



YouthFriends®

News

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Mentors Make Great People Possible • youthfriends.org



UpLink®

The Ultimate Tomorrow for Kids

UpLink offers yet another way for YouthFriends to engage the community in order to help young people succeed.

— Lisa Adkins, President

YouthFriends Launches Hub to Connect Businesses and Classrooms

Prudent risk management practices and community-business engagement have long been hallmarks of YouthFriends success. So it was fitting when the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation selected YouthFriends to implement a program connecting Greater Kansas City businesses and classrooms to promote the study of math, engineering, technology and science (METS).

The UpLink "hub" offers a variety of opportunities for businesses and classrooms to connect, including student job shadowing and internships, teacher externships, volunteer career speaking and YouthFriends mentoring opportunities for professionals in METS-related fields. (Detailed information about UpLink is

available in the *UpLink News* insert of the Greater Kansas City-area newsletter.)

"UpLink offers yet another way for YouthFriends to engage the community in order to help young people succeed," said Lisa Adkins, YouthFriends president. "We're particularly excited about the opportunity it provides for YouthFriends to recruit thousands of additional school-based mentors."

With a strong foundation of business- and school district-relationships already in place, YouthFriends hit the ground running and successfully launched UpLink on Feb. 2. For more information, visit yf-uplink.org.

YouthFriends Gets New Look

As part of its ongoing strategic commitment to "strengthen the organization," YouthFriends recently conducted a major branding effort to enhance and reinforce its identity.

As a result of that effort, YouthFriends adopted new logos for all of the YouthFriends brands. Although most of the enhancements are subtle, the logos now share a more unified look and feel, making each an easily identifiable "YouthFriends Solution."

Another major component of the branding effort is the newly designed youthfriends.org web site, which will debut in May. In addition to incorporating YouthFriends new look and feel, the site has been condensed for easier navigation and requires fewer clicks than the previous site.

For more information about the YouthFriends family of brands, visit youthfriends.org.

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YouthFriends®

Mentors Make Great People Possible

Deepen the Footprint

Share the Knowledge



UpLink®



YouthFriends®



MentorMap®



Via®



MentorMail®



YouthFriends®



TeacherTech®



LaunchPad®



YouthFriends Corps®

Understanding Young Adolescents



Paul Pierce (center) spends one lunch hour each week mentoring adolescent boys at Central Middle School in Kansas City, Mo. Now in his sixth year as a YouthFriends volunteer, Paul understands the importance of listening and caring. "I enjoy being a friend the boys can talk to, listen to and trust," he said. Paul is one of 27 volunteers from Friendship Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo.

Each week, hundreds of YouthFriends mentors and school district employees have the opportunity to make meaningful connections with young adolescent students. According to Sue Thompson, associate professor, UMKC School of Education, understanding more about young adolescent development can help make those connections even more meaningful.

"Young adolescence is such an ambiguous time for kids," Thompson says. "Between the ages of 10 and 15, they're no longer children—and they're certainly not adults. And because they're experiencing so much change, young adolescents constantly need to be reminded that people care about them—their family, teachers, friends and mentors."

Thompson says that in addition to showing care and concern, it is important for adults to understand the following:

1. There is no room for sarcasm when talking with young adolescents. Even when an adult's intentions are good, sarcasm can be detrimental.
2. This age group is filled with curiosity. They want to try a lot of different things and it's important to support their exploration. Adults should not expect young adolescents to find an interest and "stick with it" for the long haul.
3. It is critical that young adolescents get enough sleep. Lack of sleep can negatively impact their entire school experience.
4. Just listen. When a young adolescent confides in an adult, they're not always looking for solutions. Usually, they just need someone to talk to. Young adolescents want people to be interested in the things they're interested in.

Characteristics of Young Adolescents

Intellectual

- Are in a transition period from concrete thinking to abstract thinking
- Are intensely curious and have a wide range of intellectual pursuits
- Prefer active over passive learning
- Respond positively to opportunities to participate in real-life situations
- Have a strong need for approval; may be easily discouraged
- Are inquisitive/ often challenge authority

Physical

- Experience rapid, irregular growth
- Undergo bodily changes that may cause awkward, uncoordinated movements
- Varying maturity rates
- Restlessness/ fatigue
- Need daily physical activity
- Often lack physical fitness
- Poor eating habits
- Develop sexual awareness

Emotional

- Experience mood swings
- Need to release energy
- Seek to become increasingly independent
- Tend to be self-conscious
- Believe personal problems, feelings and experiences are unique to them
- Exhibit intense concern about physical growth

Social

- Have a strong need to belong to a group
- Exhibit immature behavior because their social skills frequently lag behind their intellectual and physical maturity
- In search of self
- Desire recognition for their efforts and achievements
- Like fads
- Overreact to ridicule, embarrassment and rejection
- Socially vulnerable



Mission Possible

Start the Countdown!

