

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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January is National Mentoring Month **Mentoring Works!**

North Jersey---The Fourteenth Annual National Mentoring Month is scheduled for January 2015.

The Harvard Mentoring Project of the Harvard School of Public Health and MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership jointly created National Mentoring Month, and are collaborating with the HandsOn Network, as well as other non profit groups to reach out to Americans to become a mentor to a child or adult because “Mentoring Works!”

According to MENTOR magazine, research has demonstrated that mentoring is a critical support strategy that positively impacts academic achievement in youth, workforce development and behavioral outcomes for all. A mentor working with overwhelmed parents can help the entire family thrive and has been shown to lower or prevent instances of child abuse/neglect.

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County, the local affiliate of the Hands On Network, has been sponsoring mentoring programs for over 30 years, and is currently in need of men and women age 18 and up to become volunteer mentors to meet the increasing needs in several areas of the community.

Through the **Mentoring Youth** Program, caring men and women provide guidance, friendship and support to abused and neglected children ages 5 to 18. There are a number of youth waiting to be matched with someone with whom they can develop

a positive relationship. There is an especially great need for male mentors and bi-lingual, Spanish speaking mentors of both sexes. Winter training starts January 28th.

Mentoring Moms are women who make a difference in the lives of isolated and overwhelmed mothers of all ages. The volunteers spend time with mothers who have experienced difficulty in coping with parenting, managing households, providing for their children or other obstacles. The mentors listen, share ideas and offer encouragement, so that the mothers can improve their lives and that of their children. Bi-lingual Spanish speaking women are also needed to become mentors for this program as well. Training begins February 2nd.

Free three or four-week training sessions are provided to mentors in both programs. During this time, the volunteers take workshops on developing listening skills, communication and problem solving. Guest speakers such as current mentors or mentees share their experiences so that new mentors have the background and knowledge to help support their mentees. All mentors undergo a comprehensive screening process which includes fingerprinting and other background checks.

Mentoring Youth training begins Wednesday, January 28. **Mentoring Moms** begins training on Monday, February 2. All trainings are held at the Volunteer Center of Bergen County, 64 Passaic Street in Hackensack, from 7:00 pm to 9:30pm. Both trainings will also be held again in spring 2015.

Janet Sharma, CEO of the Volunteer Center, says, “To be a mentor, you don’t need any special skills—just an ability to listen and to offer friendship, guidance and encouragement to a child or an adult. And you’ll be amazed by how much you’ll get out of the experience. Be someone who matters to someone who matters. So, share what you know. Become a mentor because Mentoring Works!”

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

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