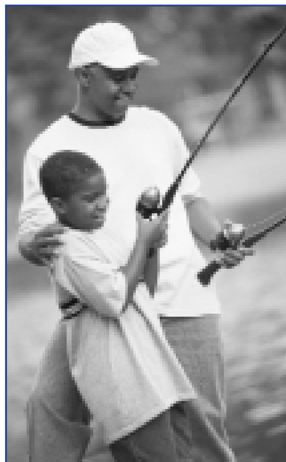
BULLETIN

PAGE 3 An Honest Look at Mentoring
PAGE 6 Cross-Race Matching
PAGE 7 Resources for Mentee Development

NATIONAL MENTORING CENTER

Issue 10
Spring 2002



Looking Inward, Looking Outward

Developing Organizational Policies and Practices To Support Diversity

By Beth Senger-Shaw

Here's a test: Take a look at your program's vision and mission statements. Do they mention diversity? Now skim through your program's strategic plan. (Don't have one? You're not alone!) Is the cultivation of a culturally diverse organization even obscurely referenced? For those of you who see the subject mentioned in those documents, pat yourself on the back. For the rest of you, this might be a good time for a little program self-examination and change.

When I facilitate trainings on cultural diversity, the first subject that comes up is the importance of cultural diversity in every organization. Participants often conclude that greater diversity leads to more money and mentors—two essentials for supporting the good work mentoring programs do. Cultivating diversity among all program participants is an often-overlooked avenue for meeting both goals.

For the purposes of understanding how money and mentors can spring from your organization's efforts to build diversity, it is important to first establish a working definition of key terms—*diversity* and *program participants*—and to understand what it means for a program to be "representative" of the community.

When I say "representative," I don't mean looking at your program participants through the standard "race" or "ethnicity" lens. That's a pretty flat picture of a marvelously mixed community. So when I say "diversity" I'm looking through some pretty multifaceted glasses—ones that can capture humanity's true kaleidoscope. The brightly colored pattern our societal lens reflects includes sexual orientation, religion, culture, socioeconomic level, blue- or white-collar employment, disabled, male, female,

See DIVERSITY, page 4

Reaching Out to Victims of Violence

A hospital-based program works with kids to prevent future injury or death

By Kathy Schaeffer

"Deeds of violence in our society are performed largely by those trying to establish their self-esteem, to defend their self-image, and to demonstrate that they, too, are significant." —Rollo May

What happens to a young person when he or she leaves the hospital emergency room after being treated for injuries from violence?

Upon investigating this question, Richard Blakeney, project coordinator for the Henry Ford System's Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Detroit, Michigan, discovered that youth are typically sent home with no follow-up or assistance for curbing the violence permeating their lives. Remarkably, he found that youth admitted to emer-

See VIOLENCE, page 2

OJJDP
Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

VIOLENCE: continued from page 1

gency rooms as victims of violence are four times more likely to return to the hospital because of violence. "And when they do return, it's usually for more severe problems due to escalation in violence" from fistfights to stabbings to gunfire, says Blakeney. On an even bleaker note, he says, "there's a 25 percent mortality rate" among youth who come to the ER. In other words, these youth face the grave risk of never seeing adulthood.

To curb this destructive cycle, Blakeney devised a preventive approach to the problem. Blending financial support from OJJDP's JUMP program, a one-year state grant, and the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan, Blakeney began an innovative program called the Teen Enrichment Program. Now, when a youth leaves the Henry Ford Hospital, the program follows up with a letter (with the permission of the hospital's Internal Review Board) to the youth's parents inviting their child to attend the 20-week program. "Sometimes," Blakeney says, "it is difficult to reach the youth. Some do not have a phone, some lie about their address, and some are emancipated and no longer living at home. But once the youth come to us, we seem to keep them in the program." Not only is there good retention, but there are also tangible results. Since the program's inception two years ago, not one participating youth has returned to the emergency room, a testament to the strength of the program and its staff.

"THEY OFTEN DON'T REMEMBER THE EMERGENCY ROOM EXPERIENCE."

Currently, the Teen Enrichment Program serves about 35 youth, ages 12 to 18 years, most of whom are gang affiliated. The youth voluntarily meet once a week at the hospital to discuss a variety of issues, such as avoiding fights, safeguarding one's health, setting goals, and exploring career options. The meetings include a free dinner and are based on a curriculum taught by Blakeney; Mike Vasquez, a youth counselor for Detroit's Hispanic Development Corporation; Cara Seguin, a trauma nurse coordinator at Henry Ford Hospital; and Casandra Nelson-Pruit, director of community services at the Detroit Urban League. At one point during the program, the youth visit the emergency room and walk through a mock trauma. "They often don't remember the emergency room experience," says Blakeney. For youth who need extra posttrauma support, social workers and outside agencies are there to assist.

