



Kinship

Kids 'n Kinship

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SPRING 2007

Newsletter

SPRING OUTING AND VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DAY

*Please join us for a fun afternoon and to celebrate our
wonderful volunteers at the
Kids 'n Kinship Spring Outing*

Sunday, April 15rd, 2007
2:00pm – 5:00pm
Minnesota Valley YMCA
13850 Portland Avenue South
Burnsville
952-898-YMCA

2:00 pm – Sign In and get new member card
Volunteer Recognition /
photos and refreshments
3:00 pm – Games in the gym/ crafts
4:00 pm – Swimming

All are invited: volunteer/child matches, families and those on the waiting list. This is a fun day and a great opportunity for the children to thank their mentors. Please join us!

An adult must accompany all children at all times.

Note: No cutoffs or floatation devices are allowed in the pool. (Life jackets are okay.) Non-marking soles only and no street shoes on the gym floor. Please bring your own towel and padlock if desired.

RSVP by April 7th to Kids 'n Kinship 952-892-6368

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From the Director

April 15–21, 2007 is National Volunteer Appreciation week. Kids 'n Kinship plans our spring outing each year around these dates so we can have the opportunity to thank our volunteers in person for their fantastic service. The 2007 theme is "Inspire By Example" because it truly reflects the power volunteers have to inspire the people they help, as well as, to inspire others to serve!

When I think of the overall goal of mentoring, I think that "inspiring by example" is a super description, so the theme feels very fitting for us this year! We as a Board and Program staff are constantly inspired by the many special stories we hear of the good that is occurring in youth's lives because of the time and attention focused on them from a volunteer mentor.

Some inspiration for you:

Study after study shows that:

Mentoring helps kids avoid risky behavior,
Helps kids improve achievement in school, and
Helps kids improve social relationships as well as feeling good about themselves.

In Kids 'n Kinship, 41 new mentoring relationships were formed the past year! A record for the program!

86 youth are currently matched with 107 volunteers

The value of our volunteers' time spent on a weekly basis with a child is \$200,749.

While we ask for a minimum of a one year commitment, 62% of relationships last at least 2 years, 47% last 3 years and 35% last 4 years!

Our longest existing current mentoring relationship was formed in 1995!

Thank you to all of you for your wonderful, inspiring relationships! Come celebrate your successes with us on April 15th!

Sincerely,

Jan Belmore, Director.

Tell your friends

We bet awesome mentors like you know of others who would like to learn how to mentor through Kids 'n Kinship. Tell them about our upcoming orientations – they will learn about the children waiting for a mentor and the benefits (and fun!) of mentoring. Each of the following orientations will be held at

Grace Lutheran Church in Apple Valley.
7800 W. Cty Rd 42 - Apple Valley 55124

Monday April 16th in the Samuel Room –
6:00-6:45 p.m.

Tuesday May 22nd in the Alpha Omega Room
6:00-6:45 p.m.

Monday June 11th in the Samuel Room
6:00-6:45 p.m.

RSVP to 651-686-0990

Program Wish list

90 mentors

Lots of funding to increase staff time

A pro-bono computer and tech support person

An "Online Auction" volunteer

A pro bono Office management consultant

Volunteer to solicit free tickets to local venues

Welcome New Matches

Joe Marzullo / Kirby and Harry

Bryn Johnson and Michael

Deb Gallagher and Miyra

Doug & Michelle Snyder and Jonathon

Amy Eggert and Keonshay

"Every act of kindness is an act of strength" Bill Russell at the Angel of Mentoring presentation 1/19/07

Mentors and Parents: does your employer or a church or community group you belong to, offer support to non profit / volunteers groups in which you are involved? If so, please let us know so we can make a contact with you.

Match Highlight –

It was easy to see why Jen and Melanie have been sharing such a special friendship for the past 6-½ years. They are both such special people and have an obvious bond and mutual respect for one another.

Melanie started mentoring Jen when she was 11 years old and in 6th grade. Jen will be celebrating her 18th birthday this week, and will be graduating from high school this June.

Melanie has great pride in the person Jen is today. She is proud of her for her many accomplishments as well as the compassion she shows toward others – especially friends at school who are facing disabilities. She has great admiration towards Jen for over-coming the many hurdles and challenges she has dealt with in the years she has known her.