National School-Based Mentoring Conference Coming Soon

Back by popular demand, YouthFriends is hosting the third National School-Based Mentoring Conference on June 13-14 at the InterContinental Hotel Kansas City at The Plaza.

Conference theme: Mission Possible: A Caring Mentor for Every Child

Approximately 400 school-based mentoring practitioners, funders, educators, mentors and community leaders from throughout the country are expected to attend. On the conference launch pad:



- Former astronaut **Dr. Sally Ride**
- **Kevin Carroll**, author of *Rules of the Red Rubber Ball: Find and Sustain Your Life's Work*
- Leading school-based mentoring researcher **Dr. Michael Karcher**
- Mentoring expert **Dr. Susan Weinberger** (aka "Doctor Mentor")

For more information, or to purchase tickets to the Sally Ride keynote luncheon, visit mentormap.org or call 816.842.7082.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Dr. Sally Ride, Kevin Carroll, Dr. Michael Karcher, Dr. Susan Weinberger



New Initiative Boosts Kansas Mentoring Efforts

YouthFriends Kansas recently celebrated the successful launch of its Partner with a School initiative, a business-education partnership that provides volunteers and funding to sustain mentoring efforts in Kansas schools.

The initiative is flexible so any company can afford to be involved. Sponsors help YouthFriends determine which schools will receive the valuable programming.

In March, Partner with a School's first sponsor, Westar Energy in Wichita, Kan., made a contribution to the YouthFriends Kansas e-mentoring program at Robinson Middle School and Northwest High School in the Wichita School District.

"We are very excited to have such a dedicated partner on board," said Leila Gallagher, YouthFriends Kansas Statewide Director. "Westar's leadership has provided more than 70 volunteers and touched the lives of more than 165 students."

The goal this first year is to bring 15 new partners on board in the Wichita area, as well as partners throughout the state of Kansas.

Thank you to all YouthFriends Kansas Employer Partners for making 2006-2007 a wonderful school year. To find out more about this opportunity, please contact Jeanine Conrady at 620.238.0306 or jeanine.conrady@greenbush.org.

Mayors Make Great Mentors



LEFT: Basehor, Kan., Mayor Chris Garcia meets with his fourth grade YouthFriend. "It makes me happy to see that he lights up when I walk in," Garcia said. "I like that we share and really get to know each other. We talk about study habits, life habits and what makes us who we are. He seems pretty proud to have me as his YouthFriend." The city of Basehor is a YouthFriends Employer Partner.

In Their Own Words

A third grade student who's been in trouble all his life has really improved since he's had one-to-one YouthFriends tutoring.

Today he read an entire basket of books to me. The students counted them—31 in all!

YouthFriends volunteers have helped this child move from being constantly disruptive to being focused and positive!

— Primary teacher, Kansas City, Mo.

I am thrilled with my new experience as a YouthFriend. My student couldn't be a better match for me, which is the best incentive for volunteering. The teachers and staff seem to really appreciate YouthFriends, which makes me very proud to be a part of the organization.

— Volunteer, Kansas City, Mo.



Everyone Wins

Game of Chess Connects Elementary and College Students

As if they weren't already spending enough time in the classroom, 18 high-performing William Jewell College students made the commitment to spend even more time in the classroom this year—teaching the game of chess to 39 fourth and fifth grade students in two Liberty, Mo., elementary schools.

With their shared goal of helping young people succeed, two Jewell student organizations, Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) and the Mortar Board honor society, teamed with one another and Liberty YouthFriends Coordinator Dee Rosekrans, to develop ChessMates, an after-school chess program designed to build confidence and develop young students' analytical and strategic thinking skills.

Equipped with financial assistance provided by a 2006 Missouri Campus Compact Grant (used to purchase chess sets and fund a tournament) and solid YouthFriends training, the groups were able to establish their ChessMates effort in time for the 2006-2007 school year.

Learning from One Another

With a 2:1 student-mentor ratio, the one-hour-a-week program has been a rewarding learning experience for both the elementary students and their mentors.

"We believe the 2:1 ratio helps spice up the games a little," said Melissa Herschlag, Jewell's ChessMates project manager and SIFE officer. "The Jewell student can play against a team of two elementary students, they can let the two elementary students play against each other and make suggestions to both, or they can team up against another group of elementary students and one college student."

It also has been interesting to see, in some cases, how much the college students have learned from the elementary students.