Along with the meetings, youth are connected with an adult mentor. Most volunteer mentors are recruited via the hospital newsletter, which circulates to approximately 20,000 people each week. Mentors participate in two three-hour training sessions held at the Detroit Urban League. Many mentors attend the meetings with the youth and later talk with them outside the hospital. The relationship lasts for at least a year, and longer if possible. One mentor, a paramedic, provided a day of job shadowing for his young mentee. Impressed with the fact that paramedics can earn $35,000 annually, the youth decided to sign up for GED classes and finish his schooling. (For many kids, GED classes are a safer alternative than going back to school, where old rivalries may once again erupt.)

Like many mentoring programs, the Detroit program faced certain struggles the first year. Some youth formed cliques, and romantic attachments began to disrupt the group. In response to this, the staff implemented a Saturday retreat to develop team building and trust between the group members. The program also incorporated volunteer projects within the hospital and out in the community for the youth.

By next year, Blakeney hopes to increase the number of youth involved from 35 to 50. Building on the positive outcomes that this innovative program has observed, Henry Ford's Teen Enrichment Program plans to keep growing and become a model for other hospitals around the country looking to reach out to young victims of violence. ◆

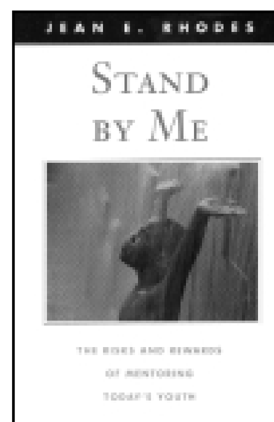
If you would like to learn more about the Teen Enrichment Program in Detroit, contact Richard Blakeney at rblaken1@hfhs.org.

Looking at Both Sides

A new book explores mentoring's risks as well as its rewards

By Michael Garringer, NMC Resource Specialist

BOOK REVIEW



Stand by Me is perhaps the most comprehensive look at the realities and results of youth mentoring to date. Taking a hard look at existing research on effective mentoring relationships, author Jean Rhodes offers an honest assessment of the program practices needed to bring them about.

This critical eye is something currently lacking in the mentoring field. As youth mentoring continues to explode in popularity, its limitations and realities are often overlooked in an effort to keep the movement on the rise. But the mentoring movement, as Rhodes puts it, must "be given a fair chance to perform." For mentoring to be successful in the long run, it is important to step back and examine not only what seems to be working, but what the impact may be if mentoring services and relationships are poorly developed. This book does that quite well.

Much of Rhodes' evidence for mentoring's successes and failures comes from Public/Private Ventures' 1995 landmark study of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBSA) programs, a major piece of research that still resonates today. The book also draws on a wide body of youth development research, as well as a variety of lesser-known mentoring research efforts. Rhodes uses this information to paint a well-rounded picture of how mentoring affects a child's development and how program practices can enhance or weaken that impact.

The tone throughout the book is a cautious one. Rhodes states in the introduction that "vulnerable children would be better left alone than paired with mentors who do not recognize and honor the enormous responsibility they have been given." She also examines how programs that fail to effectively recruit, train, supervise, and support volunteers also contribute to relationships that have a negative impact on the youth. And the concept of "negative impact" is key: it's not just that an unsuccessful match doesn't result in positives for the youth; these matches actually may do great harm to the youth's self-esteem, personal development, and ability to form healthy relationships.

But make no mistake, Rhodes is a staunch advocate of youth mentoring. If anything, the book takes the stance that "if it's worth doing, it's worth doing right." The bulk of the book is spent dissecting what it takes to "do it right." This applies both to what makes an effective relationship between the mentor and the youth, and the necessary program characteristics that can help build those relationships.

The book also examines what the reasonable, proven outcomes for youth look like if the relationship, and program itself, are well tended. Many think that mentoring can produce miracles—that simply meeting with a youth a few times a month will produce drastic, permanent improvements in their life. This view of mentoring as a panacea is misguided and ignores the complex web of other social and environmental factors that contribute to a child's successful development. Rhodes takes great pains to attempt to pinpoint what mentoring is truly capable of, and what outcomes have not been well researched or are outside the power of a mentoring relationship.

