

Mentoring Program of First Mennonite Church Denver 2015-2016

Mentoring Program Participant Handbook

Welcome to the FMC sponsored Mentoring Program. Whether you are new to the program or an ongoing participant, we welcome you to a new year of activities. There are some parts of the program that are a bit new this year, so please read the following handout to become familiar with the things that have changed.

The new guidelines are intended to give a framework for participation and some minimal expectations to observe as you move through toward graduation. Given the financial gift available to each youth in completion of this program, this framework is being implemented to structure the experience and establish a basic level of participation. This way, each recipient of the financial award at the end of his/her senior year will have followed a similar program.

Please review the suggestions and feel free to contact Tory Doerksen, the mentoring program coordinators or any of the Children and Youth Commission members if you have any questions.

Historical Roots

The Mentoring Program at First Mennonite Church Denver originally was established to support its teenage youth in having an intentional relationship with a caring adult to deepen their faith and discern life's choices in a safe space.

In simple terms, it is viewed that mentors help teens feel good about themselves and deeply valued as human beings.

This program has been reviewed by the current Children and Youth Commission. Overall, participants have reported that the Mentoring Program has been a positive experience. The program will continue with the same purpose noting that there will be a slight change in its structure.

Upon completion of a minimum of three years of this program and at the time of graduation from high school, each youth is eligible for a one time monetary gift with the desire that it be used *to further your calling in the world*. If so chosen, the gift could be directed toward to educational goals. The recipient would be given this gift during a worship service, among congregational members, in a celebration of the mentoring relationship.

Basic Expectations of Each Youth Participant

This year, the Mentoring Program Coordinator will be providing quarterly activities to enable the pairs to join other pairs for activities.

The mentor/youth pairs are also encouraged to plan and enjoy activities *on their own or in small groups*.

1. It is expected that the youth initiate an equal number of activities with the mentor. The guideline suggests that the pair meet 6 times a year and that there be a record maintained of the date of the get together. Given the busy schedules that typically characterize a high school student's life, it is important for the student to make the effort, as much as the mentor, in finding times to meet.

2. Each spring, the Children and Youth Commission will request a simple record of the dates of the activities each pair completed. As well, the youth will be requested to answer a question at the close of each year. These responses will be combined at the end of the fourth year as a record of how the program has been beneficial and how the relationship has contributed to personal growth.

Basic Guidelines for the Mentor

The mentor is requested to take the adult role in facilitating discussion to extend and nurture the relationship with the youth. These topics may extend into general life choices/experience, shared wisdom, spirituality and being a Mennonite etc. It is requested that the mentor take the guiding questions in the mentoring packet and help give structure to specific conversations about community, servant hood, pacifism and faith.

The mentor is also requested to initiate various activities with the youth, reflecting a genuine interest in his/her life. Resources are available to both the youth and mentor to generate conversation if needed.

Mentoring Program Coordinators Role Description

The coordinator will be an adjunct member of the Children and Youth Commission and will refer to this group for recommendations, support and direction as needed throughout the year. Current Coordinators are Kris Long and Ligia Gibson. Previous Coordinator was Amy Conrad.

The coordinator will:

- provide an initial presentation in the fall to all mentor/youth pairs with a framework for participation
- facilitate pairing mentors and youth
- remain apprised of interested adults willing to fulfill the role as mentor
- be the point person for handling questions or concerns; any issues that may present of a serious nature will be directly relayed to FMC's Pastor of CYFF, to the Children and Youth Commission if appropriate and then subsequently referred to the FMC pastoral staff as deemed necessary
- plan 4 annual events for mentor/youth pairs to participate in
- check-in periodically with the participants
- provide resources as needed to support conversation and suggest fun activities
- submit budget requests to Children and Youth Commission, and
- collect exit interviews in the spring from graduating youth and their mentors for the May Menno Focus Newsletter.
- maintain Mentoring Program Guidelines and oversee the Youth Support Gift; this would include maintenance of a basic log with the office staff/pastor that keeps track of the gift dispersal
- with the CYFF Pastor, coordinate a formal recognition of new freshmen pairs in the fall and the formal presentation of a Youth Support Gift following the completion of the Mentoring Program. This gift will be given in May during the service when graduating seniors are acknowledged.