"A few of the children have played chess since they were in preschool, so there have been some



TOP: Melissa Herschlag (left) shares a game of chess with an elementary student in Liberty, Mo.

moments when the 'teaching' roles have been reversed," says Herschlag. "We have had some very humorous experiences!"

Finding Success

The mentors feel a great sense of accomplishment when students unexpectedly take their pieces, are able to map out their next move and articulate what they can or cannot do.

"I can now sit back and listen to my ChessMate explain every move he makes and the reasons he chose not to move other pieces," Herschlag says. "That is success!"

All higher-level thinking aside, something very simple also makes this program a great success—friendships.

"It has been so rewarding to see the students' skills, behaviors and characters change," says Herschlag. "For some, their skill level has improved drastically, but for others, they didn't need to improve their skills—they just needed to have a friend to listen."

YouthFriends/William Jewell College ChessMates Volunteers

Student	Organization
Amanda Brown	Mortar Board
Jordan Cole	SIFE
Melissa Herschlag	SIFE
Diana Hilton	Mortar Board
Matt Kastner	Mortar Board
Caroline Ketter	Mortar Board
Marilyn Minter	Mortar Board
Jenilee Morrison	Mortar Board
Kelsey O'Donnell	Mortar Board
Will Ogorek	SIFE
Alicia Pavkov	Mortar Board
Anna Perko	SIFE
Katie Perko	Mortar Board
Brian Place	SIFE
Christina Pryor	SIFE
Sarah Smith	Mortar Board
Danny Stricker	Mortar Board
Page Walters	SIFE



YouthFriends Corps®



Megean Price, senior, reviews flashcards with third grade students at Liberty Elementary School in Galena, Kan.

Lessons Beyond the Classroom

Elementary and high school students in Galena, Kan., are learning valuable life lessons from one another. Through the district's YouthFriends Corps effort, 42 high school juniors and seniors are participating in two exciting mentoring opportunities with students in grades 3-5.

Through traditional mentoring, the mentors and mentees alternate academic study time and fun activities on a weekly basis. "The competition and camaraderie is fun to be a part of," said Teresa Berry, YouthFriends Facilitator. "A special friendship develops that gives the high school student an opportunity to grow as a role model and gives the elementary student another positive person to look up to. This is truly a win-win situation."

In addition to traditional mentoring, Galena also offers a very unique YouthFriends Corps opportunity.

YouthFriends Education Seminar, now in its third year, is a one-credit elective class designed to give YouthFriends Corps students the opportunity to be a volunteer to a classroom. Working with students at Liberty Elementary, each student is assigned to a class and then switches to another grade during the second semester. This allows the

student to understand the various developmental stages of children and various styles of teaching.

Students are required to keep a daily journal, teach three character education lessons and attend monthly seminar classes with the YouthFriends coordinators. The classroom teachers also evaluate the students' performance in the classroom on a monthly basis.

"This class is a wonderful idea!" said Shelby Wood, senior. "It gives you a feel of what it's like to be a teacher. I love getting to know the kids."

Senior Megean Price agrees.

"This is my first year with YouthFriends," she said. "I am in the YouthFriends Education Seminar and I also have an individual YouthFriend—both are wonderful experiences. I love spending time with the kids."

Berry hopes these experiences stick with both the elementary and high school students for many years to come.

"As the Galena YouthFriends effort evolves, we are establishing a tradition of service for our high school volunteers and an opportunity to give back to the younger students who will someday walk the same hallways their mentors have," she said. "We're hoping they, in turn, will also take the time to improve their little corner of the world."

We've Moved!

To meet the needs of our growing organization, the YouthFriends Central office has relocated to the Crossroads Arts District in Kansas City, Mo.

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Toll Free 877.842.7082



New Statewide Director Named

YouthFriends announces the appointment of Leila Gallagher as YouthFriends Kansas Statewide Director. Before being named statewide director in February, Leila spent six years providing marketing and volunteer service support to YouthFriends Kansas. Leila can be reached at 800.563.0472 or by e-mail at leila.gallagher@greenbush.org.

Special Delivery: Another YouthFriends Solution Coming Soon

This fall, YouthFriends will introduce MentorMail®, a private, online bulletin-board that will allow e-mentors and e-mentees to correspond even more securely and efficiently. MentorMail® will open the door for e-mentoring in school districts throughout the country—including districts that do not allow students to have school e-mail accounts. Using the bulletin-board system, students will be able to connect only with their e-mentors and messages will be filtered and archived for risk-management purposes. To learn more about MentorMail® or becoming a YouthFriends e-mentor, please call 816.842.7082 or 877.842.7082.



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