Although *Stand by Me* offers a compelling and systematic look at where mentoring is today, there are a few cautions readers should note. The dearth of quality mentoring research forces Rhodes to rely quite heavily on the BBBSA research to illustrate many of her key points. While that research is still some of the most concrete information available on youth mentoring, most of the data are more than seven years old. A bit more meta-analysis to explore common findings across newer and different bodies of research would have strengthened the author's arguments. Also, Rhodes draws comparisons between volunteer mentoring relationships and those found in adult-youth clinical therapy at several points in the book. While informative, these sections could have used a stronger caution about interpretting the comparison. If misinterpreted, some readers may be left with the impression that mentors can assume a paraprofessional role.

But all in all, this is a wonderful resource. It is well researched, thoughtful, realistic and, at times, quite moving. Everyone from national policymakers to grassroots program coordinators, and even mentors, will find something valuable in this book. It's precisely at this time when mentoring's future looks brightest that we need the honest, yet hopeful, look at the power of mentoring that *Stand by Me* provides. ◆

DIVERSITY: continued from page 1

non-English-speaking, immigration status, age, and so forth. And that's only scratching the surface.

Now for the "program participants" part. When we talk about program participants in workshops, most professionals automatically mention the kids and the mentors, but haven't thought to broaden their thinking about diversity to the staff, board members, advisory group, families, other volunteers, and financial supporters. When I refer to program participants in this article, I'm thinking of all these groups.

"IN ORDER FOR A PROGRAM TO TRULY BENEFIT FROM THE DIVERSITY IN ITS COMMUNITY, PERCEPTIONS NEED TO SHIFT FROM 'ACCEPTANCE' TO ACTIVE PURSUIT OF PEOPLE FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE."

Now that we understand the frame of reference for a few terms, let's talk about money and mentors. More and more state, federal, and private funders want to know if your program participants are representative of your service area's population. Not only is such representativeness evidence of good practice, it lets funders know that their dollars are reaching a broad cross-section of the community. In many cases, in fact, it's a basic requirement of eligibility.

Many programs have a "nondiscrimination policy" related to employment, and perhaps mentor recruitment. But I propose that you take things a step further. Nondiscrimination policies tend to be passive instruments, simply stating that this program is open to people from diverse backgrounds. In order for a program to truly benefit from the diversity in its community, however, perceptions need to shift from "acceptance" to active pursuit of people from all walks of life. If you begin seeking out, welcoming, and cherishing the varying elements of the community, you'll open yourself up to sources of money and mentors you didn't even know existed.

For example, have you targeted any faith-based or culture-based groups for inclusion in your program? What about organizations that serve immigrant populations? What about unions, fraternities and sororities, organizations for retired citizens, professional associations, organizations for the physically disabled, the military, women's groups, Native American tribes, gay and lesbian advocacy groups? These groups are mentor-rich. They often hold fundraisers. And they may be potential partners on grants specific to their population. They also just might make you their volunteer or financial support focus if they know you are aware of, and open to, their particular culture.

Note that I just said "aware of." That's important. Before you plunge into a "diversity campaign," you'll probably need to do some staff and, perhaps, board training. In fact, there are a number of things to consider before launching a diversity campaign. Some major elements for your organization to consider were mentioned at the opening of this article: the mission statement, strategic plan, and other organizational policies. Review these with your policymakers to see if encouraging greater diversity can readily be incorporated into the governing philosophies of the agency. Many common goal or focus areas apply to diversity: fund development, board development, participant recruitment, marketing, event planning, employee recruitment, mentor and staff training, and outreach.

Let me outline a simple process you can modify for your own use:

- Invite 10 to 15 forward-thinking, open-minded folks who know your community to a meeting. They can be board members, staff members, mentors, parents, community leaders—people who all care deeply about the kids you are trying to serve.

- Open the meeting with a general discussion identifying special groups in your community and how they might help your program through mentor recruitment, in-kind support, and/or financial support. Narrow down those target groups to those who have the greatest potential to make a positive impact on your program (try to pick at least five to 10 focus groups).

- Hand out a chart (like the example on the right) of general program areas and have small groups or pairs brainstorm on how those program areas can be positioned to attract the target groups you've identified as potential partners. For example, your group decides that it would really like to attract older adults as mentors. What marketing materials will be effective for that group? Which organizations or groups can you approach that cater to older adults or are made up of older adults? Is there a fundraiser you could host that would be particularly attractive to older adults? Does anyone have any personal contacts to open doors to working with this group?

- Now that you've got the framework of a plan, get the decisionmakers in the organization to endorse this "diversity campaign" and look at ways to integrate the philosophy of embracing rather than simply accepting diversity into the mission and vision statements, and strategic plan of your organization. After all, your program's operations should be springing from those key documents.

