



Connecting Generations

Creative Mentoring® Seasons of Respect Creative Transitions

Helping adults and children reach their full potential

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Newark High School teachers become mentors!

Newark, Del. – Forty-five teachers at Newark High School were trained last week to be Creative Mentors to Newark High students. Creative Mentoring, a program of the nonprofit organization Connecting Generations, is expanding its traditional training of adults who mentor elementary and middle school students and is now giving teachers the tools to be mentors to students of all ages. This training at Newark High on January 29th was the second in a new Creative Mentoring initiative. To date more than 95 teachers in New Castle County have become mentors! This is more important than ever with funding cuts to mentoring programs and the urgent need for new mentors.

As Rich Kapolka, Executive Director of Connecting Generations said, “teaching is very different from mentoring. Most teachers see in excess of 100 students a day. There is rarely time to develop a one on one relationship with students. A mentor is a guide, a friend, and a role model. While they are a teacher they are not The Teacher. Academics can and should be an important component of the mentoring experience, but it is not the only or ultimate goal. The goal is to make a difference in the life of a child and let them know they have an adult who cares about them. Having at least one adult in the building who is focused on them is a very powerful asset. Our teacher-focused training helps clarify the difference in roles, while utilizing the skills we know teachers already have.”

Susan Corey, the Christina School district mentoring coordinator, says this effort “will mean so much to students who need that time and attention from a significant adult”. Michelle Savage, assistant principal at Newark High, agrees that teachers are more than qualified to be that significant adult. Their lives are already about making a difference in children’s lives, and they are right there in the schools!

As Marie McIntosh, a Creative Mentoring trainer, says, “These teachers want to make a difference in the lives of students and one way to do that is to connect with them on a personal level. These students will be kids who want a mentor and teachers who want to mentor. Ultimately we would love to train these students how to mentor younger kids, thus creating a cache of mentors for the future.” The teachers will mentor students who are not in their classes to avoid any perceived conflicts.

Both Newark High School and Middletown High School expressed interest in getting their teachers involved in mentoring this fall. The teacher training includes mentoring techniques and principles of mentoring. Participants also receive 'The Power of One' mentor training manual, which combines the best of Creative Mentoring’s two previous

award-winning training manuals. McIntosh says “schools have to be willing and committed to mentoring to make a difference in students' lives. Hopefully as these schools mentor, other schools will, through word of mouth, discover the incredible benefits of mentoring their students.” This is an investment, mostly of volunteer time, that pays dividends.

Over 50 teachers from the Appoquinimink School District, including those in Middletown High School, piloted this initiative with the Creative Mentoring program in October. The Creative Mentoring program has focused on training adults to be mentors to children in elementary and middle schools for the past 10 years. This year they are expanding their reach to include teachers and high school students as mentors. They have also partnered with community and faith-based organizations to support their mentoring programs during after-school hours.

Schools and community/faith-based organizations around the state are in dire need of volunteer mentors of all ages and background to work one-on-one with children. The Creative Mentoring program, a program of the nonprofit organization Connecting Generations, is actively recruiting and providing free training to volunteer mentors who want to make a difference in the life of a child in Delaware. The training will be provided to any mentoring program regardless of program affiliation. With funding cuts to schools and other mentoring programs, there is an urgent need for mentors all around Delaware for the 2008/2009 school year.

Creative Mentors spend one hour a week in a mentoring program of their choice, often near where they live or work. The Creative Mentoring program provides free training, background checks, and ongoing support to mentors and mentoring programs. Training sessions are held in New Castle, Kent, and Sussex Counties throughout the year. Any individual interested in becoming a mentor can get more information from the website at www.CreativeMentoring.org, contact Rachel Markowitz at (302) 656-2122 ext. 15 or contact any school or community/faith-based organization directly.

Connecting Generations is currently partnering with more than 75 schools around the state and has trained almost 7,000 adult mentors. Its Creative Mentoring program will train any adult who wants to become a mentor, whether in a partner school or a program like Big Brothers Big Sisters, Latin American Community Center, Delaware Youth for Christ, Cathedral Choir School, or any other school, community, or faith-based mentoring program.

Connecting Generations is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, offering the programs Creative Mentoring, Seasons of Respect, and Creative Transitions. Their mission is to provide creative programs and services that help Delaware's children and adults lead purposeful, fulfilling, and self-directed lives. More information about these programs is available at www.connecting-generations.org, or by calling (302) 656-2122. Connecting Generations is located at 100 West 10th Street, Suite 1115, Wilmington, DE 19801.

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The following contact info is not for publication and for media use only.

Digital photos from the January 29th training session are available. Contact Stephanie Ferrell, Director of Development, at (302)656-2122 ext. 14 or sferrell@connecting-generations.org.

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