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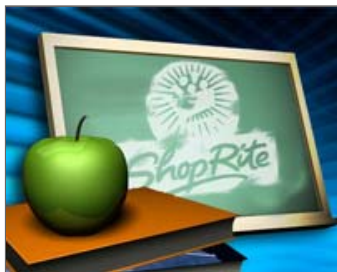
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## DELAWARE NEWS



### Mentoring services expand in Delaware

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At least 35 school children from low-income, homeless or broken families in Delaware will soon have a supportive new teacher, friend and role model to count on each week.

Under a new partnership between ShopRite and Warner Elementary School, a group of supermarket employees have received training to become mentors to a selection of Warner's students starting in September.

The volunteers are a mix of cashiers, deli clerks and store management employees from ShopRite's four locations in Delaware. Mike Felton is a volunteer looking forward to working with Delaware's at-risk youth. "We're all a product of our environment," Felton says, "Hopefully, our positive influence can help to have a positive impact on a child's life".

Creative Mentoring, a local third party that facilitates the training, provided its second two-hour mentoring seminar at the ShopRite of Christiana Crossing today. Once school begins, each volunteer will be asked to donate one hour of each week to work one-on-one with local students.

This is the first of what is hoped to be a number of partnerships between Delaware businesses and local public schools in need of mentoring programs. ShopRite CFO Chris Kenny says he is thrilled to be the first business to participate. "Hopefully, we can be a catalyst for other employers to start participating in the program."

Kenny says he sees great value in what this program can do for his employees and local students. "It's going to add value to our organization by encouraging career growth for our associates to teach, learn, listen and coach," Kenny says, "It will also bring comfort, counseling and a softening ear to students that need it the most"

Warner Elementary is just one of a handful of public schools involved in the program. The school has one of the state's highest percentages of low-income students. Principal Meg Hoefer stresses that having additional help is vitally important in a school with such an unstable population. She says, "We can use as much help as we can get".

"One hour of mentoring is like night and day for these kids" Kenny says "The time being spent with these children currently is like a single drop of water on a desert each month. This mentoring program is like an ocean, or an outpouring of what these kids need every day"

The program is all part of a statewide effort to expand mentoring services in Delaware schools. Lieutenant Governor Matt Denn says statistics show that this type of program has proven success in the classroom. "Test scores go up, discipline problems go down, the kids experience, in terms of school day, improves".

Lt. Governor Denn's goal is to have at least 10 local companies

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partnering with 10 different schools for mentoring services by the end of 2009.

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