If this process sounds familiar, it is probably because you have been using something similar for strategic planning, fundraising, and other key areas of operation for years. Perhaps this is the time for your organization to apply the same process for incorporating and encouraging greater cultural diversity. You might be surprised at the overlooked wealth of opportunity that lies within your diverse community. ◆

Beth Senger-Shaw is the Executive Director/CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of El Paso. She is a Licensed Master Social Worker with experience in public relations, counseling, and small business management. Senger-Shaw has been creating and conducting professional development workshops since 1986 and has trained on topics ranging from electronics to child sexual abuse.

Policy and Cultural Diversity

Each program is guided by policies and procedures. Below you will find some standard policy areas, along with room to add policies specific to your agency's operations. Please assess your agency's responsiveness to and pursuit of diversity as they relate to these areas of operation.

POLICY/AREA OF OPERATION	How does our organization address culture in this policy/area of operation?	What could we be doing to encourage greater diversity?
Employee Hiring		
Board Membership		
Mentor Recruitment		
Client Participation		
Fund Raising		
Other:		
Other:		

Cross-Race Versus Same-Race Matching

An expert explores one of mentoring's most enduring debates

INTERVIEW

Cross-race matching is an issue that many mentoring programs struggle with. While programs may have a firm grasp on other matching criteria, such as gender and common interests, they often have confusion around the role that race plays in making a successful match. Dr. Jean Grossman of Public/Private Ventures in Philadelphia recently shared her thoughts on this issue with the National Mentoring Center, offering insight into the findings of current research on cross- and same-race matches.

National Mentoring Center: Cross-race matching is a hot-button issue in mentoring. For those who may be unaware of the background on this issue, what are the main points both in favor of, and against, cross-race matching?

Jean Grossman: The most commonly held belief against cross-race matching is that an adult of a different race cannot help a youth learn how to cope in society—that, for example, a white adult cannot understand what it feels like to be a minority in America. The main argument in favor of cross-race matching is that the mentor's personal qualities, not his or her race, are what matter most. Thus, since there are not enough minority volunteers for all the minority youth who want mentors, cross-race matches should be considered, as long as the parent and youth don't have a particular preference for a same-race match.

NMC: What does the current research say about cross-race matches?

Grossman: Basically, the effectiveness of mentoring does not differ for youth in same-race or cross-race matches—that is, as long as the parent and youth have agreed to the match.

NMC: Does the research point to any pitfalls or negatives associated with these matches?

Grossman: No, not for youth who don't have a special desire for a same-race mentor. However, it may take a little more patience and understanding on both the mentor's and youth's side to get the relationship to gel.

NMC: With this research overview in mind, let's get tactical: What advice would you give to mentoring program directors to help them customize and tailor their mentor training and efforts to support the match, in ways that would increase the chances that cross-race matches survive?

Grossman: This is exactly what we talk about in detail in the next NMC Technical Assistance Packet (see below). We discuss things like planning the match so that a pair have common interests or temperaments, obtaining the parent's or guardian's acceptance of the proposed match (particularly in community-based programs), and providing strong supervision and special training in cultural understanding for mentors in cross-race matches.

NMC: Are there any times when you would advise a mentoring program director not to do cross-race matching? That is, how can a program determine the level of cross-race matching that fits its program goals and objectives?

Grossman: Obviously, program staff must assess the situation in their own community. In some cases, considerations about same-race and cross-race matching might be related to larger issues of race important in particular communities. For example, there could be opposition in a community to cross-race matching because of the belief that youth need same-race role models in order to develop self-esteem. For reasons such as these, some communities—as well as some programs' board members and staff—might be uncomfortable with, or strongly opposed to, cross-race matches.

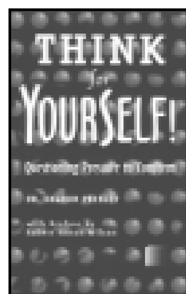
In an effort to help programs think about the benefits and potential problems surrounding cross-race and same-race matches, the NMC and Public/Private Ventures have developed Same-Race and Cross-Race Matching, *the newest publication in the Technical Assistance Packet series. This guidebook takes an indepth look at the research into the efficacy of cross-race matches and offers useful advice for program coordinators and caseworkers. This publication can be downloaded from the NMC Web site at www.nwrel.org/mentoring/packets.html. Hard copies can be obtained by calling 1-800-547-6339, ext. 135.*

Guiding Young People Toward Succcess

New publications offer ideas for promoting goal setting and self-esteem in youth

It's a well-known fact among our readers that the National Mentoring Center's lending library has hundreds of useful guidebooks and manuals to help mentoring program staff set up and improve mentoring services. But less well-known is that the collection includes a great many resources for mentors, and even mentees. In addition to program development resources, the lending library also contains workbooks and child development publications that can help mentors understand their mentees better and assist them in working on their personal development.

