

MENTOR PROGRAMS

Having the guidance and support of a positive adult role model is crucial for the healthy development of our youth. FLY's mentor programs provide that positive adult role model to youth who often slip through the cracks: youth struggling with substance abuse; youth on probation; and youth in the pivotal 8th grade years at risk of dropping out of school.

Mentors help their youth ("Mentee") develop new attitudes, behaviors, and ambitions. Mentees also discover how to have fun and solve problems without turning to alcohol, drugs, or crime. And for many of FLY's youth participating in the Juvenile Drug Treatment Court program, their mentors are the first positive and sober adults they have ever known.

FLY Mentors are incredible community volunteers who commit to meeting with their youth every week, one-on-one for one year. Mentors come from local universities, law schools, and the broader community. Mentors must pass a highly selective process that includes numerous interviews, with one taking place in their home, and one conducted by a current or former Mentee. Successful interview candidates are invited to attend sixteen hours of initial orientation and training. After completing a thorough background check, Mentors are invited to join FLY and begin working with their Mentee. During their tenure as a volunteer they receive on-going and in-depth group and individual training.

For the duration of their match FLY provides Mentors and Mentees with:

- Individualized attention, support, and consistent encouragement.
- Activities (at no cost) such as horseback riding, bowling, and white water rafting. These activities foster development of a pro-social peer group for mentees that is committed to developing a new outlook on life; a community of supportive adults who model positive behavior for the mentees; and opportunities to experience adrenaline rushes in a sober way.
- Attendance and advocacy at the youth's court hearings and school functions
- Ongoing crisis management services to address any questions or problems Mentors, Mentees, or the mentees' family members may have.
- Impact: FLY's mentor program has a history of success. For example:
- Over 90% of youth report that they have significantly reduced or eliminated their use of drugs and/or alcohol as a result of participating in the Program.
- 100% of middle school mentees have stayed enrolled and engaged in school and out of the juvenile justice system.
- 95% of Mentees now have goals and hope for their futures.
- 91% of Mentors complete their year-long commitment, with 70% opting for a second year.
- Collectively our volunteer mentors provide over 4000 hours of service each year, which averages 8+ hours a month per mentor.

Youth have said of the mentor program: "Now I am following up on job interviews, following up at school even when I don't want to. And now I get along better with my mom because my mentor encouraged me to talk to my mom." Another shared, "I am stronger, I can say I don't want drinking and drugs, I can think about consequences." Former Juvenile Court Judge Eugene Hyman shared: "FLY is important because most of these kids don't trust anyone. They do need hands-on attention. And that is what FLY Mentors give them- someone they can count on and trust and have a positive relationship with. Without FLY I know I would see far more repeat offenders. Not having FLY would be a tragic loss. These are mostly kids without fathers, whose mothers work. It's strange but in a year of probation for instance, the probation officer can change, the judges can change and the only person that doesn't change is the FLY Mentor. I depend on the mentors of FLY."