When Melanie and Jen were first matched, Jen was facing a difficult time in her life. Jen and her younger brother have lived with their grandparents since Jen was 2 years old. Jen’s grandparents reached out to raise the children since their mother faced challenges that did not allow her to successfully parent the children. Jen’s dad stayed in their lives, visiting and seeing them when he could. Jen’s dad faced medical challenges through these years that did not allow him to care for the children by himself, and died from cancer two weeks before Jen and Melanie were first matched.

At first Jen was not up for doing many activities. Throughout this time, Melanie came to Jen’s house and spent time with her. She got to know her grandparents and younger brother, and visited Jen – listening to her, just being there, and letting her know she cared.

After time, Jen found the courage to venture out and try some new activities with Melanie. Some of their favorite things they have done through the years are going out to lunch where they spend hours talking about whatever’s going on, Jen’s future plans, and the amazing “sci-fi fantasy” book Jen is currently writing. They both love to watch movies, and then discuss them at their favorite place ~ the dairy queen ~ on the way home. One of Melanie’s favorite memories is they night she and Jen make homemade pizzas at Melanie’s house and then watched Jaws. Jen and Melanie also had a blast at a recent get together at Skateville where Melanie won a prize for doing the Hockey-Pokey!

Jen is grateful to Melanie for encouraging her to try new activities that she might not have otherwise experienced, for providing re-assurance and encouragement, and for believing in her. Melanie has been a great help to both Jen and her grandparents in

working through the generation gap they sometimes face.

Melanie has found her relationship with Jen extremely rewarding. She says she gets far more “back” from their friendship than she ever dreamed.

.....Melanie said it’s the little things you do in a child’s life that can make all the difference – baking cookies, talking, just hanging out doing everyday things that can make a child “feel special.” Melanie has enjoyed being able to “be a kid” with Jen and do “kid” things together, and has learned to be open to new experiences. Melanie is very excited to watch Jen through this exciting time in her life as she makes plans to attend Brown Institute next year, pursuing her passion for writing. Jen has taught Melanie that “perseverance can take you through hard times” and she has learned so much from her in her strength in facing her challenges.

Jen says “Having a mentor like Melanie might save a kid’s life!” “Sometimes just having a friend to talk to can make all the difference – at least you know you are not alone!” She has also found comfort and re-assurance knowing that she is never being “judged.” Jen says she has been so fortunate to have her grandparents in her life ~ they have done such an incredible job of raising her and her brother, and she has been extremely lucky to have Melanie as her special friend throughout the years as well! They both know they will be life-long friends and both consider themselves very fortunate to have come together 6 ½ years ago.



Melanie and Jen

Clothing Swap

Do you have children's clothing that you no longer use? Bring it to the spring outing on April 15. Do you need children's clothing? Come and pick up items you may need. Kinship families and volunteers are asked to bring clothing items to the spring outing to have a nice assortment to choose from for children who need items. We are focusing on clothing; however items such as backpacks, gloves or other accessories and shoes in good condition are also accepted.

Online auction volunteer needed

Are you an outgoing kind of guy/gal with a determined spirit to help locate items for the Kids 'n Kinship's online auction? We are need of some additional help to form a team to work with our online auction, www.bid4funds.com. Items such as gift certificates to local establishments, restaurants, salons, service stations, etc. need to be requested. Forms and tracking systems are set up. Your task would be to approach area businesses and request items and help with follow up. This can be done from home with a phone and/or a fax. Contact Jan Belmore at 952-892-6368.

Kids Day America

For the third year, Kids 'n Kinship has been named the beneficiary of the Kids Day America event. It will occur on May 19th, at Lakeville North in Lakeville from 10 A.M. till 1 P.M. This event brings together many groups in the community that provide for the safety and development of youth. Food and games, prizes, etc will be available. A contact person will be present at the Kinship Spring Outing to give more information. They are also seeking help from our family mentors to run the event this day. This could be a fun activity to do with your Kinship child and volunteer for the event at the same time. If interested, call Turning Leaf Chiropractic, Dr Jill Hammes or Dr. Betsy Oakland, 952-898-0525 or email: turningleaf@frontiernet.net

Berean Baptist supplies Match Boxes

A Match Box is a plastic box given to a new match that includes a calendar, thank you notes, a journal, etc, and can be used to store memorabilia. *Special thanks to the Berean Baptist Church Adventure Club* for making match boxes for 2007 - the boxes get our mentor/child matches off to a great start!

