficulty communicating with the school staff, contact the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office.

“What happens in the event of school cancellations?”

The COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION tutoring and classroom volunteering programs operate strictly on the school calendar. If school is dismissed due to bad weather, all volunteer activities will be canceled for that day. Our best advice is to be vigilant, and to call the school if you are in doubt.

“What about this child's parents?”

Parents are required to give permission to enroll their child in this voluntary program. Most parents are happy to have this opportunity. They have probably been struggling to help at home and are hopeful that tutoring or mentoring will be beneficial.

Parents are given some information about the tutor/mentor. However, they do not receive information regarding how to contact you. If you wish to provide your home address and/or phone numbers, there is no reason not to do so. You may wish to call the student's parent(s) and introduce yourself or send home a note or business card.

“If I want to take my student to a concert, may I?”

Tutors and mentors often provide unique and stimulating opportunities that may not otherwise be available for students. However, this does require special signed permission from the parents/guardians because it is not a COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION event. COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION operates within strict guidelines during the school year. If you—or your entire study site—wish to do something outside the ordinary, please notify the COMMUNITY-CLASSROOM CONNECTION office. Be certain that all students have signed permission forms before the event takes place.

There were people there to help me as I moved along. So it's important to me to give something back—volunteer.

# VOLUNTEER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

	TUTORS	MENTORS	COACHES	OTHER
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	One-to-one homework help.	One-to-one support for a middle or high school student.	In-classroom assistance at the elementary school level.	Assist others *careers *recruitment *orientation *routine clerical *communications *evaluation
<b>TIME</b>	One hour, once a week, for one school year.	One hour, once a week, for one school year.	One hour, once a week, for one school year.	Flexible
<b>DUTIES</b>	Reading, listening, math drills, spelling, writing, encouraging, developing study skills.	Guiding and assisting in development of academic and/or life skills, encouraging.	Reading, listening, math drills, spelling with individual or small group; duties vary according to classroom needs.	* <u>Site coordinator</u> (good communicator) * <u>Computer operator</u> (computer literate) * <u>Office clerk</u> (office skills) * <u>Loaned executive</u> (professional skills)
<b>QUALIFICATIONS</b>	Dependable, consistent, patient, good communicator, friendly, discreet, interested in helping others, able to work with professional staff.	Dependable, consistent, patient, good communicator, friendly, discreet, interested in helping others, able to work with professional staff.	Dependable, consistent, patient, good communicator, friendly, discreet, interested in helping others, able to work with professional staff.	See above in parentheses.
<b>INSURANCE</b>	General liability insurance, while acting within the scope of WCS Volunteer Services.	General liability insurance, while acting within the scope of WCS Volunteer Services.	General liability insurance, while acting within the scope of WCS Volunteer Services.	General liability insurance, while acting within the scope of WCS Volunteer Services.
<b>PARKING</b>	Free, safe parking usually available at schools and study sites.	Varies	Free, safe parking usually available at schools.	Varies



**VOLUNTEER APPLICATION**

**PERSONAL**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT**

I am presently:  working full-time  working part-time  high school student  
 homemaker  retired  unemployed  
 college student

Job title/Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Business phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer Volunteer Services correspondence mailed to:  home  work

**EDUCATION**

Highest level completed:  elementary  high school  college  graduate school  
College degree(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**EXPERIENCE/SKILLS**

Volunteer experience: \_\_\_\_\_  
Work experience: \_\_\_\_\_  
Special skills/interests: \_\_\_\_\_

**OPTIONAL (for nondiscrimination reporting purposes)**

Gender:  male  female  
Age:  under 18  19-24  25-34  35-49  50-64  65 +  
Race:  African-American  Asian  Hispanic  Caucasian  Other

**REFERENCES: (Please list two references who are not relatives.)**

1. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**EMERGENCY CONTACT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

Indicate your choice from the following categories:

- Tutor** (between 2:30-5:00 p.m.)  
Grade level:      K-2      3-5      6-8
- Mentor** (flexible arrangement between mentor and student)  
Grade level:      6-8      9-10      11-12
- Classroom Volunteer** (between 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.)  
Grade level:      K-1-2      3-4      5-6      7-8
- Computer Operator/Data Entry**
- Office Clerk/Filing
- Site Coordinator**

**DAY(S) AVAILABLE**

- Monday    Tuesday    Wednesday    Thursday    Friday

How did you hear about Community-Classroom Connection?

\_\_\_\_\_

State briefly why you would like to become a school volunteer.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT**

As a volunteer working with WCS students, I agree to comply with the following directives:

- Authorize the release of information with the police department.
- Abide by all school rules and Board of Education policies.
- Honor the commitment to work as scheduled. If I must be absent from a scheduled commitment. I will notify the appropriate person in advance.
- Communicate regularly with school personnel.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Detach and send completed form to: Community-Classroom Connection  
WCS Volunteer Services  
P.O. Box 328  
Warsaw, IN 46580