Basic Guidelines for Families

It is requested that the parents give support to the process of finding a mentor pairing – you know your child the best and may have some helpful insight as to who might be a good choice for the youth. That said, it is the youth's choice in the end that guides and initiates the pairing.

To enhance the relationship between the youth and mentor, it is suggested that the initial contact between them be hosted in some way with the youth's family. The goal is to provide a setting where the mentor and mentee can have a positive first connection and to familiarize the mentor with the youth's family. This gathering might be a shared meal or game night and might include the spouse of the mentor and the youth's siblings!

The Children and Youth Commission feels that this would likely foster a positive beginning for the pairs, serve to bridge the pair by “breaking bread with another” and encourage initial conversation.

Additionally, it is suggested that parents support some of the activities financially (or to at least check in about costs in case this might be a concern). As well, it is recommended that parents might help their student communicate extra curricular events and special dates to the mentor. Understanding that the youth participant may not be aware of logistics (tickets, parking and/or the need to plan ahead), the parents may need to alert the mentor to calendar details from time to time. Please defer to having the youth participant initiate contacts and plans as the rule.

9/2014

Mentoring Log

Starting in May 2015, please submit a log each May to Pastor Tory or the Child and Youth Formation Committee to record activities and time spent with your mentor. Pastor Tory will keep logs in a file shared with Mentoring Coordinators, Kris and Ligia.

Along with this log, please also submit one paragraph responding to the content you discussed with your mentor (topics covering faith, service, peace or community).

Date	Activity	Mentor's Initial	Comments

9/2014

Yearly Discussion Questions for the Mentoring Program

At the conclusion of your mentoring program experience, you will be requested to submit a summary of your overall experience with your mentor. This summary is published in the FMC Weekly to allow the congregation, who financially supports the program, a glimpse of how the mentoring program has been beneficial to you. These questions have been designed to target specific topics when talking with your mentor.

Four specific questions have been designed to target specific topics and guide conversation when talking with your mentor. The questions have been outlined to serve as a suggestion for discussion, so if you and your mentor have a different line of focus, this is acceptable.

Please find a time to talk about one topic or question sometime during the year and write a short summary of what you have learned from your mentor. Your responses are to be submitted annually to Pastor Tory (online is preferred). By the time you are a senior, you will have your end summary practically completed!

Year One

What is community? What has been the effect of community on your life? How can you create community?

Year Two

(for mentor) What does servant hood mean to you? In what ways have you extended yourself in service? How has it been beneficial?

(for youth) What experiences have you had with service opportunities up to this point in your life? What feelings did this experience/these experiences create?

Year Three

(for mentor) Did you grow up in a pacifistic culture? If so, were there any challenges that you encountered? If not, how did you develop pacifistic perspectives? Are they difficult to convey to non-Mennonites?

(for youth) Have you ever tried to explain pacifism to a friend? How did that go? Was this challenging?

Year Four

(for mentor) Tell me about your childhood faith formation. Were you baptized? If so, when? Who was supportive in that decision/process? How did it impact you?

*summary at the end of each year only needs to be a short paragraph. Revised 9/2014

2015-2016 Mentoring Program Kick-off

Welcome to a new year of Mentoring! For continuing and new pairs, the Child and Youth Formation Committee would like to express our anticipation for the year ahead!

Our “Kick Off” activity this fall will be our 3rd annual Scavenger Hunt on Sunday, October 25th. Each pair will be set off on their own to find and photograph identified things within a specific time frame. The first pair to complete the task and return will win a *prize*.

Parents: Please contact Kris Long or Ligia Gibson with dates/times/directions for other possible youth activities.

Thanks!