Emails Requested

Special notice to parents of children who are matched and children on our wait list as well as mentors. Are you regularly getting emails from Kids 'n Kinship about upcoming events and important information? If not, please call your Kids 'n Kinship coordinator or our main number at 952-892-6368 and give us your email address. We will add it to our list to keep you informed – thanks!!

Attention Mentors: Help Wanted

Are you interested in being part of our recruitment team and feeling pride in helping to connect children in need with a special friend and mentor? We are seeking volunteers to help provide awareness of our need for mentors through your churches. There are many ways you can get involved – being on our speaker's bureau and sharing your mentoring experience with others, distributing our brochures and posters to church staff, writing articles for your church newsletter or bulletin, posting our volunteer opportunity on your church website, and/or informing us of contribution programs in which we could participate. No experience necessary. Many mentors find this experience personally rewarding and it helps find more mentors for those wonderful kids on our wait list. Please call Susie Truax at 763-473-0995 if you are interested. Thank you for all you do for our program as well as enriching the lives of the children you mentor!

Help raise money for the program

Bid on monthly auction items at www.bid4funds.com
New items such as gift certificates to restaurants or services are added monthly – might as well purchase it here and know it benefits Kids 'n Kinship

Sign up for Food Perspectives food tasting events
Each time testers participate in a taste test, they personally receive \$21.00-\$35.00 and in addition, their organization is credited with \$6.00-\$9.00 www.foodperspectives.com. Make sure you list Kids 'n Kinship as your designated group.

Log on to Goodsearch.com - a new search engine powered by Yahoo! Type in Kids 'n Kinship in the "I support...". Kids n Kinship will then receive a donation every time you search the Web using GoodSearch.

Angel of Mentoring Award given to John Elder



John Elder with award

Congratulations John! On January 19th, John Elder received the Angel of Mentoring Award for the individual mentor category at a reception with Bill Russel, NBA Hall of Famer, hosted by the Minnesota Mentoring Partnership and the Minnesota Business Partnership. See additional photos on our website.

John began mentoring Dante almost three years ago and believes it is the simple things a mentor and mentee do together that builds the relationship. John organized and rode in the Big Sky 900 last summer, raising over \$16,000 for the program. John is already training for this year's Ride. The "2007 Charity Ride for Kids 'n Kinship" will leave from Cape Girardeau, Missouri on June 1, and will arrive in Apple Valley on Saturday, June 16th. Mark your calendars for a welcome celebration on this day.

Want to hear a story

StoryLine is a phone line kids can call anytime, day or night, and hear a local actor read an excellent children's book. The stories change every week, but the stories every month are grouped by theme or subject area. This service is free unless long distance charges apply. A new story starts every Sunday at noon! Call 952-352-1350 and enjoy!

Mentor Chat Group is set for Eagan, Apple Valley and Rosemount Mentors!

A special invitation for Mentors only:

Please join us for our Chat Group. Tuesday April 24, 5:00 to 6:30 at the Wescott library in Eagan, Dakota Room. Facilitator: Rita

We are focusing Chat group meetings to specific areas to better address local topics of interest. This chat group is geared to our mentors who live or work with a child in Eagan, Apple Valley and Rosemount areas, however all mentors are invited to attend. The Chat Group conversation has been LIVELY and informative and the Chat groups are a great opportunity to connect with other mentors in your community. Please plan to attend. Discussion topics will include: issues with matches, children's participation, internet safety and activity ideas. Call or email your coordinator so we can save a spot for you or to let us know if there is a particular topic you would like us to address! We hope you will join us!

Mentor Chat Group is set for Lakeville and Farmington Mentors

The next chat group is scheduled for May 16th from 6:15 –7:45 p.m.. It will be held in the conference room at Lakeview Bank ~ 9725 163rd St. West in Lakeville. Mentors who have a match with a child in the Lakeville School District are strongly encouraged to attend, and all other mentors are welcomed. Chat group is a time for mentors to come together and share challenges, joys and seek advice from other the experience of other mentors. Mentors who have attended past chat groups have enjoyed connecting with other volunteers in the program and learning about how others have handled common challenges and bumps in the road in their mentoring relationships. We welcome hearing from you on any topics you wish to discuss. Some topics of interest in past chat groups have been:

- How to mentor in a different value system
- How to build a relationship with the parent.
- How to value differences.
- Activity ideas that are fun and low-cost.

