

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Repeat as space permits

Women Volunteers Needed to Mentor Struggling Mothers and their Families

North Jersey—Raising children today is a challenge for any parent, but it can be especially overwhelming for mothers who are living on the edge of stability due to poverty, a history of trauma or abuse, and/or mental illness. Mentoring Moms, a program of the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, trains volunteer mentors to work with mothers who are overwhelmed by the responsibilities of children and life and who are also faced with immense personal challenges. When a struggling mother is supported by a mentor, the entire family benefits from that support. Adult women are needed as mentors for mothers living in Bergen County. There is an especially great need for women who speak other languages to become mentors.

“It is so great to have a friend, someone I can really talk to!” “I have learned so much about raising my son.” “I feel better as a parent and a person since meeting my mentor,” say mothers being mentored through Mentoring Moms. The volunteer mentors are caring women who understand how hard it is to raise children and want to make life easier for struggling moms, who are often referred through community or child service agencies. The mentors listen, share

ideas and offer support as mothers deal with the daily challenges of raising children, while also trying to manage overwhelming personal challenges. 95% of the mothers being mentored are living in poverty, even in Bergen County.

Registration is now open for Mentoring Moms Spring training, which begins April 20th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, 64 Passaic Street, Hackensack, NJ. Subsequent training sessions will be held on April 27th and May 4th, same time and location. Call (201) 489-9454, ext. 123 to learn how to become a Mentoring Moms volunteer, and positively change a mother's – and her family's – life.

“Mentors provide the needed support and resources that help strengthen a family”, says Cindy Andrade, program director of Mentoring Moms. “We know that parents with a social network of emotionally supportive people in their lives find it easier to care for their children and themselves. Most parents need someone they can call on when they need a sympathetic listener, some advice or ongoing support—our mentors fill that role.”

Volunteers are provided with a free multi-session, 10-hour training program and ongoing support from program staff. During this time, the volunteers take workshops on developing listening skills, communication and problem solving. Guest speakers such as current mentors and/or mothers who have participated in the program share their experiences so that new mentors have the background and knowledge to help support moms who may be single parents, or struggling with managing their family household, or who are simply overwhelmed. Through weekly contact, mentors offer emotional and practical support to the mothers. While each situation is different, one mother aptly described her mentor as “Someone I can talk to besides family, who understands and cares. She makes me think about my life and encourages me.”

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County strengthens the community by connecting people through service and developing civic leaders.

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