Below are some of the featured items related to goal setting, critical thinking, and other areas that may be helpful in augmenting the mentoring relationship. These items may also be of interest to program staff who are developing training related to effective youth development.

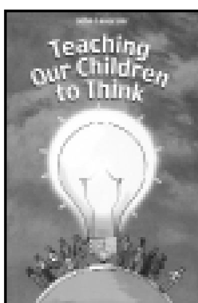


■ **Think for Yourself!: Questioning the Pressure To Conform (2001)**
This publication takes a hard look at the many pressures to conform that bombard our youth from institutions such as the family, the school, and the media. It offers practical advice and tools to help young people think critically and find their own voice.

■ **What Do You Really Want?: How To Set a Goal and Go for It! A Guide for Teens (2001)**
This is an excellent resource on the topic of goal setting. Although the guide is written for the teenager's perspective, it can also be a useful tool for the match to use together. It starts with the basics of figuring out where a young person wants to go, and then offers step-by-step tools that can really help with career exploration, college decisions, and behavior modification.

■ **Brave New Girls: Creative Ideas To Help Girls Be Confident, Healthy, & Happy (1997)**
This book lives up to its title, offering a myriad of fun and creative exercises designed to help girls become confident, independent thinkers. This is another book that could be used alone by a mentee or as a tool for self-exploration with the mentor's help.

■ **Teaching Your Kids To Care: How To Discover and Develop the Spirit of Charity in Your Children (1995)**
Although written for parents, this book can be beneficial to a mentoring relationship as well. It features 100 activities that kids and adults can do together designed to help instill charitable and compassionate values in children on topics such as responding to injustice, appreciating diversity, and helping disadvantaged people.



■ **Teaching Our Children To Think (2001)**
This resource really focuses on thought processes and the way individuals often fall into patterns of erroneous or disconnected thinking. To help improve a student's ability to analyze, question, and make creative mental connections, the book offers more than 200 exercises designed to help improve mental organization and critical and analytical thinking.

These are just a few of the library resources that can help with a mentee's personal and intellectual development. As always, books may be borrowed from the NMC library via interlibrary loan at your local public library. The collection can be searched on the NMC Web site at: http://www.nwrel.org/mentoring/library.html

The National Mentoring Center Bulletin

A newsletter of the National Mentoring Center
Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 275-0135 or 1-800-547-6339, ext. 135
Fax: (503) 275-0444
E-mail: mentorcenter@nwrel.org
Home page: www.nwrel.org/mentoring

NWREL Executive Director/CEO:
Dr. Carol Thomas

National Mentoring Center Director:
Mark Fulop

Editor:
Michael Garringer

Copy Editor:
Lee Sherman

Contributing Writer:
Kathy Schaeffer

Graphic Designer:
Michael Heavener

Technical Editor:
Eugenia Cooper Potter

Partner organizations:
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America
230 North 13th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 567-7000

Public/Private Ventures
2000 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia PA 19103
Phone: (215) 557-4400

This project was supported by Award No. 1999-JG-FX-K001 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

News Briefs

■ **National Youth Summit to be Held in D.C.**—The Department of Health and Human Services will be sponsoring the National Youth Summit June 26th–28th. This event, aimed at national, state, and local youth service organizations, will feature four tracks: Supportive Families and Communities, Safe and Healthy Lives, Economic Self-Sufficiency and Success, and Settings and Opportunities for Development and Service. The event will feature nationally prominent speakers from the public and private sectors, and will focus on the myriad of ways in which youth service organizations can help young people develop into healthy adults. To learn more, visit the conference website at: http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/fysb/summit.html

■ **New Mentoring Funding Available from the Dept. of Education** —The Department of Education's Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Office has announced the availablity of their "Mentoring Programs" funding. Over $17 million has been made available for 115 awards. These funds are designed to support local, direct-service mentoring efforts geared towards disadvantaged youth. Local educational agencies, community-based organizations, and faith-based programs (as well as partnerships between these agencies) are all eligible to apply.

The application deadline is July 2, 2002. You can learn more about this new program by reading the announcement in the *Federal Register* on-line at: http://www.ed.gov/legislation/FedRegister/announcements/2002-2/052402c.html

Electronic applications are available at on-line at e-Grants (http://e-grants.ed.gov/egHome.asp). Print applicationas are available by calling 1-877-433-7827.

BULK RATE
U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, Oregon
Permit No. 250

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
101 S.W. Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 275-0135 or 1-800-547-6339, ext. 135
Fax: (503) 275-0444
E-mail: mentorcenter@nwrel.org
Home page: www.nwrel.org/mentoring