Please join us for another evening of lively discussion!

R.S. V. P to Susie at 763-473-0995 or susietruax@comcast.net

Thank You Donors

AVHS National Honor Society
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Christus Victor

Thank You Individual Donors

Jim Swanke in memory of Sandy Gaskil
Jan and Tim Menning
Gil Mathews
Brian and Cheryl Johnson
Dan and Geri Hess
Karen Anderson in memory of
Alice Anderson
Dave and Jan Belmore
Bev Stirtz



Lauren, Hope and Diamond have fun skating!

Thank You In-Kind Donors

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Mall of America volunteers:
-Deanne Gusse
-Koreen Speegle
-Julie Wooley
-Paul McNamee
-Beverly Slater
-Matt Mosteiko

Winter Outing was a Blast!

Special Thanks to the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 1776 for sponsoring a wonderful day of rollerskating and a great lunch. Thanks to the volunteers who helped with the activities, Jan Menne, Casey and Natalie. The donations from Malt O Meal, were appreciated too. THANKS!



Deanna and Larissa at Skateville

BULLETIN BOARD (we recommend you call ahead for date/time/cost changes)

WHAT	DATE	WHERE	TIME/COST	CONTACT
MN Horse Expo	April 27-29	State Fair Grounds	varies cost \$5-8	952-922-8666
*Macys Spring Flower Show	begins March 21	Minneapolis	store hours	612-375-2200
Raptor Center Fabulous Flight and Mighty Migration	April 12	1920 Fitch Ave, St Paul campus, U of M	call	612-624-9753
Minnesota Zoo				
**Farm Babies	March 3-April 22	Apple Valley	Weekends 9-4	952-432-9000
** Butterflies and Blooms	June 16	Apple Valley		
MN Valley Wildlife Refuge Eagle Nest Watching Van Tours	Saturdays, May 12, 19, 26	Visitor Center 3815 American Blvd. East in Bloomington		
	2:30-4:30	Reservations required, donation of \$5 adult \$3 child		952-858-0740
*Fishing clinic	June 2, register for #11491 by May 29 July 17, register for #11492 by July 10 August 16, register for #11493 by August 7	free, ages 9-13 Eagan		651-675-5500
*Eagan Art Festival	June 23-24	1501 Central Parkway	time varies	651-675-5500
*Edina Art Fair	June 1-3	50th and France	varies	952-922-1524
Disc Golf	ongoing	Northview Park, Eagan	for more info: www.cityofeagan.com	
*Como Zoo	ongoing	Saint Paul	daytime	651-645-1014
**Science Museum	ongoing	Saint Paul	varies	651-221-9444
**Children's Museum				
*Also free third Sundays	ongoing	Saint Paul	ongoing	651-225-6000
Spring Plays at local high schools		Eastview	Guys and Dolls	952-431-8955
call for times/cost		Rosemount	American Originals	651-423-7540
		Eagan	Arsenic and Old Lace	651-683-6964
		Apple Valley	Spring Musical	952-431-8208
		Burnsville	Beauty and the Beast	952-707-2320
**Eagan YMCA Family Fun Nights		SW YMCA in Eagan	Friday nights	651-456-9622
**Burnsville YMCA	MN Valley	Burnsville	call for open times	952-898-9622

*Free Events

**YMCA Passes: We have free passes for mentors matches to use at any open gym / pool times at the Eagan Southwest YMCA and the Minnesota Valley YMCA! Both facilities are fantastic. To use, call Kids 'n Kinship for pass information (volunteers must also bring a photo ID).

**Walker Museum, call Kids 'n Kinship to reserve your free passes (at least three days in advance).

**Science Museum, call Kids 'n Kinship to reserve your free passes (at least three days in advance).

**Children's Museum, show your Kids 'n Kinship Membership card for free adult admission (one per child) and \$2.25 child admission rates, call if you need a new Membership card.

**Zoo Passes, call Kids 'n Kinship to have passes mailed to you.